

**JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES Concord-Carlisle School Committee
Concord School Committee
June 16, 2026**

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

Not Present: Drew Magliozzi, CSC; CCSC

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

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Waterson called the Concord-Carlisle School Committee meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Mr. Pisharody called the Concord School Committee meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Roll was taken: Herchek, present; Kelleher, present; Marano, present; Pisharody, present; Waterson, present; and Williams, present.

II. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. May 6, 2026, Joint Minutes
- B. May 14, 2026, CSC Minutes
- C. May 20, 2026, CSC Minutes
- D. Warrants

Mr. Williams moved and Ms. Marano seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Roll was taken: Herchek, aye for both; Kelleher, aye for region; Marano, aye for both; Pisharody, aye for both; Waterson, aye for region; and Williams, aye for both.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mary Beth Tinker, Washington, D.C., expressed concern over the discipline received by Aris Apollos for wearing a t-shirt on a school trip that read 'bombing children is not self-defense.' Drawing on her experience as the plaintiff in the landmark 1969 Supreme Court case *Tinker v. Des Moines*, she emphasized that students do not lose their constitutional right to free expression at the schoolhouse gate unless it causes a substantial disruption. Ms. Tinker commended Mr. Apollos for putting his civic education into action and caring about global and domestic issues. She concluded by urging the administration to support student voices and affirm a respectful, protective stance toward student expression.

Aris Apollos, Conan Street, Concord, reported a free speech violation that occurred during the CMS trip to Washington, D.C. The Vice Principal pulled him from the group and confined him to his hotel room, following complaints from parents regarding the imprint on his t-shirt, 'bombing kids is not self-defense.' Citing the 1969 *Tinker v. Des Moines* Supreme Court case, Mr. Apollos feels his constitutional right to free speech was violated by this disciplinary exclusion.

He stated he met a Holocaust survivor at the museum who thanked him for wearing the shirt and speaking up. Mr. Apollos concluded by urging the school committee to take action to address the constitutional and moral concerns within the district.

Debbie Wengrovitz, Old Marlboro Road, expressed disappointment about the seating of the chair and vice-chair election at the June 3rd meeting. She felt the nomination and voting process was unprofessional, confusing, predetermined and failed to reflect the values of inclusion and respect. She added that elected officials have a responsibility to represent all members of the community, including marginalized voices. Ms. Wengrovitz concluded by requesting the committee perform their duties with care, professionalism, and genuine responsiveness to the public.

Jean Smith, 15 Conan Street, Acton, spoke in support of eighth-grader Aris Apollos, calling him a remarkable young person for standing up for his beliefs and against injustice. She expressed concern that it seemed easier to punish him because he acted alone rather than part of a larger group. Ms. Smith concluded that Mr. Apollos' actions were rooted in a desire to do what is right and silencing him was a direct violation of his fundamental right to freedom of speech.

Ellen Quackenbush, 206 Prairie Street, expressed disappointment about the seating of the chair and vice-chair election at the June 3rd meeting. She felt that the handling of the nominations did not reflect democratic principles and Mr. Williams' defeat for a chair or vice-chair position appeared pre-planned, noting the prepared speeches. She stated that the nomination method was flawed and interested candidates should be allowed to present their qualifications openly, in a forum. Ms. Quackenbush feels blocking Mr. Williams ignored the will of the voters and sent a message the community votes do not matter.

Tooey Rogers commented on the seating of the chair and vice-chair election at the June 3rd characterizing the exclusion of Mr. Williams from a position is a form of systemic racism and suppression of minority voices. Mr. Rogers drew a parallel between the election behavior and the historical, institutional suppression of Black and Native American voices in the United States. He expressed disappointment that such discrimination is visibly active within the community. Mr. Rogers concluded by warning that unprofessional and exclusionary actions send a harmful signal of approval for racism and bullying, and members should model inclusive, empathetic behavior for the district's students.

Nancy Aykanian spoke in support of Aris Apollos and condemned the administration's actions during the Washington, D.C. trip as a form of silencing and repression. A retired educator and granddaughter of Armenian genocide survivors, she feels a core purpose of Massachusetts civics education is to encourage students to become active, informed citizens. Ms. Aykanian criticized the administration for choosing censorship over protecting constitutional rights.

Jacob spoke in support of CMS student Aris Apollos, stating mourning dead children, showing empathy for human suffering, and peacefully expressing moral beliefs are not political statements, but basic reflections of human decency and conscience. Jacob stated questioning authority and practicing critical thinking are core American values to cherish, yet the administration treated Mr. Apollos' peaceful expression as a problem to be managed and silenced. Jacob concluded that schools should never teach empathy is unacceptable because it is controversial and a child's right to life is a fundamental moral stance.

IV. DISCUSSION

A. Concord Municipal Decarbonization Roadmap

Concord Deputy Town Manager Megan Zammuto presented the town's state-funded Decarbonization Roadmap, which outlines a framework for reducing municipal fossil fuel emissions by focusing on end-of-life cycle equipment replacement across 17 municipal and school buildings. The conceptual endorsement of this roadmap by both school committees and the Select Board serves as the final step for Concord to secure a Climate Leader Community designation from the state, unlocking eligibility for a \$1 million municipal grant opportunity and enhancing competitiveness for future state funding. Dr. Hunter clarified that the vote signifies acceptance of a high-level framework for future planning and collaboration rather than approval of a capital plan or authorization to spend money. It does not commit the district to any specific engineering project, budget expenditure, or vehicle procurement timeline.

Ms. Marano moved and Mr. Pisharody seconded the motion to approve the Concord Municipal Decarbonization Roadmap as presented. Roll was taken: Herchek, aye for both; Kelleher, aye for region; Marano, aye for both; Pisharody, aye for both; Waterson, aye for region; and Williams, aye for both.

B. Amenities Building Update

Mr. Conry presented an update on the amenities building project, noting that dual administrative processes are currently underway. Following the departure of the previous facilities manager, the district issued a Request for Services for a new Owner's Project Manager. The construction bid is live; sub-bids are occurring first, followed by general contractor bids due around July 17th, which will require a special summer school committee meeting to officially award the contract. Mr. Conry concluded that the design engineering firm, Gale Associates, does not anticipate that rising oil prices will have a prohibitive impact, given that labor and local work constitute most of the project's expenses and the district is prepared to leverage a state grant to cover any budgetary variances.

C. Electric Bus Update

Mr. Conry presented a proposal from Highland Fleet Solutions to lease two used Thomas electric buses, following a federal grant restriction that prevented the district from executing its initial five-bus procurement plan. The lease framework costs \$28,600 annually per bus with a 3% annual escalator over a 10-year period, representing a total cost equivalent to roughly 70% of a \$375,000 to \$400,000 outright purchase price. The agreement includes a dual-port charging infrastructure funded and installed by Highland, full parts and specified labor reimbursement for maintenance, and downtime penalty clauses to protect the district from paying for idle vehicles. Mr. Conry concluded that at current diesel prices, the district projects a 15% to 20% operational savings and noted that these two vehicles will help sustain and scale the current 35-bus fleet.

D. School Committee Goals

Mr. Waterson reviewed the progress of the school committee goals across four core categories. First, the Budget and Finance goal is on track, highlighted by the delivery of clear, community-accessible budget presentations earlier in the year. In contrast, the evaluation of the Communication & Community Engagement goal was mixed; while progress was made through a well-received district bulletin and community coffees, efforts to pilot effective two-way communication fell short. Addressing these gaps, Mr. Williams

and Ms. Lawton emphasized the need to improve communication within the committee itself and to develop stronger outreach strategies for underrepresented groups, specifically the METCO parent community, alongside initiatives regarding bias and equity. The Policy Oversight goal is currently off track due to the absence of the planned public policy tracker, though a brief discussion on future approaches led the committee to prioritize a formalized, long-term policy review strategy for the upcoming cycle. The Superintendent Evaluation & Data Monitoring goal was deemed on track, supported by comprehensive weekly updates from Dr. Hunter that report operational achievements under standard instructional and administrative benchmarks.

The committee discussed adjusting its goal-setting methodology. Recalling that last year's session with the MASC Executive Director occurred in August, Mr. Williams suggested moving the timeline to earlier in the summer. Ms. Lawton advocated for a more equitable process for the full committee to collaborate and brainstorm drafts goals from inception, rather than the co-chairs compiling them independently.

E. Second Reading Policies

Dr. Hunter presented the second reading of policies JICK (Harassment of Students), AC (Non-Discrimination Policy Including Harassment and Retaliation), and AC-R (Non-Discrimination Policy Including Harassment and Retaliation), which incorporate language recommended by the Department of Justice (DOJ) to ensure legal compliance. Following a brief discussion, the committee agreed to a two-step process to fulfill immediate DOJ compliance requirements while allowing for ongoing adjustments. Dr. Hunter noted that the administration is committed to reviewing the text in July to draft alternative options, ensuring the committee can resume dialogue and potentially revise the policies when they reconvene in August or September.

Ms. Marano moved and Mr. Herchek seconded the motion to approve Policies JICK, AC, and AC-R as presented. Roll was taken: Herchek, aye for both; Kelleher, aye for region; Marano, aye for both; Pisharody, aye for both; Waterson, aye for region; and Williams, aye for both.

F. First Reading Policies

The committee held a first reading for policies JLCD (Administration of Medication to Students), JLCDC (Self-Administration and Self-Carry of Medication), JKAA (Time-Out, Seclusion, and Restraint of Students), and KBG (PACs). The first three policies address state regulatory changes that must be implemented before the start of the school year. Policy JLCD allows school nurses to delegate the administration of a wider range of medications beyond epinephrine pens, while the new Policy JLCDC establishes guidelines for student medication self-administration and self-carry. Additionally, Policy JKAA introduces strict limitations on confining students and emphasizes alternative de-escalation strategies. Policy KBG provides updated MASC guidance, clarifying that groups like the Special Education Parent Advisory Council are exempt from Open Meeting Law.

G. School Committee Calendar 2026-2027

The proposed School Committee Calendar 2026-2027 was reviewed, and the first meeting is scheduled for August 19, 2026. To prevent overlapping with Carlisle's regular second-Wednesday meetings, several committee meeting dates will be adjusted to the first Wednesday of the month including February 3rd, March 3rd, and June 2nd. The May meeting schedule was adjusted to May 5th and May 19th to maintain a balanced gap

between meeting sessions.

H. School Committee Liaisons

Mr. Waterson reviewed the committee liaison assignments for the 2026–2027 academic year. Ms. Marano stated that Concord United is a leadership initiative involving the police department, Select Board, town manager, superintendent, and school committee that evolved from a DEI commission project to proactively address community issues should be on the list. Ms. Marano volunteered to serve as the liaison for Concord United, while Mr. Williams will continue to serve as the DEI liaison. Liaison assignments for the four upcoming union collective bargaining units will be deferred until later in the school year.

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

I. CPS /CCRSD Maintenance Unit Agreement 2026-2029

Dr. Hunter discussed the three-year collective bargaining agreement with the district's maintenance union, which covers the years 2026 - 2029. The tentative agreement is a progressive contract designed to slowly bring the school district's maintenance workforce into alignment and parity with the Town of Concord's municipal maintenance staff.

Mr. Williams moved and Ms. Kelleher seconded the motion to approve the CPS /CCRSD Maintenance Unit Agreement 2026-2029 as presented. Roll was taken: Herchek, aye for both; Kelleher, aye for region; Marano, aye for both; Pisharody, aye for both; Waterson, aye for region; and Williams, aye for both.

J. CPS/CCRSD Administrative Assistants Unit Agreement 2026-2029

This item was tabled for a future agenda.

K. 2026-2027 Student Handbook and CCHS Appendix

Dr. Hunter presented the 2026–2027 Student Handbook and CCHS Appendix, which details campus-specific guidelines tailored to the higher level of independence expected of high school students. During the review, Mr. Pisharody noted incorrect gender language on page four of the appendix, and Mr. Williams requested that the handbook's front pages formally list the METCO representatives alongside the school committee members.

Mr. Williams moved and Ms. Marano seconded the motion to approve the 2026-2027 Student Handbook and CCHS Appendix with the discussed edits. Roll was taken: Herchek, aye for both; Kelleher, aye for region; Marano, aye for both; Pisharody, aye for both; Waterson, aye for region; and Williams, aye for both.

L. Climate and Culture Framework for 26-27

The committee held a discussion on managing the district's climate and culture framework for the 2026–2027 academic year. Mr. Williams requested that the Bias and Hate Incident Working Group become a recurring agenda item, while Mr. Pisharody proposed a formal review three times per year to track progress effectively without diminishing the topic's impact, clarifying that this schedule represents a reporting floor rather than a ceiling if urgent incidents arise. Committee members discussed balancing qualitative data with quantitative metrics, such as the Panorama survey and the biennial YRBS. Dr. Hunter stated that the district possesses an overwhelming amount of high-level quantitative data and

suggested shifting the focus toward triangulating this information with student affinity group feedback and professional development initiatives to address intent versus impact. Ultimately, the committee agreed to form a non-quorum Summer Working Group to research external models, consult experienced facilitators, and study benchmark approaches used by other school committees. The Climate and Culture Framework will be integrated into an annual goal formula to ensure the committee's initiatives remain measurable, transparent, and focused on student privacy and connection.

V. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ms. Marano moved and Mr. Williams seconded the motion for the Concord School Committee and Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee to enter Executive Session under Purpose 3 of Open Meeting Law: to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the K-12 Administrative Assistants and CTA ESPs and not return to Open Session.

Roll was taken: Herchek, aye; Kelleher, aye; Marano, aye; Pisharody, aye; Waterson, aye; and Williams, aye.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Gilmore

Approved: September 9, 2026

Abbreviations:

CCHS Concord-Carlisle High School
CCRSD 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
CPC Community Preservation Committee
CPS Concord Public Schools
CSC Concord School Committee
DEIB Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging
FINCOM Finance Committee
LEAP Learning Executive and Academic Processes
MTSS Multi-Tiered System of Supports
PD Professional Development
SC School Committee
SEPAC Special Education Parent Advisory Council
WRAP Writing, Reading, and Academic Processes
YRBS Youth Risk Behavior Survey