

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.

CCRSB Annual Operating Budget Recommendation

Following a public hearing in December, the Regional School Committee voted to adopt an FY18 operating budget recommendation. The final operating budget level will be decided at the Town Meetings in Carlisle and Concord this spring.

A key element in the \$33,301,609 proposed budget is funding to expand transportation services to allow for a later start time at CCHS. This action follows the work conducted by the High School Start Time Advisory Committee which recommended a later start time at CCHS of at least 30 minutes. The School Committee created the Advisory Committee after reviewing and sharing the research that details the impacts on adolescent brain development, student health, and performance of early school start times and lack of sleep. The Regional School Committee made developing an appropriate plan for a later start time a priority during the current academic year in order to implement the new approach in September of 2017.

The Committee undertook an exercise to find the appropriate approach to the 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 start at a different time allowing 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.

A variety of options were studied 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. In the end, the Committee agreed that the best approach was to expand the District's transportation services. (For more information on the medical research regarding adolescent brain development and school start times, interested individuals are encouraged to visit, www.startschoolater.net)

Additional key cost drivers include contract based increases for personnel as well as funding the Other Post-Employment Benefits Account.

While the School Committee's proposed budget is higher than the Concord Finance Committee's recommendation by approximately \$220,000, it is consistent with historic increases that balance maintaining an exceptional school system while mitigating impact on resident taxes.

Superintendent Search

HYA, the Executive Search firm working with the School Committees on the Superintendent search presented their leadership profile report at the latest business meeting of the Committees. The report was based on the feedback from the public forums, public survey, and focus groups. To view the report, interested individuals can visit the District's web site at 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. 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.