

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.

K-12 Science Curriculum Alignment

The School Committees recently met with the K-12 Science Committee to review the proposals to align CPS and CCHS science curriculum with the new Massachusetts Science Standards and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) that were adopted by the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in January of 2016. In addition to aligning local curriculum with state standards, the K-12 Science Committee worked to ensure that there was vertical alignment in the science curriculum utilized by the Concord Public Schools and Concord-Carlisle Regional School Districts.

The K-12 Science Committee members included 12 teachers and Kristen Herbert who is the District Director of Teaching and Learning. The core of the Committee's work included research and training on the NGSS standards and gathering input from teachers in the districts. Following that process, the teachers voted on what curriculum standards and content to use moving forward that would achieve the goals of aligning with the state and achieving vertical alignment within the Districts. As part of those recommendations, the Committee created an implementation plan that includes teacher training, material purchases, summer work plans and a plan for communication with parents.

The full presentation by the K-12 Science Committee is available on the District's web site, www.concordps.org.

STEM/STEAM Committee Report

In addition to reviewing curriculum, the School Committees also met with the STEM/STEAM Committee regarding its work to integrate these concepts into curricular, extra-curricular and co-curricular programs for the Districts. (STEAM is Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) The Committee shared its vision for the Districts:

“Every student is a scientist and the every CPS and CCHS student participates in STEAM experiences or design challenges each school year. These experiences reach all learners so that, after years of these experiences, every student feels confident and creative in analyzing and tackling real world problems through a STEAM lens.”

The STEAM Committee developed three keystones that include:

- Graduates leave with the critical thinking skills and STEAM habits of mind needed to analyze situations and solve problems that they will face in life. These skills and habits of mind give all students opportunities to pursue STEAM paths in life
- K-12 students build proficiency in the STEAM approach. Students see the value in STEAM education.
- Teachers are supported and therefore effective STEAM educators. Teachers see the value in STEAM education.

As part of their efforts to develop their plan, STEAM Committee members participated in a program at WPI to inform their work on program assessment, goal setting, short and long range planning and performance evaluation. The plan includes actions steps such as developing and adapting design challenge rubrics to assess students work, continuing summer programs, and creating STEAM professional development opportunities for teachers.

The Districts will continually measure progress by tracking the number of students who begin applying the STEAM approach across the curriculum, chose STEAM focused and Engineering classes and clubs CCHS and CMS, attend engineering/STEAM colleges and universities, and graduate from college with STEAM majors.

The STEM/STEAM Committee members included teachers and specialists from each school site as well the District Director of Teaching and Learning. The full presentation by the STEM/STEAM Committee is available on the District's web site, www.concordps.org.

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@concordps.org and the Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee at concordcarliseschoolcommittee@concordps.org. 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.