

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.

Later Start Time for CCHS

As a result of the work and recommendation of the High School Start Time Advisory Committee to push the CCHS start time back by at least 30 minutes, the Regional School Committee is reviewing a series of potential changes to the current busing operations to make the change possible. The CCHS is currently a part of a three tier bus structure that also provides transportation for CPS elementary and middle school students. Each of these grade levels starts at a different time that allows the two districts to share buses and reduce the costs of bus operations. The current bus fleet consists of 36 vehicles and requires a minimum of 45 minutes between each morning tier to accommodate the number of miles traveled and morning commuter traffic. The fleet also must provide service to the Boston students and local private school students.

In addition to the three tier bus system, another key factor for the Committees to consider is the state requirements regarding the number of instructional hours in a school year for high school students (990 hours) and K-8 students (900 hours).

The High School Start Time Advisory Committee presented a variety of options that included purchasing or leasing new vehicles/hiring additional drivers, contracting with METCO Transportation for student transportation services in Boston, hiring a private contractor for Carlisle CCHS routes, and hiring a private contractor for all CCHS routes.

The Regional School Committee was hoping to gather as much information as possible regarding costs and other trade-offs associated with each recommended approach in order to facilitate an informed public dialogue on this potential action. In order to accomplish that task, the Committee voted to ask METCO Inc. to secure bids that would provide the Committee with cost estimates associated with contracting bus services for the METCO students. The Committee is under no obligation to act on the bid but this action provides the Committee and District residents with information to make an informed decision regarding the costs associated with each scenario to achieve the goal of a later start time at CCHS.

The Committee plans to hold public meetings to garner further public input before making any final decisions.

CPS & CCRSD Draft Budgets Aligned with Concord Finance Committee Recommendations

Both School Committees and the Administration have worked successfully with the Concord Finance Committee to bring the Committees draft operating budgets in alignment with the Concord Finance Committee Recommendations.

For CPS, the proposed operating budget calls for a 3.22% increase over the current budget and funds important goals for the Committee such as new K-5 Spanish language teacher positions and a part time position at the Middle School for a Latin teacher.

For CCHS, the proposed budget calls for an increase of 5.11%. This includes a significant contribution (\$850,000) to OPEB (other post-employment benefits) to further the Committee's goal to comply with operating budget guidelines provided by the Concord Finance Committee. This brings the five year average of operating budgets to 3.42%.

The School Committees will hold a public hearing for the FY18 proposed budgets on Tuesday, December 13 at 5:30 pm before they vote on the budget recommendations. Budget information is posted on the district website, www.concordps.org. The final budget levels will be determined at the Town Meetings in the spring.

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. Interested individuals are encouraged to sign up for the School Committees subscriber's list which is also on the District's web 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.