

The School Committees Report: FY21 Draft Budgets

The School Committees discussed their draft FY21 operating budgets at their meeting of November 19th. As part of the process that will include the Committees voting a recommended budget that will be forwarded to Town Meetings in Concord and Carlisle, public hearings regarding the budgets are scheduled prior to the regularly scheduled joint meeting at 6:30pm on December 3rd in the Ripley Building.

Building on the precedent established last year, 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 in the Districts. The budgets reflect the priorities established in the Districts' strategic plans. Zero-based budgeting facilitates efforts by the Superintendent and School Committees to produce budgets that reflect the core District values of excellence and equity while being sustainable and sensitive to the financial impact on residents in Carlisle and Concord.

For Concord Public Schools, the draft budget is set at \$40,795,072 which is 3.57% higher than the current year's level. The main costs are contractual increases in teacher salaries, special education tuitions, two new bus leases, and utility cost increases. The budgets call for level service delivery although three positions were shifted to create Assistant Principals at each elementary school site to help address state-mandated performance reviews. The Concord Finance Committee issued a budget level guideline which called for a 3.15% increase over the current fiscal year.

The draft budget for the Concord-Carlisle Regional School District is set at \$35,444,885 million which is 2.18% higher than the current year's budget level. Similar to CPS, the main cost drivers are contractual salary increases for teachers, insurance costs, new bus leases and increasing utility costs. These increases were partially off-set by decreases in debt payments and reductions in out of district special education tuitions. The recent strategic review of special education facilitated improvements that resulted in more students remaining in both Districts which has multiple educational benefits for the students as well as cost savings.

The assessment from the Regional District to Concord will reflect a shift in student population at CCHS. Concord students now comprise 76.1% of students compared to 23.9% of Carlisle students. The draft budget level is lower than the Concord Finance Committee guideline.

Drafting the budgets starts in the summer as the administrative team conducts an extensive review of the district budgets while monitoring the current year's budget and expenses. Input is received from each school site to ensure that the budgets support the District's strategic plan and each school improvement plan.

The School Committees plan to hold forums and other opportunities for the public to discuss both budgets prior to Town Meetings.

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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.