

School Committee Update

Following the meetings of November 13, 27, December 11, 2012.

School Budgets

The goal of the School Committees and the school administration is to develop budgets that preserve the strong programs at Concord Public Schools (CPS) and the Concord Carlisle Regional School District (CCRS) and that are respectful of the taxpayers of Concord and Carlisle. At the December meeting, the School Committees approved the budgets for FY14 (the 2013-2014 school year). The budgets meet the guidelines set by the Concord Finance Committee and, for the seventh year in a row, the school budgets are within the levy limit and will not require a Proposition 2 ½ override. The Concord Town Manager's budget includes \$795,000 for CPS capital projects. These budgets will be voted on at the Concord and Carlisle Town Meetings.

The FY14 CPS budget contains an increase of 4.65% for a total of \$31,140,538. The budget increase averaged over 5 years is 2.75%. Main factors driving the increase are: salaries, transportation costs, special education tuitions, and enrollment-driven staffing increases. The FY14 CCRSD operating budget increase is 1.21% for a total of \$23,934,508. The budget increase averaged over 5 years is 3.46%. Major factors driving the increase for are: salaries, OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits), technology, transportation costs, retirement, legal fees, and other escalations. In addition, the enrollment ratio at CCHS has shifted toward Concord. The Budget Information section of the district web site is at www.concordpublicschools.net/budget-information.

Town Meeting Warrant Articles

The School Committees voted to approve six articles for the 2013 Concord Town Meeting:

- Concord Public Schools Budget
- Concord Public Schools Renovations
- Concord Public Schools – Supplemental Appropriation for Current Year \$210,000
- Concord Public Schools – Capital Stabilization Fund Use \$950,000
- Concord-Carlisle Regional High School Budget – Concord Assessment
- CCRSD – Supplemental Assessment for Current Year \$140,000

The Supplemental Appropriation and Supplemental Assessment articles are placeholders to cover unanticipated FY13 transportation expenses if necessary. These articles will only be moved if these expenses cannot be met in the current year's budget. The allocation from the CPS Capital Stabilization Fund would be used to develop transportation infrastructure.

CCRS Stabilization Fund Transfers

The FY12 (2011-12 school year) CCRSD budget has been closed, and the operating budget contained unexpended funds due to savings on heating costs from the mild winter, insurance relief, and Special Education Out-Of-District tuition cost savings. The Regional School Committee voted to reserve \$500,000 for the CCRSD Technology Stabilization Fund. The FY14 budgets reflect decreases in those budget areas. In addition, FY12 state funding for Chapter 70 aid, regional transportation, and charter school reimbursement exceeded published amounts, and Medicaid reimbursements, facility rental, e-rate reimbursements and interest income exceeded expectations. The School Committee voted to reserve the unbudgeted revenue of \$169,631 for

the CCHS Stabilization Fund. Stabilization funds are a means for the School Committee to plan for significant future expenditures.

Human Resources Report

Kelly McCausland, Director of Human Resources, presented the 2012 Human Resources Report, which analyzed the separations, retention rates, and new hires for teachers and support staff (tutors) at CPS and CCRSD. At CCHS, the educator retention rate was 99% and at CPS the educator retention rate was 96.4%. The majority of teachers who voluntarily resigned went on to promotions into administrative positions or relocated for family reasons. Many tutors moved on to teaching positions. The districts hired 15 new teachers and 17 support staff for CPS and 9 new teachers and 6 support staff for CCRSD; the acceptance rate for job offers was 100%. Charts and graphs are posted at <http://concordpublicschools.net/schoolcommittee/attachments/2012-11-13-AT.pdf>

METCO Report

Aaron Jonas, METCO Director, gave the annual report of the Concord and Concord-Carlisle METCO (Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity) program. The Towns began participating in the METCO program in 1967. Students enter the program in either kindergarten or 9th grade; there are currently 70 students in K-5, 25 students in CMS, and 64 students in CCHS. A state grant provides funding for staff, transportation, and student support programs. A Parent Advisory Council provides input for program improvements. At CPS, achievement initiatives include kindergarten orientation and summer readiness, family friends, tutors, and summer school. Support at CCHS focuses on freshman orientation and study skills, technology equity, and college admission support. A part-time teacher was hired at CCHS to support student learning. One of the district goals for 2012-13 is to increase the academic achievement of METCO students. This year, more METCO students achieved placement in CCHS Honors classes. 100% of the Class of 2012 METCO students went on to college.

CCHS Building Project

Stan Durlacher, Chair of the CCHS Building Committee, updated the School Committees on the status of the building project. The project is currently in the Construction Document phase and the goal is to have the 60% Documents delivered to the MSBA by the end of January 2013. The Building Committee is closely tracking the project budget and scope. Building Committee meetings have focused on review of the exterior elevations and materials and the interior renderings and finishes. A Building Project Communications Manager has been hired, and the web site has been redesigned. Please visit the new website for updated information at www.cchsbuilding.org.

Rivers and Revolutions

Michael Goodwin, Rivers & Revolutions Program Coordinator, updated the Regional School Committee on the progress of the new interdisciplinary program for juniors and seniors at CCHS. Current students shared their experiences and perspectives on the program. English, math, science, social studies and the arts are integrated into a single curriculum, and a stewardship component was added to the program. Mr. Goodwin recognized the Rivers & Revolutions faculty, Principal Peter Badalament, and Superintendent Diana Rigby for their support.

Other Reports/Business

Brian Miller, Assistant Principal, and Mr. Badalament discussed the CCHS Advisory Program. The program was started three years ago for freshman and has expanded to include all students at CCHS. The goal of the program is to create opportunities for students' personal development and deeper connections with adults and fellow students. Advisories provide a structured, ongoing and positive vehicle to foster an atmosphere of trust and learning.

The School Committees heard presentations from CCHS students who attended the World Challenge Expedition to Tanzania in the summer of 2012 and from a CCHS student who studied engine design at the Singularity University in California during the summer 2012. The Regional School Committee approved student exchange trips to France and China for spring 2013 and a World Challenge Trip to Bolivia for summer 2013. The Committee also approved the CC Weather Service trip to the Annual Meeting of the American Meteorological Society in Austin, TX.

The School Committees previously approved a Feasibility Study of the Concord former landfill site in order to further investigate the possibility of using that location for a bus depot. The Committees will request that the Concord Board of Selectmen concur that it is an appropriate action for the School Committees to conduct a Feasibility Study concerning the operation of in-house student transportation and a maintenance facility on approximately two acres of Town-owned land located at the closed landfill site off Route 2 in order that the 2013 Concord Annual Town Meeting can have access to the best possible information necessary to consider any proposed actions.

The Regional School Committee approved a \$9,000,000 Bond Anticipatory Note (BAN) Sale for the CCHS building project. There were five bids submitted and the lowest bid had an interest rate of 0.2041%.

For more information, please go to the School Committee page on the district web site, www.concordpublicschools.net/school-committee. All School Committee meetings are recorded and rebroadcast on CCTV live or as video-on-demand (www.concordtv.org).