

## **The School Committees Report: New Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; Special Education and, Equity Survey**

### **Special Education Update**

School Committee members recently received an update from Director of Students Services, Ruth Grube, on the special education programs and efforts underway in both Districts. There are more than 800 students who live and attend Concord Public Schools and CCHS who have individual educational plans (IEP). Most students are in full or partial inclusion, with access to both the general education curriculum and general education peers.

Since conducting a comprehensive review of the special education approach in both districts in 2017, district leaders have added many programs to support students who require significant differentiation of the curriculum and additional assistance for them to access the curriculum. These programs have allowed more students to remain in district to receive the services to support their individualized learning plan as opposed to attending out of district schools and programs. The presentation outlined more than a dozen programs within CPS and CCHS as well as the types of specialists who are available to support students. These include, but are not limited to, therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech pathologists, behavior therapists and other professionals.

Interested individuals can view the entire presentation on the school department's web site at [School Committee Meetings - Concord Carlisle School District \(concordps.org\)](https://www.concordps.org/school-committee-meetings), the presentation was made at the meeting held on April 13<sup>th</sup>. Parents with questions regarding services and student supports can contact school site principals.

### **Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

Andrew Nyamekye has been named the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for the Concord and Concord-Carlisle School Districts. This is a newly created position is the latest effort by District leaders and the School Committees to prioritize their efforts in anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Goals for the position include:

- to bring a diversity, equity, and anti-racist lens to every aspect of the functioning of the districts;
- to improve student experience, particularly for black and brown students;
- to provide faculty and staff with support on cultivating a school culture that is inclusive and elicits a sense of belonging for all students, families, and employees;
- to support all administrators in decision making;
- to be a resource for families and community members; and,
- to be a liaison with community groups and institutions on behalf of the school system.

Nyamekye earned a Master of Arts in Intercultural Relations from Lesley University in addition to his B.S from UMass, Westfield. He is currently serving as the METCO Director for the Districts, a position he has held since August of 2018. In his current role, he has earned the praise from his colleagues for his collaborative style and for building strong relationships and connections with every part of the school communities including students, families, faculty, staff, and district leaders. These relationships and connections will serve as a strong foundation to start his new role.

Nyamekye, who was born in Ghana, stated, "I'm thrilled to have this opportunity to continue building on the foundation that we have created for this important work. It is a pleasure to have the support of District leaders, the School Committees, faculty, students, and families. This support will enable us to deepen our collaborative efforts toward high intentionality around cultural competency, anti-bias, anti-racism and equity, and address these difficult subject areas with an intensity that is bearing fruit and bringing real change to our schools' culture."

The Districts plan to hold a public session to introduce Nyamekye and discuss the future of this important work in the near future.

### **Equity Survey**

As part of their ongoing anti-racism and cultural competency efforts, District leaders are planning to conduct an Equity Data/School Climate Survey. One of the pillars of the Districts' Strategic Plan is to, "Create a collaborative and inclusive culture in the schools and community that values diversity and recognizes the contributions and uniqueness of each learner." One of the listed outcomes of this work is to, "Utilize school climate surveys with students, family, and staff while measuring baseline and gains with focus on subgroup populations." To do this work, the Districts have contracted with subject matter experts in the field of supporting schools to become more culturally competent and anti-racist. These consultants will work with district leaders to conduct surveys, focus groups, and data analysis to support both districts to enhance their efforts to become a more inclusive culture where all community members feel a sense of belonging.

### **Upcoming School Committee Meetings:**

Tuesday, May 11	Joint Meeting
Tuesday, May 25	Joint Meeting

All meetings begin at 5pm and zoom links are available on the District website, [www.concordps.org](http://www.concordps.org). Minuteman Media Network videos all meetings which are available for viewing at either <https://concordma.gov/2335/Minuteman-Media-Network-MMN>, or at [www.concordps.org/schoolcommittee/](http://www.concordps.org/schoolcommittee/).

**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 (Vice-Chair of CCRSC), Fatima Mezdad, Cynthia Rainey (Vice-Chair of CPS)

**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)

Individuals 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). Individuals 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.