

The School Committees Report: FY20 Budget Public Hearings

The School Committees held public hearings regarding the FY20 operating budgets for CPS and CCRSD prior to the regularly scheduled joint meeting on November 27. The Committees will vote to recommend operating budgets that will be forwarded to Town Meetings in Concord and Carlisle at their meeting scheduled on December 11.

The leadership teams from each district utilized a zero-based budget process to build the recommended budgets to ensure a complete understanding of all aspects of spending at each school site and level in the Districts. Additionally, this process serves to ensure that the Superintendent and School Committees are producing budgets that reflect the core District values of excellence and equity while being fiscally responsible and sensitive to the impact on residents in Carlisle and Concord. Both draft budgets at CPS and CCHS budgets call for level service delivery.

At CPS, the \$39.4 million operating budget draft calls for a 2.99% increase over the current year's budget level with the main cost driver being contractual increases in teacher salaries of \$1.1 million. Teacher salaries constitute 58% of the CPS budget. The draft budget also includes reductions in several areas including special education tuitions, legal services, and savings from the early retirement incentives offered last year.

For the regional district, the \$34.9 million draft operating budget calls for a 3.44 % increase over the current budget level with the main drivers being contractual salary increases for teachers, insurance costs, and additional contributions for Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB). These increases were partially off-set by decreases in debt payments and reductions in special education tuitions. A recent strategic review of special education facilitated improvements that resulted in cost savings for both Districts.

The process to create the draft budget presented at the public hearings started in the summer as Superintendent Hunter worked with the 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 ensure that the budgets support the implementation of the recently completed strategic plan for each District.

The School Committees will be holding forums and other opportunities for the public to discuss both budgets prior to Town Meetings.

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.