

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 Calendar Approved

The Concord and Concord-Carlisle School Committees voted to approve the 2014-2015 School Calendar at a joint meeting on March 10. The calendar calls for the first day of school on September 2 and the final day of school on June 18, with five emergency days scheduled through June 25. This will provide the districts with flexibility to absorb snow and weather days while not extending the school year until the end of June. The 2014-2015 School Calendar is posted on the district web site.

As the Committees reviewed their calendar options, they were required to work within specific parameters set by state regulations and language contained in contracts with the Districts' collective bargaining units. In addition to the regulatory and contractual restrictions, members of the Committees had heard concerns from students and families about the school calendar extending so late in June. The calendar can be an issue for many families as they consider educational programs, family plans, and summer camps that begin in June.

The School Committees want to thank the teachers' unions and the Calendar Committee comprised of teachers, union representatives, administrators, and a School Committee member who worked hard to consider many options and input from all stakeholders. Options considered included calendar adjustments addressing religious holidays, professional days, parent-teacher conference days, winter/holiday vacation, and February vacation.

The state requires that School Committees approve a calendar that includes at least 185 school days for elementary, middle, and secondary schools in the district. State regulations also require that every elementary (K-8) student is scheduled to receive a minimum of 900 hours per school year of structured learning time and every secondary (9-12) student is scheduled to receive a minimum of 990 hours per school year of structured learning time. All student and teacher days must be completed by June 30.

Language in the Concord Teachers Association (CTA) (K-8) and Concord-Carlisle Teachers Association (CCTA) (9-12) teachers' contracts stipulates that the Districts cannot require teachers to begin work until September 1 without consent of the unions.

School Committee Website Design Upgrade and Superintendent on Twitter

As part of the strategy to improve communications with citizens, Superintendent Rigby has created a Twitter account (concord_super) and the School Committee has re-designed its web page, www.concordpublicschools.net/school-committee, to be more user friendly. Both actions are elements in the plan launched by the School Committees this year to improve transparency and to create more dialogue with the community.

The School Committees 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. The district web site (www.concordpublicschools.net) contains updated information on meetings and interested individuals can contact the Concord School Committee via email at concordschoolcommittee@colonial.net and the Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee at concordcarliseschoolcommittee@colonial.net or the Your Voice link on the District's home page at www.concordpublicschools.net.