

## **The School Committees Report: FY25 Operating Budgets and CPS FY23 Capital Budget**

### **FY25 Operating Budgets Update; Regional School Committee Votes to Amend Their Budget Recommendation to Lower Level**

School Committee members and senior District leadership continued their discussions regarding the FY25 operating budgets for both CPS and CCRSD at the latest regularly scheduled meeting of the School Committees.

As part of the on-going review of staffing needs for CCHS, Superintendent Hunter recommended a combination of reducing one full time math teacher and adding a one-quarter time special education instructor which would result in savings of \$110,394. The Regional School Committee voted to adopt the amendment to their recommended FY25 Operating Budget which is now set at \$38,974,907. The new budget recommendation would represent a 3.08% increase over the current fiscal year's operating budget. While the recommended operating budget increase is 3.08% over the current fiscal year, it will have a different fiscal impact on Concord and Carlisle due to the assessments based on enrollments from each town.

The Concord School Committees recommended Operating Budget for FY25 remains at \$46,602,943 which represent a 3.45% increase over the FY24 Operating Budget.

Both budgets are level service budgets that were built using a zero-based budget methodology. The objectives for each budget are to maintain existing programs and supports to students, to sustain the 2023-28 Strategic Plan initiatives, and to meet legal mandates for special education, homelessness, and other requirements. One of the largest budget drivers for both districts is teaching and instructional support which is rising at 4.3% over the current fiscal year at CPS and 2.0% at CCRSD. Savings were achieved in Out of District Special Education Costs for both districts as recent strategic changes made to the Districts' approach to Special Education have allowed more students to remain in each district. The largest budget risk for each district remains homeless related expenses that were not accounted for in the budget recommendation as currently it is assumed that those expenses will be covered by state and federal grants. For CPS, those state and federal grants do not cover the increase in the size and cost of the preschool program which is occurring with the arrival of new students who are residing in shelters located in Concord.

The FY25 Budget Book will be available by mid-February and public hearings will be held with each Finance Committee in March.

Ultimately, voters will set the Operating Budgets at the Town Meeting in Concord for CPS and Town Meetings in Concord and Carlisle for CCHS; Concord's Town Meeting is currently scheduled for April 29<sup>th</sup> and Carlisle's Town Meeting date is not finalized yet.

### **Proposed FY25 Concord Public Schools Capital Budget Amended**

There has been a decades-long practice of the Concord Town Manager designating certain funding amounts from the Town's Capital Budget for the Concord Public Schools to manage facility needs. In recent years, that amount has been \$900,00 and this guided the Concord School Committee and District Leaders approach to building the annual capital budget for CPS. During the development of the FY25 CPS Capital Plan, questions and concerns have arisen regarding what type of projects should be included in the Capital Budget as opposed to the Operating Budget. In addition, there are conflicting viewpoints regarding spending on sustainability measures in school buildings. CPS District Leaders and School Committee members stated their desire to discuss how capital funding and sustainability goals will be addressed going forward following the 2024 Annual Town Meeting. Ideally, the process would include

professional town and school leaders along with representatives from the three boards (Select Board, Finance Committee, and School Committee).

For the FY25 Capital Budget, District Leaders and the Concord School Committee are advancing a request of \$446,000 as opposed to the \$900,000. If approved, this budget would include funds to improve the grounds at Thoreau following the receipt of the on-going feasibility study (\$200,000), funds to replace the Alcott fire alarm system (\$96,000), and funds to replace the District's 20-year-old dump truck (\$150,000).

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

January 23, 6pm

Joint School Committee Meeting, Ripley Conference Room 4

February 6, 6pm

Joint School Committee Meeting, Ripley Conference Room 4

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 (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

**Student Representatives:** Zariah Alves, Harry Crowley, Felicity Zhang

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). Interested individuals are encouraged to sign up for the School Committees subscriber's list which is also on the District's web page.