

The School Committees Report

The School Committees are dedicated to supporting the school districts' educational goals for Concord, Carlisle and Boston students while maintaining a transparent public process related to policy decisions. This article is one in a series that is intended to update and inform the residents of Concord and Carlisle about the districts' on-going activities, initiatives and policies.

School Committees Vote to Advance FY2016 Budget Recommendations

The School Committees voted to advance their FY2017 budget recommendations to the Town Meetings at their business meeting held on December 8th. The recommendations for both the Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee and the Concord School Committee were in alignment with Concord Finance Committee guidelines. Final budget levels are set by the vote of citizens at Town Meeting in the early April.

The Concord School Committee approved an operating budget of \$35,660,111 which represents a 3.23% increase from the prior year and a five year operating average increase of 4.62%. The largest cost driver in the increase is salary escalation for teachers which accounts for \$860,973 of the \$1.1 million increase over the previous budget. Educational program levels remain the same as last year while service levels increase to include the purchase of two new buses.

The Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee advanced a recommendation for an operating budget of \$26,608,381 which is an increase of 3.12% over the previous year and represents a five year operating average increase of 2.76%. This recommendation includes the resumption of the technology replacement cycle and one bus purchase, and was consistent with the Concord Finance Committee guidelines

Members of both Committees expressed their desire to analyze every dollar spent and to recommend budgets that called for modest increases that were sensitive to the impact that their budgets have on taxpayers. In both budget requests reductions were made to lessen the impact of the escalation and cost drivers.

These approvals are the culmination of a six-month process that began with the submittal of the annual School Improvement Plans which are developed with input from teachers, parents, and administrators at each school site. Based on these plans, the Superintendent and the Deputy Superintendent propose budgets to the School Committees who further develop the recommendations and present them to the Concord and Carlisle Finance Committees for their review. Throughout this process, the School Committees engage with the public by encouraging them to attend regularly scheduled business meetings and through discussions at Parent Teacher Group meetings and at a School Committee Community Coffee.

Town Meeting Warrants Advanced

The School Committees also advanced Town Meeting Warrant Articles. The Concord School Committee advanced an Article that would authorize \$870,000 for construction, renovations, repairs and related work at various Concord Public School facilities. Highlights of the work include a new roof for the Sanborn Building and replacing aging HVAC equipment at Peabody and Sanborn.

The Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee advanced an Article for \$1,100,000 to address the remediation of the former private landfill located on the Concord-Carlisle Regional School District land.

The School Committees Contact Information

You can link to the School Committees' emails on the Districts' home page at www.concordps.org. Or, you can email the Concord Public School Committee at concordschoolcommittee@colonial.net and the Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee at concordcarliseschoolcommittee@colonial.net. You can reach out to the Superintendent and the School Committees through the Your Voice Matters link on the Districts' home page.

School Committee meetings are open to the public and the public is encouraged to attend. The meetings are broadcast on CCTV and are available on demand at www.concordtv.org. The district web site (www.concordps.org) contains updated reports, presentations and information on meetings.