

SCHOOLS

CONCORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Kathleen Snook, Chair
Phil Benincasa, Vice Chair
Jennifer Munn
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The Concord Public Schools (CPS) continue to enjoy strong support from Concord citizens, which allows the provision of a high quality education to every child in our community. The importance placed by the Concord community on education means that our schools can maintain high achievement levels, hire and support excellent teachers, introduce new curriculum and technology, and provide a safe and healthy environment for our students.

Mission and Core Values

The School Committee uses the vision provided by the district's mission statement and core values to guide our decisions. The mission of the Concord Public Schools and the Concord-Carlisle Regional School District is to educate all students to become independent lifelong learners, creative thinkers, caring citizens, and responsible contributors to our increasingly diverse global society. The core values are: academic excellence, empathic and respectful community, professional collaboration, educational equity, and continuous improvement. In addition, the School Committee and administration set annual goals for student achievement and instruction, learning environment, professional collaboration, communication and community engagement, and infrastructure and operations.

Enrollment

Concord Public Schools serves 2093 students in grades K-8 and an additional 53 students in the integrated pre-school program. CPS experienced a slight reduction in enrollment (-59) in 2014. This followed a significant enrollment increase (+145) in 2012 and another increase in 2013 (+50). Over the past five years, the enrollment has increased by 12.5% with an additional 234 students in grades K-8. Student enrollment is projected to increase for the next five years by 6%. The Superintendent and School Committee are carefully monitoring enrollment. The proposed FY2016 budget includes additional staff

and an administrator to address enrollment and increased regulatory and administrative requirements. Additionally, the schools have recommended funding to support replenishment of supplies and materials that have not kept pace with enrollment increases.

Student Achievement and Activities

The school administration and School Committee focus on improving student learning. Teachers and administrators work hard to ensure an appropriate educational experience and learning environment for each student. The district uses a variety of assessments to monitor student progress, and details of student learning and achievement are provided in the Superintendent's Report. The district continues efforts to integrate technology into the daily curriculum as one of many tools that enhance teaching and learning, with teachers exploring new strategies and serving as mentors to each other. The School Committee supports these efforts by providing resources through the school budget.

The School Committee received updates on initiatives and enjoyed joint student-teacher presentations on "K Students Use iPads to Increase Their Learning," "Grade 5 Save Our Sharks – STEAM Project," "Grade 4 Geocaching," "CMS 21st Century Learning Environment," "Thoreau Times Electronic News," and "K-8 Art Initiatives." The level of student engagement in the learning process, the appropriate use of available tools to enhance teaching and learning, and the interdisciplinary aspect of learning activities impressed the School Committee.

Concord is extremely fortunate to have robust music and arts programs in our schools. All students receive music and art instruction, and most students participate in supplemental music programs for orchestra, band, and chorus that are offered from 4th through 8th grades. Activities beyond the school day extend the learning experience for students in a multitude of areas to include enhancements to academic studies, athletics, the arts, technology, games and student interest groups. Outside organizations such as the Concord Education Fund and the Parent Teacher Groups (PTGs) fund many of these activities. We are grateful to the teachers, parents and citizens who facilitate and support these opportunities for students.

Superintendent Evaluation and Contract

In 2011, the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE) adopted new regulations for the evaluation of Massachusetts’ educators, and an implementation guide was released in 2012. The School Committee completed the second year of this new procedure for the 2014 Superintendent Evaluation. The Superintendent began the first year of a new three-year contract on July 1, 2014.

School Budget

The goal of the School Committee is to develop budgets that meet the needs of students and are sensitive to the impact on taxpayers. The School Committee, school administration, and Finance Committee meet every year in October and November to discuss funding priorities and cost drivers. The proposed FY16 CPS operating budget of \$34.5 million represents a 6.48% increase for a 5-year average increase of 3.92%.

Major cost drivers for the CPS budget increase include teacher salaries, curriculum materials restoration for increased enrollment, staffing to address new education regulations and requirements, support of increasing enrollment in the integrated preschool, special education costs, and transportation costs. Salaries for faculty and staff comprise 57.3% of the proposed CPS budget increase and 79.2% of the total proposed FY16 operating budget.

The proposed FY16 budget reflects a higher annual increase than in the past five years. This increase includes funding to restore curriculum materials and supplies, and staffing to address enrollment increases and regulatory education requirements. Over the past five years, funding of materials and supplies has not kept up with the increases in enrollment due to very tight budgets. The School Committee fully supports and strongly recom-

mends the increased funds this year to maintain the educational excellence of our schools. For the 9th year in a row, the recommended budget does not require a Proposition 2½ override.

Long Term Transportation

The School Committee has devoted extensive hours to identifying a viable location to park and maintain the districts’ school buses in order to maintain an in-District School Transportation operation. While waiting for the development of a long-term transportation facility in Concord, the School Committee has continued to explore options for the most efficient and economical temporary solution. The School Committee was successful in enter-

ing a lease agreement in Acton for temporary parking, maintenance and fueling at one location until the permanent facility in Concord is operational.

The Town purchased the property at 37 Knox Trail in Acton as an access to the W.R. Grace land - the anticipated future site of a long-term school transportation facility. Additionally, 37 Knox Trail offers space to house the

school transportation administration offices. Once the Town acquires the W.R. Grace land, plans will commence to develop this property for Town and School use.

Communication and Community Engagement

The School Committee adopted a goal to continue efforts to improve communication with stakeholders. The Committee has held several School Committee - Community Coffees as forums beyond their regular business meetings, where members of the public can comment and ask questions of School Committee members. The Committee plans to continue this initiative in 2015. In addition, the Committee is submitting regular articles to the *Concord Journal* to update citizens about School Committee news and has made improvements to the School Committee

Concord Public School Enrollment							
October 1, 2014							
Elementary grade level	K	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Alcott	76	75	85	73	71	82	462
Thoreau	59	77	81	89	80	68	454
Willard	<u>63</u>	<u>82</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>99</u>	<u>87</u>	<u>486</u>
Total	198	234	241	242	250	237	1402
Middle School Grade Level	6	7	8	Total			
Peabody	105	103	112	320			
Sanborn	<u>135</u>	<u>107</u>	<u>129</u>	<u>371</u>			
Total	240	210	241	691			
METCO (included above) Non-Residents (included above)							
Alcott	34						
Thoreau	17	Tuition Waived Students					
Willard	14	(included above)					
Middle School	<u>31</u>	Total					31
Total	96						
Total - CPS							2093
Out of District Special Education Students							34
Grand Total CPS							2127

Web Page. School Committee meetings are open to the public and agendas and attachments are posted on the district web site (www.concordpublicschools.net). The meetings are broadcast on CCTV.

Appreciation

The School Committee is grateful to have exemplary school leadership and an exceptional faculty and staff, who make Concord Public Schools among the top districts in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. We appreciate all the parents and community members who volunteer their time on behalf of our schools. Most of all, we thank the citizens of Concord for their ongoing support of our schools.

CONCORD-CARLISLE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Jennifer Munn, Chair
Johanna Boynton, Vice Chair
Phil Benincasa
Bill Fink
Kathleen Snook
Mary Storrs

We are grateful to the citizens in Concord and Carlisle for all you do to support the work of students, faculty and administrators. Your support helped make this year exceptional in many ways for Concord-Carlisle High School (CCHS). This past year was marked by new accomplishments to celebrate and steady progress on goals and objectives to acknowledge. Near the top of the list of highlights is the new school building. With the installation of floors and fixtures, the new school is nearly ready for occupancy and faculty, students and members of school community continue to tour the building and prepare for the move in April 2015. As noted in a thorough update from the Building Committee, the new building is exceeding expectations and with more than 88% of the project complete, it remains on budget, on scope and on schedule. As exciting as the prospect of the new school is, there are wide-ranging achievements of students, educators and staff to bring to your attention. Noteworthy work in classrooms and laboratories, in studios and on stages and out in the field and across varied athletic venues, made 2014 a remarkable year. The Concord-Carlisle School Committee is profoundly pleased to be associated with a district comprised of teachers, administrators and staff who are tireless in their dedication educating all students to become lifelong learners, creative thinkers, caring citizens, and responsible contributors to our global society.

Building Project Status

The Building Committee, the Administration and the School Committee continue to work diligently to assure that in the final months, the project remains on scope, on budget and on schedule for an April, 2015 opening of a high-performing, flexibly-engineered and outfitted building that will meet the needs of 21st Century learning and be a community asset for generations.

Athletic Fields Renovation

In June, the CC at Play organization broke ground on Phase I of the fields renovation project. At the time of this report, Phase I of this public-private initiative is substantially complete with six new tennis courts on the lower fields along with upgraded varsity softball and baseball diamonds. The enhancements include new and refurbished batting cages, dugouts and scoreboards. This work helped remedy existing gender inequities, which is another benefit of Phase II of the project, which includes enlarging and turfing the football field to make it available for multiple sports. Phase II will also include a new concessions and storage building with bathrooms to enhance the experience of both athletes and spectators.

Student Achievement

Academic achievement across grade levels and disciplines is well-documented. A full report on student performance on standardized tests appears in the Superintendent's Report. Highlights from this report include six students in the Class of 2014 qualified as National Merit Scholar Finalists, 92% of AP test takers scored a 4 or 5 on the exam (5 is the highest) and 99% of Class of 2014 received a Competency Determination as a result of passing both the English Language Arts and the Math MCAS.

Enriching Experiences

Qualitative measures of success at CCHS abound and the School Committees and the Superintendent are particularly proud of the accomplishments of faculty and students beyond standardized tests. As a means of benchmarking performance, the members of the School Committees are working with colleagues in other districts, through the EDCO Collaborative, to better define what success looks like in high performing districts in which standardized test scores vary little and tell a limited story of the kind of unique accomplishments students aspire to.

In its second year, the school within a school, known as *Rivers and Revolutions*, continues to offer a rigorous and innovative interdisciplinary program to juniors and seniors.