

## **JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**Concord-Carlisle School Committee  
Concord School Committee  
March 4, 2026**

**Present:** Tracey Marano, Chair CCSC  
Brian Waterson, Vice-Chair CCSC  
Andrew Herchek, Chair CSC  
Sandeep Pisharody, CSC; CCSC via Zoom  
Michael Williams, CSC; CCSC via Zoom  
Lynette Kelleher, CCSC  
Ayesha Lawton, CCRSD METCO  
Michelle MacDougall, CSC METCO

**Not Present:** Carrie Rankin, Vice-Chair CSC; CCSC

**Present from Administration:** Dr. Laurie Hunter, Superintendent of Schools  
Robert Conry, Assistant Superintendent  
Shelly Chin, Assistant Superintendent

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Marano called the Concord Carlisle School Committee to order at 6:00 PM. Roll was taken: Herchek, present; Kelleher, present; Marano, present; Pisharody, present; Waterson, present; and Williams, present.

### **II. RECOGNITIONS - METCO STUDENT**

Dr. Kandice Sumner, METCO President and CEO, recognized METCO student ambassadors who meet monthly to discuss program goals, challenges, and strategies for taking ownership of their education. As a METCO alumna, Dr. Sumner shared her commitment to removing barriers for students of color as an educator and anti-racism advocate. Dr. Sumner supports a dialectical approach which celebrates the program's successes while honestly addressing its flaws. She expressed dedication to students, vowing to fight for their safety and belonging and concluded by describing her leadership as one that persists through both the triumphs and the difficult work of growth to ensure every student feels supported.

### **III. SUPERINTENDENT AND CHAIRS UPDATE**

Dr. Hunter deferred her update to Andrew K. Nyamekye, Director of DEIB who reported a meeting was convened at CCHS with leaders from 14 student affinity groups including the Black Student Union, Spectrum LGBTQIA+, and the Jewish Student Union, to foster intersectional collaboration. The initiative bridges belonging gaps identified in surveys, which indicated LGBTQ+ and student racial subgroups felt less connected than white and Asian peers. As the district diversifies its visual identity is evolving. The cafeteria now displays flags from nearly 90 countries, representing more than 100 nationalities within the student body.

Ms. Marano attended the CCHS Multicultural Celebration and shared one of many highlights, the introduction of affinity-themed buttons, which will be distributed at future community events to promote visibility and pride. By setting a high standard for inclusivity, the CCHS celebration served as a model for the rest of the district.

Ms. MacDougall thanked the METCO families for attending the committee meeting and recent program events, including the Black History Month breakfast at Alcott and the upcoming "Friends and Family" gathering at the Discovery Museum.

Ms. Lawton raised concerns on the declining METCO enrollment and proposed a policy shift to allow new student admissions beyond the kindergarten level. This change would help maintain a robust, inclusive presence in the middle and high schools. She praised CCHS for its efforts to increase METCO enrollment in AP classes through direct family outreach. As a program alumna, she expressed her personal commitment to strengthening academic and social bridges for the program's long-term vitality.

#### **IV. CCHS STUDENT UPDATE**

Maddie Clancy, Mark Johnson, and Evelyn Mudge highlighted recent CCHS achievements including the boys' Alpine team secured second place at the state championship; Theo Remington defended his title as the slalom state champion; wrestler Carla Boosgaard advanced to regional competition; the Science Olympiad team placed sixth at the UMass tournament and ninth at Harvard; and DECA hosted a fundraising ping-pong tournament for their upcoming state competition. Students also celebrated school spirit and cultural diversity at the Multicultural Food Fest and the immersive music during World Language Week. Looking ahead, CCHS is preparing for Mentors in Violence Prevention training, spring sports tryouts, and the upcoming in-school SAT.

#### **V. CONSENT AGENDA**

##### **A. Warrants**

Mr. Waterson moved and Mr. Williams seconded the motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Roll was taken: Herchek, aye; Kelleher, aye; Marano, aye; Pisharody, aye; Waterson, aye; and Williams, aye.

#### **VI. CORRESPONDENCE**

Thirteen pieces of correspondence were received since the last meeting.

#### **VII. DISCUSSION**

##### **A. METCO Directors Updates**

Malintha Fernando, CHS Director; Solange Benjamin, K-8 Director; and Andre Thomas, K-8 Assistant Director, presented an update on the METCO program's progress in academic achievement, student leadership, and community engagement. There has been a surge in rigorous coursework, with 51 instances of students enrolled in honors classes and 7 in AP courses. The program also has nearly 100% participation in extracurriculars, ranging from varsity sports to professional internships. Parent involvement is also growing, marked by the appointment of METCO representatives to local PTGs and successful community events like Black History Month breakfasts and library donations. While the Directors highlighted a 100% college acceptance rate and a growing sense of student agency, they recognized ongoing challenges, including long commutes, special education coordination, and the need for shadow days to ease middle school transitions.

##### **B. Upcoming Coffees in Concord, Carlisle and Boston**

A brief discussion was held on upcoming community engagement coffees. Ms. Rankin and Mr. Williams will host the first session on April 3 from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM; Mr. Pisharody is scheduled to host a dedicated virtual-only coffee; and additional sessions are being planned for Concord, Carlisle, and Boston.

C. Update CCRSD FY27 Budget

Mr. Conry presented an update to the CCRSD FY27 Budget, which reflects a 1.24% increase in total expenditures over the previous year driven by a reduction in the health insurance premium estimate and a projected increase of over \$90,000 in state revenue. In response to feedback from Carlisle leadership, the district pivoted its capital funding strategy, opting to budget for specific FY27 projects directly rather than pre-funding future needs through a stabilization fund. While the assessment for Concord decreased by 1.47%, Carlisle's assessment rose by 8.62% due to shifts in student population; however, the committee's cuts provided a net reduction of \$267,000 toward Carlisle's initial request for relief. Consequently, the CCRSD FY27 Budget was reduced from a preliminary \$41,043,946 to a final \$40,887,524.

Mr. Waterson moved and Mr. Williams seconded the motion to approve the CCRSD FY 27 Budget as presented. Roll was taken: Herchek, aye; Kelleher, aye; Marano, aye; Pisharody, aye; Waterson, aye; and Williams, aye.

D. Second Reading of Policies

Mr. Waterson moved and Mr. Williams seconded the motion to approve Policy GBEB, JJE, and KBE as presented. Roll was taken: Herchek, aye; Kelleher, aye; Marano, aye; Pisharody, aye; Waterson, aye; and Williams, aye.

E. School Committee Representatives to Bargain with K-12 Maintenance and K-12 Administrative Assistants

Mr. Herchek, Ms. Kelleher, and Mr. Pisharody expressed interest in volunteering for the K-12 maintenance and K-12 administrative assistant contract bargaining sessions, and Ms. Marano will continue as lead for the administrative assistant negotiations.

F. School Committee Handbook

Ms. Marano launched an initiative to overhaul the current school committee handbook, which serves as a resource for committee policies, protocols, and onboarding materials. The goal is to create a handbook for new members, incorporating 30, 60, and 90-day onboarding framework to streamline the transition into committee service. The project aligns with broader regional goals, Ms. Marano and Mr. Waterson will review and revise the handbook to ensure a clear, cohesive guide for future leadership.

G. Bias and Hate Incident Working Group

Mr. Pisharody shared the work of the Bias and Hate Incident Reporting Working Group, highlighting the current focus on categorizing bias types and coordinating data collection between the school and the town. In response to a recent rise in local incidents, members are collaborating with state representatives and senators to bring specialized speakers to the community to address challenges directly. Mr. Williams suggested the agenda item be renamed Bias Assessment to ensure the schools are proactively looking at their own house across all grade levels rather than merely reporting on external findings.

#### H. Cell Phone Policy Survey

A brief discussion was held on the proposed cell phone policy survey, which will gather feedback on potential "bell-to-bell" restrictions at CCHS. Suggestions made included defining terms such as "out of sight" and "bell-to-bell," and adding specific options for school-sanctioned apps. Committee members will submit their final feedback directly to the Chair, incorporating additional input from high school principals.

### **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Waterson moved and Ms. Kelleher seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 p.m. Roll was taken: Herchek, aye; Kelleher, aye; Marano, aye; Pisharody, aye; Waterson, aye; and Williams, aye.

Respectfully submitted,  
Barbara Gilmore

Approved: May 6, 2026

#### Abbreviations:

CCHS Concord-Carlisle High School  
CCRSB Concord-Carlisle Regional School District  
CCSC Concord-Carlisle Regional District School Committee  
CCTA Concord-Carlisle Teachers' Association  
CMS Concord Middle School  
CMSBC Concord Middle School Building Committee  
COAR Communities Organizing Against Racism  
CPC Community Preservation Committee  
CPS Concord Public Schools  
CSC Concord School Committee  
CTA Concord Teachers Association  
DEIB Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging  
DHCB Department of Housing and Community Development  
ESSER Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund  
FINCOM Finance Committee  
LEAP Learning Executive and Academic Processes  
MTSS Multi-Tiered System of Supports  
PD Professional Development  
SC School Committee