

The School Committees Report: FY24 Operating Budgets; Operating Budget Public Hearings on December 20, 2022; Sustainability Investments

Superintendent's FY24 Operating Budget Recommendations Shared with School Committees

Superintendent Hunter and Robert Conry, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, shared their FY24 Operating Budget recommendations for each District at the School Committees' business meetings held on December 6th and December 20th. The budget recommendations use a zero-based budget approach and reflect the priorities established in the Districts' five-year strategic plan as well as the school improvement plans for each school site.

For CPS, the recommended budget level is \$45,197,176 which represents a 5.08% increase above the FY23 budget. Examples of budget drivers include increases in salaries for teachers (\$1,345,000), rising utility and fuel costs, out of district special education tuition increases as well as increases in the cost of special education transportation.

Budget increases could have been higher for the year but were avoided due to savings realized in the recently implemented approach to add appropriately trained staff that allows more special education students to receive specialized educational services within the District. The cost avoidances for this and previous years are estimated to be approximately \$1,681,000 due to restructuring the Districts' approach to special education.

The operating budget recommendation for Concord-Carlisle Regional School District (CCRS) is \$37,811,098 which represents a 3.48% increase above the current year level. Similar to Concord, the CCRS budget drivers include increases in salaries for teachers and staff (\$938,000), maintenance and operations costs due to rising utility costs, increases in the cost of health insurance, increases in the cost of special education transportation, and a 14% increase in the cost of out of district special education tuitions. The recommendation also reflects savings in debt service for the high school building of \$101,000 and \$95,000 from bus leases which are ending.

The assessments to the region's communities are derived from the student enrollment levels as of October 1, 2022, which are 76.26% of the students reside in Concord and 23.74% reside in Carlisle. This would result in a 1.58% increase over the current assessment for Concord and an 8.37% increase over the current assessment for Carlisle.

In addition to the discussions held at their December meetings, the Committees held public hearings regarding the budgets at their December 20th meeting which allowed interested individuals to participate of to submit comments, questions, and suggestions. Following the hearings, the Committees voted to approve the recommended budgets. Like previous years, Committee members and the Administration will continue examining the budgets as they are discussed with the Finance Committees in Carlisle and Concord.

Concord Public School Sustainability Investments

As part of the FY24 Capital Improvement Budget, the Concord School Committee approved funding for electrical upgrades at the Ripley Building that will allow the installation of electric heat pumps to service a portion of the building and will facilitate future electrification improvements at the site. Committee members and the Superintendent were pleased to take this latest step in their efforts to move away from the use of fossil fuels by the District.

Upcoming School Committee Meetings:

January 10, 2023, 6pm Joint Meeting

January 24, 2023, 6pm Joint Meeting

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/.

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 (Chair of CSC), Court Booth, Tracey Marano (Chair, Regional School Committee), Cynthia Rainey, and Carrie Rankin (Vice-Chair of CSC)

Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee is comprised of the five Concord School Committee members as well as two Carlisle representatives, Sara Wilson, and Sharon Witt (Vice-Chair, Regional School Committee)

METCO Representatives Domingos DaRosa, and Ayesha Lawton

Student Representatives CCHS students Zariah Alves, Harry Crowley, and Felicity Zhang

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.