

Concord Public Schools and the Concord-Carlisle Regional School District are committed to educating all students to become independent lifelong learners, creative thinkers, caring citizens, and responsible contributors to our increasingly diverse global society. The core values and beliefs include academic excellence, an empathic and respectful community, professional collaboration, educational equity, and continuous improvement.

The School Committees and Superintendent are dedicated to achieving these goals 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 Committee Votes to Extend Superintendent Contract; Committee Member Statements Posted Online**

The Concord and Concord-Carlisle School Committees voted 6-1 in favor of extending Superintendent Diana Rigby's contract for three years. Set to expire on June 30, 2014, the new contract will run through the end of June 2017.

The vote followed multiple executive sessions that included reviewing performance evaluations dating back to 2009. Each of the School Committee members read a statement outlining their position on the contract at the October 22nd meeting and those statements are posted on the District's website ([www.concordpublicschools.net](http://www.concordpublicschools.net)).

**FY 2015 Budget Process: Special Education**

The School Committees started the FY15 budget process earlier this month. CCRSD budget data from the previous five years indicates an annualized growth rate of 3.4% which is down from the previous five years which averaged 5.9% growth in annual budgets. For CPS, with 14% increased student enrollment, the annualized growth rate from the previous five years is 3.29%.

The major cost driver for the CPS and CCRSD budgets are employee costs. Another significant factor is the cost of special education. Key elements of the special education budget are out-of-district placements, contracted services, adaptive equipment, transportation, and additional in-district staffing. Out-of-district placements occur when students require therapeutic environments or intensive special education services that are not available in CPS or CCHS. The state sets the reimbursement rates for providers and annual tuition costs for out-of-district students can range from \$35,000 to \$262,000 per student.

In order to comply with federal and state laws, school districts are responsible for providing special education services for qualified students from ages 3 to 22. Over the past few years, CCRSD has seen the population of 18-22 year-old special education students increase from 18 to 23 and out-of-district placements have increased from 41 to 49. For CPS, out-of-district placements have decreased from 44 to 38 and the percentage of special education students has decreased from 19% to 17% which is the statewide average.

For the FY14 budget, special education costs were approximately \$4.8 million of the \$23.9 million CCRSD operating budget (20%) and \$8.4 million of the \$31.1 million CPS budget (27%). The School Committees anticipate cost increases for the FY15 CCRSD budget.

**Contact Information**

The School Committees and Superintendent are committed to on-going public dialogue and to ensuring that residents of Carlisle and Concord are informed. 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](http://www.concordtv.org). The district web site ([www.concordpublicschools.net](http://www.concordpublicschools.net)) contains updated information on meetings and interested individuals can contact the Concord School Committee via email at [cps@colonial.net](mailto:cps@colonial.net) and the Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee at [cchs@colonial.net](mailto:cchs@colonial.net).