

The School Committees Report: School Committees Convene in Boston; Meet with METCO Parents 11-3-2017

The School Committees held their latest business meeting at The New Mission School in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Boston with the goal of making it easier for the parents of students who live in Boston to participate. The first portion of the meeting was dedicated to discussing the successes and challenges for Boston families with students attending Concord-Carlisle Regional High School (CCHS) and Concord Public Schools (CPS).

The students from Boston participate in METCO (Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity) which is a voluntary desegregation program that allows students who reside in Boston and Springfield to attend suburban public schools. There are 131 students participating in the program for the current academic year; 79 in CPS and 52 at CCHS. This academic year marks the 50th year that CPS has participated in the METCO program.

Students and families in attendance shared success stories and advice for parents who are new to the program or contemplating whether or not to have their child participate. While the opportunities to attend high performing schools in CPS and at CCHS bring great benefits there are some challenges that were discussed. The bus rides can last an hour and if children participate in after school activities, it can be a long day for students. The Districts have developed approaches to address issues such as transportation by creating support systems for students such as matching them with Concord families who host students for overnights and in other situations such as weather where returning to Boston is delayed or not practical for that particular night. In addition, at CCHS, older students who participate in METCO are matched with freshmen to help them acclimate to the new high school environment.

Superintendent Hunter, Aaron Joncas, K-12 METCO Program Director, Committee Members and attendees engaged in a productive dialogue about what could be done to improve the program including how to create a balance between ensuring that students in the program can participate in all that CPS and CCHS have to offer and allowing METCO students to bond with their peers in the program.

FY19 Budget Development and Public Hearing Schedule

During October, a part of her entry plan, Superintendent Hunter was working with her administrative team and the School Committee's new budget subcommittee to conduct an extensive review of the district budgets. This work included reviewing past budgets, monitoring the current year's budget and expenses, and meeting with teams from each school site to understand all aspects of spending at each level in the District.

As a result of that work and engagement, the Superintendent and School Committees will have a draft FY19 budget to present in November. The draft budget will be discussed on at a regularly scheduled business meeting of the joint Committees on Tuesday, November 14th and there will be a **public hearing** prior to the Joint Committee meeting on **Tuesday, November 28th**. In addition, there will be forums and other opportunities for the public to have input and comment. The goal is to create a fiscally responsible budget that reflects the core District values of excellence and equity.

Looking beyond FY19, the Superintendent and School Committees will be undertaking a strategic planning effort in the spring that will be informed by what is learned in the Superintendent's entry process which includes extensive dialogue with teachers, administrators and staff at each school site, public forums, and the aforementioned study of current and past budgets. The strategic planning process will identify priorities for the Districts. In order to ensure that priorities are reflected in future budgets, the Superintendent plans to adopt a zero-based budgeting model starting on the FY20 budget.

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.