

The School Committees Report: FY25 Budget Process; CCHS Campus; Facilities Fee Revolving Account Established

FY25 Budget Process

School Committee members and senior District leadership discussed the upcoming process to create the FY25 operating budgets for both CPS and CCRSD. Like recent years, a zero-based budget process which requires budgets to be built from scratch and every expense to be justified. This process begins at each school site in September and is eventually compiled into one budget document that is analyzed by both District Leaders and the School Committees. Budget input from the public is received at regular business meetings of the School Committee as well as public hearings held specifically to receive public input and in public meetings with the Finance Committees of Concord and Carlisle. The Finance Committees discuss the school budgets at their public meetings and issue a recommended budget guideline which is discussed with the School Committees and District leaders. Ultimately, residents of each town vote on the budgets at Town Meetings in each community.

For FY25, the process has already started at each school site and that will continue through early October as enrollments are finalized on October 1st for budgeting purposes and, for CCHS, to assign the percentage of students that comprise the student body so expenses can be attributed appropriately pursuant to the regional district agreement. Following discussions at the School Committees, the draft budgets for each District will be presented to the Concord Finance Committee at their meeting scheduled for October 26 and at an upcoming Carlisle Finance Committee as well. Budget discussions will continue at the School Committee with budget workshops scheduled for their October 24th, November 7th, and November 21st meetings. It is anticipated that there will be public meetings and dialogue with the Finance Committees during November as well.

In December, the School Committees will hold a public hearing on the budgets for each district on December 5th and the School Committees will vote on a recommended budget at their December 19th meeting to meet the deadline for Concord Town Meeting as warrants close on January 3, 2024. The FY25 Budget Book will be available by mid-February and public hearings will be held with each Finance Committee in March. If the School Committee's recommended budget differs from the budget guidelines recommended by the Finance Committees, discussions will continue.

Concord Town Meeting is currently set for April 29th and Carlisle's Town Meeting Date is not finalized yet.

CCHS Campus

Members of the Regional School Committee discussed reinvigorating the dialogue regarding the CCHS campus. Prior to COVID, the Regional School Committee undertook a public process to examine goals and needs for the CCHS campus which was led by a Campus Advisory Committee. In the 2017-18 school year, the Campus Advisor Community's process identified five potential improvements to address needs and goals on the campus that included installing permanent restrooms at Memorial Field and installing an outdoor track facility on the area of the old landfill site.

Committee members stressed that this was the very beginning of the process of examining these proposals and that there would be significant engagement with the region's communities prior to moving forward with any of the listed projects that emerge as priorities for the Committee. In addition to the public engagement, the Committee will be performing the appropriate due diligence for each proposal to better understand challenges and potential solutions. An example of which is to explore the issue of the state's plumbing code requirements for the number of toilets that would need to be installed given the seating capacity of the Memorial Field stadium. The Committee also discussed a process to determine if private fund raising is a possibility to cover the costs for any of the priorities that are identified.

CCHS Facilities Fee Revolving Account Created

Members of the Regional School Committee voted to establish a revolving account for the funds generated through facilities rentals. Creating the account allows the School Committee and District leaders to cover expenses related to facilities usage, or for any building, grounds repairs or maintenance in the current fiscal year thus matching ongoing costs with funds generated by rental fees in the same fiscal year. Unspent balances may be carried forward for use in future years. Without such an account, all facilities fees are placed in the District's excess and deficiency account at the end of the fiscal year.

Upcoming School Committee Meetings:

September 26, 6pm	Joint School Committee Meeting, Ripley Conference Room 4
October 10, 6pm	Joint School Committee Meeting, Ripley Conference Room 4

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, Carrie Patel, and Sharon Whitt (Vice-Chair, Regional School Committee)

METCO Representatives Domingos DaRosa, and Ayesha Lawton

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.