

## **The School Committees Report: Face Mask & Covering Policy, COVID Protocols, DEI Subcommittee, and Concord Finance Committee Forecast Requests**

### **Mask Policy and COVID Protocols**

The Concord and Concord-Carlisle School Committees adopted a face mask and covering policy for both Districts for the coming school year. Given the recent increases in COVID transmission rates, District leaders consulted with local health officials and considered the guidance issued by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH). The actions are consistent with the commitment by the Committees and District leaders to provide the safest possible environment for the return to full time instruction at school properties.

For the start of the school year, a face covering that covers the nose and mouth must be worn by all individuals in school buildings and on school transportation, even when social distancing is observed. The Committees and District leaders will regularly review this policy, taking into consideration factors including vaccination eligibility, vaccination rates and transmission rates. Schools with students currently eligible for the COVID-19 vaccination (CCHS, CMS Grades 7 and 8) will be first to be considered for lifting of the mask requirement.

Other COVID related protocols will be similar to the previous school year. These include but are not limited to:

**Physical Distancing:** Classrooms will space students 3' when possible. Students at lunch will have space between them and peers. Outdoor eating will be provided as much as possible.

**Cohorting and Assigned Seating:** Elementary classrooms will be considered a cohort and seats will be assigned in each classroom. Inside of the school building, students will remain with their classmates throughout the school day as much as is possible. This year buses will be at full capacity and students on a school bus will be assigned seats to allow for contact tracing.

**Screening:** Staff and students will utilize an electronic form daily in Aspen to report any COVID symptoms and determine whether to stay home in alignment with CDC guidelines. Any staff or student demonstrating symptoms must refrain from attending the school setting. Any staff or student with such symptoms at school will be leave school immediately upon onset of the symptoms. All symptomatic individuals will require a PCR test.

**Quarantine and Illness:** Should a student or staff receive a positive COVID-19 test, the Concord Health Director, and Public Health Nurse will be immediately contacted. They will determine close contacts in cooperation with the family and/or school staff. Close contacts will be contacted as a part of the contact tracing process, all coordinated through the Public Health Nurse and schools. Individuals testing positive will quarantine for 10 days. Vaccinated close contacts do not need to quarantine unless they become symptomatic. Unvaccinated close contacts will quarantine for 7 days. The entire classroom will quarantine in the event of a positive case in the elementary schools. Individual students will receive asynchronous work during the time they are absent from school. Teachers will prioritize concepts and the workload. If an entire elementary class is quarantined, remote learning instruction will be provided in the morning as it was during the 2020-2021 school year. Individual devices will be available at each elementary school when needed.

**Pool Testing:** The District will participate in the DESE sponsored asymptomatic pooled testing program. All staff and students are highly encouraged to participate.

**Cleaning Protocols:** Common spaces, including high touch areas (i.e., railings and door handles), will be wiped down multiple times throughout the day with disinfectant. Disinfectant wipes will be in conference rooms and office areas for employees to use. Where possible, we will eliminate high touch areas by propping open doors or installing foot door openers. Elevator use will continue to be limited to authorized people only. Hand sanitizer will be installed in elevators. Hand sanitizers will be wall mounted in every classroom. Hand sanitizer buckets will be placed in every classroom for students and teachers to wipe down their areas after every classroom change. Custodians will perform a daily deep clean of every classroom using backpack electrostatic sprayers.

**Use of Outdoor Space:** Tents will be available at every school with lunch being the primary purpose. Teachers and others are encouraged to utilize the beautiful outdoor environments at any time as appropriate.

**Extracurriculars and Athletics:** Outdoor athletics will run without restriction and team members will be tested as will participants for indoor sports. We will continue to work with the health officials as to protocols for indoor athletics. The music program may conduct indoor playing of woodwind and brass instruments as well as singing. Specific protocols are under development.

The School Committees held a public forum on these protocols on August 24<sup>th</sup>, a video of that session can be found at <https://www.concordps.org/covid-21-22/>.

### **School Committees Vote to Create a New Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Subcommittee**

Members of the School Committee voted to create a new Diversity Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Subcommittee. The goal of the new subcommittee will be to inform and advise the School Committees regarding policy and budgets to further the School Committee DEI effort. A formal charge will be written in the coming months as membership is finalized.

### **Concord Finance Committee Forecast Requests**

As part of their annual request to the School Committees to help them prepare their guidelines for the FY 2023 budget cycle and beyond, the Concord Finance Committee has requested information on a five-year projection of spending under current service levels. School Committee members and District leaders stated that they were pleased to do this and to continue the positive collaboration with the Finance Committee in the coming months as planning begins for FY2023.

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

Joint Meeting on August 31 at 6:30pm

Joint Meeting on September 14 at 6:30pm

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 (Vice-Chair of CPS), Court Booth, Tracey Marano, Fatima Mezzad, Cynthia Rainey (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.