

**CONCORD-CARLISLE SCHOOL COMMITTEE
CONCORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
CLIMATE AND CULTURE WORKING GROUP MEETING MINUTES**

July 9, 2026

Present: Brian Waterson, Chair CCSC
Michelle MacDougall
Sandeep Pisharody
Michael Williams

Present from Administration: Dr. Laurie Hunter, Superintendent of Schools
Andrew Nyamekye, Director of DEIB

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Waterson called the Climate and Culture Working Group meeting to order at 4:31 PM. Roll call attendance was taken: MacDougall, present; Pisharody, present; Waterson, present; and Williams, present.

II. WORKING GROUP CHARGE

Mr. Waterson shared a draft charge he created for the working group to prepare for the school year ahead.

III. DISCUSSION

A. Climate and Culture Framework

Members brainstormed approaches and ideas about what they would like to see included in the metrics and indicators. Dr. Hunter shared some updates: the local spring YRBS results should be available over the summer and the district will be re-administering Panorama in the fall. Mr. Nyamekye noted the difficulty in disaggregating the religion data and stated that it would be a multiple-choice question in the fall. Mr. Pisharody cautioned against that approach and Dr. Hunter noted that the YRBS professional survey creators used multiple choice with a possible open-ended option.

Mr. Williams suggested measuring the temperature of how students of various religious backgrounds feel about their experience in the schools. He also suggested starting focus groups at the beginning of the year to gauge the temperature of the schools/community and working with the affinity groups in the schools to get a feel of the pulse of the students.

Mr. Pisharody stated that he felt a survey was the best way to gather information from a large group of students. Mr. Nyamekye noted that the SC would need to collaborate with the students to define other measures outside of surveys, noting that his hope was that the working group values the need for student voice in defining what the data/metrics will be. Mr. Williams noted his confusion, suggesting that simply getting the pulse from the affinity group advisors would be an additional measure to use alongside the YRBS, Panorama, and MCAS data. Dr. Hunter stated that the leaders have been trying to go directly to the kids and not have the adults be the voice of the students. Mr. Pisharody noted that going into this working group with the assumption that things are broken was a mistake.

Ms. MacDougall noted the challenge of getting data from the K-8 METCO families. Mr. Nyamekye noted that the vision around METCO has changed drastically and they need to be creative in gathering feedback. He stated that the METCO directors currently schedule moments throughout the school year to gather authentic feedback. He noted that, if this group was looking for something different, the district might need to call on METCO headquarters. He noted the similarities of getting the anecdotal pulse of the METCO families through the METCO directors, and of the affinity groups through the advisors. Mr. Williams noted that the community coffees were other potential sources of getting the feel from the groups and suggested a standardized feedback form.

Mr. Pisharody noted the mental health and stress level of the students was part of the culture and climate. Dr. Hunter agreed and stated that the YRBS tracked the mental health and Challenge Success highlighted the progress on mental health and wellbeing habits.

Ms. MacDougall asked if there was an annual incident report created from the bias and hate-reporting tool. Dr. Hunter stated that they have had many conversations around this but have not landed on the best approach. Dr. Hunter asked if the group would want to look at programmatic pieces that were meant to be preventative and do some triangulation. Mr. Williams noted the different series facilitated by Carlos Hoyt and Donna Hicks and suggested that they would benefit from guidance on qualitative data. Mr. Waterson suggested that Mr. Williams reach out to them.

Mr. Waterson offered to map out the year with different data points on climate and culture. Mr. Pisharody noted all of the work currently happening and suggested Dr. Hunter provide an overview to the SC on current activities. Members talked about potential PD for the SC.

IV. SCHEDULING FUTURE MEETINGS

Mr. Waterson suggested holding one more summer meeting in August. Mr. Williams suggested setting the group's meeting cadence based on when they would want to bring items back to the full School Committee. Mr. Waterson suggested bringing it to the SC mid fall.

Mr. Nyamekye stated that the narrative around bias and hate has felt negative and suggested they work on shifting the narrative by thinking beyond the incidents and thinking of the mechanisms in place to allow the school community to be emboldened to report incidents. He noted all of the work going on behind the scenes, recognizing the faculty advisors and DEIB teacher leaders in each building.

V. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Pisharody. The motion was approved by roll call: MacDougall, aye; Pisharody, aye; Waterson, aye; and Williams, aye and the meeting adjourned at 5:40 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Erin Higgins

Approved: September 9, 2026