

The School Committees Report: School Committee Goals; Update on Cultural Competency and Anti-Racism Work

School Committee Goals

The School Committees approved their goals for the 2020-21 academic year at the last joint business meeting held on November 10th. Members of the Committees developed the goals to complement and be consistent with the strategic plan for the districts as well as the Superintendent's goals for the year. The goals include the responsibilities of the Committees relating to budgets, contract negotiations, evaluating the Superintendent, as well as their efforts to manage the pandemic's impact on the delivery of education and the safety of the students, teachers, and staff.

In response to the COVID 19 crisis, the Committees established a goal to ensure a safe and successful educational experience that addresses health risks and equity challenges within Concord Public Schools and the Concord-Carlisle Regional School District. Key actions identified to achieve this goal include supporting school-community safety practices through policy work, supporting educational equity through inclusion and cultural competency work, and supporting responsible educational delivery approaches through collaboration with the Superintendent.

Another goal addressed the annual operating budget as members committed to create fiscally sustainable budgets that support the core values and mission of Concord Public Schools and the Concord-Carlisle Regional School District. Members will work to achieve the goal utilizing multiple efforts including, but not limited to, identifying budget needs to support educational goals in FY22 and beyond as well as identifying the potential budget variables related to COVID-19. In addition to the annual budget work, the Regional Committee will model CCHS funding apportionment that projects 5-year high school enrollments and Carlisle-Concord cost-share implications.

The Committees adopted a goal to continue efforts related to cultural competency and anti-racism. Members will be working to provide the districts with the necessary leadership to help achieve district cultural competency, equity and anti-racism goals and objectives that are outlined in the Districts' strategic plan. Elements of this work will include examining calendar implications for cultural sensitivity, evaluating training, reviewing district metrics for cultural competency progress, and reviewing personnel recruitment practices as they relate to diversity and inclusion.

Other goals adopted include policy reviews, superintendent evaluation, contract negotiations with bargaining units, and community engagement, communication and transparency. A comprehensive list of the Committees' goals including key actions, progress and timelines can be found at www.concordps.org.

Update on Cultural Competency and Anti-Racism Work: Student Engagement and Student Voice

School Committee members welcomed students and faculty advisors from several student clubs and organizations from CCHS and CMS to get an update on the student engagement portion of the Districts' inclusion and anti-racism efforts. Students outlined their many inspiring and thoughtful initiatives as well as their aspirations for their schools.

The students and faculty advisors' presentations highlighted efforts of the Black Student Union at CCHS, the Intersections Club, the Unified Arts Group, and the CMS Rise Club. While all of these organizations are concrete initiatives and projects that are proactive measures to create an equitable and inclusive school community at CCHS and CPS, each effort takes a slightly different approach which allows students to choose an activity in which they want to contribute.

The Black Student Union is dedicated to "providing a safe space for black students to support the unheard voices of our community, but to also unite so we teach, inspire, and educate all students about our

history.” The Intersections Club is “dedicated to welcoming students of different race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental and physical abilities, and any other difference that sets them apart from the norm”. The Unified Arts Group seeks to create a positive and inclusive visual culture at CCHS while the CMS Rise Club is a club of students from different races and backgrounds “who come together, doing what needs to be done for our CMS community. A place where we talk seriously and respectfully about the social issues going on in the world and stand together in difficult moments.”

The work of students and faculty advisors is one element in the Districts’ overall strategic planning objective to create a collaborative and inclusive culture in the schools and community that values diversity and recognizes the contributions and uniqueness of each learner. The work to achieve this is underway and is being approached with five strategic initiatives that include:

- Developing a shared community understanding of what diversity means in Concord and Concord-Carlisle Public Schools and develop district procedures for applying this understanding to work being conducting in the schools.
- Implementing and expanding ongoing professional development for all staff with a focus on cultural proficiency and inclusive practices to meet the individual learning needs of each student.
- Increasing culturally responsive curriculum and students’ knowledge and understanding of a wide variety of perspectives and learning styles.
- Continue to actively recruit and maintain a diverse staff in the district.
- Partner with students and families from Boston to increase opportunities for them, as members of the community, to participate in the schools and Concord and Carlisle communities.

The student presentations are a part of the on-going engagement amongst student-led programs, district leaders and teachers involved in ongoing curricular development efforts. Students have made contributions to the districts’ work in curriculum development and this is one example of how District leaders are listening and responding to student voice.

Committee members encouraged interested community members to view the student presentations by watching the tape of the School Committee meeting of November 10th available at Minuteman Media Network on the Town of Concord’s website, www.concordma.gov; the student presentation begin approximately 55 minutes into the meeting.

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. Individuals interested in the Concord Middle School Building Committee (a Town of Concord Committee) can find updates and all relevant materials at <https://www.concordps.org/cms-building-project/cms-building-committee-updates/>

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.