

Monthly Memo from the Superintendent

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Concord Public Schools
Concord-Carlisle Regional School District

Superintendent
January 1, 2019

School Safety and Security

School safety and security is always a top priority. One of my [goals](#) for this year is focused on these efforts. On a quarterly basis, a School Safety Committee meets comprised of the Police and Fire Chiefs, both School Resource Officers, parents, teachers, administrators, and town and school technology staff. Updates to the district wide emergency plans are underway. Security needs such as cameras at the elementary and middle schools are slated as capital projects this summer. A review of technology-based communication tools for use during emergencies is also in progress. The discussion of our proactive measures and response to safety is ongoing and further informs our commitment to keeping students safe at school.

Student Wellness

As one of our four major objectives in the [strategic plan](#), our work with student wellness is partnered with our work in academics, safety and overall school climate. Below is an outline of the current initiatives across the schools. Links are provided to the many programs with which we partner. Should any of the links not connect, each program is easily available through an Internet search.

- Through [Challenge Success](#) teachers are shadowing students at CCHS and CMS. Discussions of homework and an overall goal of balance continue.
- Structures are in place to allow time for discussions of relationships and to build adult and student connections. CCHS Advisory and CMS Homebase are important structures in that work. The [Open Circle](#) program out of Wellesley College provides this time at the elementary schools.
- We recognize the needs of all students. The leadership team met with [Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Safe Schools](#) liaison, Jeff Perrotti, and grew in our understanding of the needs of the LGTBQ population.
- Our work in offering screeners to identify students at-risk is growing. The [PEAR tool](#) out of McLean and Harvard and [Signs of Suicide](#) screener help us to identify students in need at CMS and CCHS and provide intervention prior to crisis.
- This fall, we started new social-emotional programs at Thoreau and CMS.
- Our work is based on data. The [2018 Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#) data is the most recent and updated source of feedback from students as to their

needs and areas of concern. Highlights of the report are found on the district web page under “Teaching and Learning”, “Reports and Documents”.

- We are continually looking to partner with higher education is beginning to identify a need to shift the direction. If you haven't seen the Harvard report from 2016, [Turning the Tide: Inspiring Concern for Others and the Common Good through College Admissions](#), it is an encouraging discussion of how the college admission process might be changed.
- Most importantly, partnering with parents is critical. Please do not hesitate to contact teachers, school counselors and administrators with questions and concerns. Often parents have information that we would only know through your outreach.

2019-2020 Calendar

On December 18, the Joint School Committees approved the [school calendar for 2019-2020](#). The calendar is posted on the district webpage under “Resources”, “School Calendars”.

School Cancellations

Fortunately, winter has so far been cooperative with maintaining the school schedule. When inclement conditions occur, the decision to open, close or delay school is done in conjunction with the Concord and Carlisle Departments of Public Works, Concord and Carlisle Police Departments and the district’s leadership in transportation and facilities. Consideration as to conditions in Boston, Carlisle and Concord are reviewed. At times, road conditions may be better than those at the schools given the time required to safely clear parking lots and access to the buildings. The goal is always to maintain as much of the planned school calendar as possible while ensuring the safety of all.

Virtual School Days

In December, the Joint School Committees considered the conceptual plan for virtual school days in order to minimize the number of make-up days in June. To date, we expect to finalize a plan that could be applied during the third school cancellation. Students would have common assignments or projects to complete over a one-week period beyond the cancellation. Elementary students would read independently and select items from an activity board. Middle and high school students would complete written assignments. Staff would engage in a professional development opportunity. Our hope is to present a plan for School Committee approval at the January 22, 2019 meeting.

Cultural Competency

Later in January, we look forward to keynote presentations for all staff and opportunities for discussion led by [Principal Baruti Kafele](#) to share insights regarding culturally responsive teaching and learning. Principal Kafele is a highly regarded, national speaker and transformational school leader. We thank the Concord Education Fund for their financial support.

Budget Process FY20

In December, both the Concord School Committee and Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee approved 2019-2020 budgets that reflect moderate increases and level services as a result of our work in zero-based budgeting and review of all costs centers.

Concord Middle School Facility Needs

In December, the Massachusetts School Building Authority notified the district that Concord Middle School was not eligible for the 2018 subsidy toward a new school building project. Given that this is the second year in a row that we were declined, the Concord School Committee is discussing next steps including the possibility of pursuing a building without state support. Please watch for further information.

Transportation Survey

The districts' transportation survey will remain available until Monday, January 7, 2019. Your thoughts are very important to us. The survey is available at: <https://goo.gl/forms/rhPuiXDjKKVNqPwv1>

Upcoming Opportunities for Information

<p>League of Women Voters First Friday Friday, January 4, 2019 9:15 a.m. Fowler Library, West Concord Educating the Whole Child: Creating an Inclusive and Supportive Environment in Our Schools School leaders will showcase a variety of programs that promote student wellness, cultural competency and inclusive classrooms.</p>	<p>Superintendent Roundtable Wednesday, January 30, 2019 7 p.m. CCHS Learning Commons Please join me for an open-ended discussion of happenings in the schools and updates to our strategic plan goals.</p>
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