

School Committees Report: Town Meeting Warrant Articles and Pilot for Virtual School Days

CMS Middle School Feasibility Study

Members of the Concord School Committee have advanced a warrant article for consideration at Town Meeting that would fund the feasibility study and schematic designs for a new middle school if approved. The amount of funding would not exceed \$1.5 million. School Committee members expressed a desire to conduct a robust public dialogue on this matter in the months leading to Town Meeting.

This action followed the news from the Massachusetts School Building Authority's (MSBA) decision in December not to fund a grant request from Concord for a new middle school. This was the second time in as many years that the MSBA did not fund the request despite acknowledging the strong need for the new facility.

A comprehensive study of both Concord Middle School (CMS) buildings was completed in 2017 by Finegold Alexander Architects. Their summary findings included that, although very well-maintained, Peabody and Sanborn conditions are deteriorated and obsolete, and they are at the end of their lifespan. Additionally, the two campus configuration is inefficient and expensive and the overflow status is not sustainable. This results in a sub-optimal educational experience. Finally, the current buildings should be unified into a single structure on the current Sanborn site that will support CMS students for the next 50 years.

Members of the Concord School Committee will be hosting multiple forums and tours of the current middle school facilities for interested individuals. Upcoming events include:

Information Session on Wednesday, March 6th at 9:30 a.m. in the Ripley Building, Room 4,

Information Session on Monday, March 11th at 6:30 p.m. in the Sanborn Auditorium; and

Public tours will be conducted on Saturday, March 2nd starting at 9:30 for Sanborn and 11:00 for Peabody.

CCHS Campus Improvements

The Regional School Committee has advanced a warrant to Town Meeting that requests \$2 million for the reconstruction of the access road as well as design and construction of an additional parking lot at the high school campus. There are approximately 135 less parking spaces on the new campus than what previously existed prior to the construction of the new high school. The lack of parking is a major concern for many families and students who require access to a vehicle for post school jobs as well as sports and extracurricular activities that occur off site.

Virtual School Days

The School Committees have approved a Virtual School Day pilot program designed to provide students and staff with an alternate plan for completing their required work from home during school cancellations due to weather conditions. Due to the number of extreme weather events in recent winters, the school year has been extending into late June which threatens the ability of the Districts to meet the state requirement that students attend 180 days of school.

Students will be required to complete common grade level assignments created by staff and will be given one week from the date of the cancellation to complete the assignment or they will be considered absent for the day of the weather event. Teachers and staff will be expected to complete professional development work.

The pilot will be implemented on the third and sixth cancellation during the 2018-2019 school year. At the end of the current school year there will be a review to determine if this approach will be utilized moving forward.

Sign up for School Committee News

Individuals who are interested in knowing more about the role of the School Committees as well as receiving the latest updates on school budgets and informational events are encouraged to enroll in the "School Committee News" Subscriber List. These updates will include timely information such as meeting dates and agendas, minutes, event announcements, and the School Committee Report. Individuals can sign up at www.concordps.org/school_committee_subscriber_list

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.