

## **The School Committees Report: Diversity in Hiring Efforts, Budget Updates, COVID Testing, and CMS Educational Plan**

### **Hiring, Mentoring and Retaining Educators of Color**

The School Committee continued its work with the Superintendent and District leaders to discuss the cultural competency elements included in the Districts' strategic plan at the last business meeting held on January 12. This session focused on the Districts' efforts to actively recruit and maintain a diverse staff. Joining the meeting to discuss these efforts were the Districts' cultural competency consultant Dr. Paula Martin and METCO Director Andrew Nyamekye.

In discussing why this work is so important, Mr. Nyamekye's presentation shared research that has demonstrated that white students typically have "mirrors" in front of them leading the classroom, and especially when teachers and the overall school environment is predominately white, that reinforces their identity, their goals, their aspirations. Students of color on the other hand, often don't have these mirrors, they have windows. For Black students, having even one Black teacher can make a huge difference. These efforts benefit all members of the school community as it is consistent with the Districts' goal of continuously developing cultural competency to enable students to develop the values, skills, and behaviors needed to effectively interact in a culturally diverse community, both locally and globally.

Cornerstones of the hiring efforts include a recently formed District-level hiring committee that includes Dr. Martin and Mr. Nyamekye, distributing job postings early and more widely, partnering with organizations such as The National Alliance of Black School Educators, The New England Minority Network, and creating interview committees that includes educators of color and whose members are trained regarding bias. Retaining efforts for staff include training for mentors on working with new faculty of color, more matching with mentors of color, and creating supportive group activities such as a recent focus group formed by the Districts for all new teachers of color.

### **FY22 Budget Updates**

School Committee members discussed the process of building the FY22 operating budgets with District leaders at the January 12 business meeting. Similar to the existing fiscal year's budget, the pandemic presents challenges of unknown conditions for the new school year so the planning will include options for both hybrid and in-school scenarios. There was also discussion of other budget drivers such as what is known about the Governor's proposed budget, upcoming collective bargaining contracts, and special education.

### **CMS Educational Plan**

As part of the planning process associated with the feasibility study for the proposed Concord Middle School building project, Concord School Committee members are working to approve an educational plan that will help guide the design team working the Building Committee. The educational plan will reflect and draws from the District's strategic plan but will be focused entirely on the middle school grades that will occupy the new building. Committee members are pleased with this process and expect to adopt the plan at their next meeting scheduled for January 26.

### **Pooled COVID Testing**

The Commonwealth's Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in conjunction with the Department of Public Health announced that that some state funding would be made available to local school districts for Pooled PCR Testing Programs. The Committee authorized Superintendent Hunter to file a notice of interest with the state while District leaders explored potential interest by teachers, staff and families as well as logistical plans and impacts on staffing and district finances.

## **Upcoming School Committee Meetings:**

Tuesday, January 26, 2021      Joint Meeting

All meetings begin at 5pm and zoom links are available on the District website, [www.concordps.org](http://www.concordps.org).

**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](http://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**

**Concord School Committee** Alexa Anderson, Court Booth (Chair), Heather Bout, Fatima Mezdad, Cynthia Rainey (Vice-Chair)

**Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee** is comprised of the five Concord School Committee members as well as two Carlisle representatives, Eva Mostoufi, and Sara Wilson (Chair, Regional School Committee)

You can link to the School Committees' emails on the Districts' home page at [www.concordps.org](http://www.concordps.org). Or, you can email the Concord Public School Committee at [concordschoolcommittee@concordps.org](mailto:concordschoolcommittee@concordps.org) and the Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee at [concordcarliseschoolcommittee@concordps.org](mailto: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.