

The School Committees Report: Challenge Success; CCHS Capital Projects; FY23 Budget Meetings; Upcoming Meetings

Challenge Success at CMS & CCHS

The Principals of the Concord Middle School (CMS) and Concord-Carlisle Regional High School (CCHS) joined the School Committees at their most recent business meeting to share an update regarding the Challenge Success efforts underway at CMS and CCHS. Challenge Success is a research-based program developed by Stanford University and describes itself as a way “to help schools and families with proven strategies that promote well-being and engagement with learning to transform the student experience into one where all children can create their own paths to success.”

Justin Cameron of CMS and Mike Mastrullo of CCHS presented results of the most recent Challenge Success student surveys including information from 2021. The data from the spring of 2021 was examined through the lens of how COVID related impacts on student experiences shaped the responses. It was also compared with previous surveys to help determine if actions taken because of previous Challenge Success surveys were having the intended impact.

Some key data points from the CMS survey demonstrated areas of success as well as challenges. 72 percent of students responded that they felt that they had an adult at the school who they could go to and 65 percent said they had the right amount of homework which were both significant increases from prior years. Students are getting an average of 7.7 hours of sleep; however, 9-10 hours are recommended for that age group. Principal Cameron noted that the responses which indicated that some students felt less than fully engaged would be the focus of efforts in the coming year. He has formed a committee of faculty, staff, parents, and a student to help develop an approach and which strategies and tools are available to address that matter.

At CCHS, Principal Mastrullo noted some improvements in the number of students who felt that they had an adult at school who they could go to with significant improvements in the number for ninth graders who felt that way. Those improvements were attributed to the recently formed Ninth Grade Academy which is designed to help students transition from middle school to CCHS. Not surprisingly for high school students, the largest area of student stress was generated by concerns about the future and college plans. However, there was a significant decrease from previous surveys in the number of students who reported missing a day of school due to mental health. Similar to CMS, there will be a team working to enhance the areas of student health and engagement.

Copies of both presentations can be found on the Districts’ web site at <https://www.concordps.org/school-committee/school-committee-meetings/> or can be viewed on Minuteman Media Network’s YouTube channel; the presentations start in the 50th minute.

CCHS & CPS Capital Projects

Members of the Committees discussed capital project priorities for both CCHS and CPS at their business meeting held on November 30th. For the CCHS campus, these priorities included repaving and lighting the access road, replacing the turf fields, and possibly purchasing a tractor to reduce vendor costs for landscaping, seeding, mowing, and plowing services. For the CPS buildings, members discussed a variety of capital needs at the different sites ranging from high efficiency boilers and controls at the Alcott, safety repairs for the Sanborn and Peabody Middle School buildings, and new floors at the Ripley Building all of which fit within the Concord Town Manager’s budget. The Concord School Committee participated in a joint meeting with the Concord Select Board on December 6th to discuss their capital planning.

FY23 Budget Meetings

Superintendent Dr. Laurie Hunter presented operating budget recommendations to the School Committees at the December 7th Joint Meeting. The recommendations reflect a level service budget that addresses the priorities of the Districts' strategic plan. For Concord-Carlisle Regional School District, there is a proposed increase of 4.65% over the current fiscal year with key budget drivers including teacher salaries, out of district special education tuitions, insurance, and new buses. Concord Public School's operating budget would increase by 3.87% over the current fiscal year with similar budget drivers as the Regional School District. The Committees will continue to discuss the budgets at the December 21st meeting and will vote their recommended budgets at a later meeting. The final budget recommendation from the School Committees will then be voted on at Town Meeting.

Upcoming Meetings

December 16, 7:00pm

Special Town Meeting Public Hearing

December 21, 6:30pm

Joint Meeting of the School Committees

Zoom links are available on the District website, 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/. For the Special Town Meeting Public Hearing, zoom links are available at <https://www.concordps.org/school-committee/school-committee-meetings>.

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

Concord School Committee Alexa Anderson (Vice-Chair of CPS), Court Booth, Tracey Marano, and 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. Or, you can email the Concord Public School Committee at concordschoolcommittee@concordps.org and the Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee at concordcarliseschoolcommittee@concordps.org. Interested individuals are encouraged to sign up for the School Committees subscriber's list which is also on the District's web page.