

The School Committees Report: School Committees Approve Budget Recommendations for FY19 12-18-2017

The Concord and Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committees approved their FY19 budget recommendations at the last joint meeting. Each budget reflects the core District values of excellence and equity while being fiscally responsible with level service.

The CPS recommendation includes a 4.48% increase over the current budget with the main cost drivers being contractual increases in teacher salaries and special education costs. Salaries constitute 83% of the CPS budget and the current Concord Teachers Association contract reflects a concerted effort to gain parity with teacher salaries in the regional district. The draft budget also includes reductions in several areas including computer hardware, staff, and instructional supplies and materials. The Concord Finance Committees guideline calls for an increase of 2.88% which is a difference of \$592,367.

Based on the reductions already incorporated into the budget recommendation, the Concord School Committee made the decision to vote the recommended budget in order to continue discussions with the Concord Finance Committee and potentially bring the final decision to Town Meeting.

For the CCHS, the Regional School Committee approved a budget recommendation that has a 4.3 % increase over the current budget level with the main drivers being contractual salary increases for teachers and special education costs both within the district and for out of district placements. In addition, medical insurance costs are increasing by \$221,165. These increases were partially off-set by decreases such as staffing, administrative support, as well as supplies and materials.

While the Regional School Committee is advancing an operating budget recommendation for the next fiscal year, each town in the regional district also must consider the regional assessment formula which is based on student enrollment. For the FY19 budget, shifts in student enrollment from each town will result in shifting the assessment to Concord by 2% resulting in a decrease to Carlisle. Taking the assessment into consideration, the Concord Finance Committee's guideline recommendation for a \$957,512 increase in Concord's assessment translated into 1.25% increase to the CCHS operating budget for the next school year. This creates a gap of \$651,681 between the Concord Finance Committee assessment guideline and the proposed Regional School Committee's operating budget recommendation. Members of the CCRSD School Committee will continue dialogue with the Concord Finance Committee with the goal of resolving the delta; ultimately the budget levels will be determined at the Town Meetings.

The votes were the culmination of a process that started in late summer; this process included public hearings, 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.

The School Committees will be holding forums and creating opportunities to engage the public regarding their budget recommendations.

Future Budget Development

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.