



2013 CONCORD ANNUAL TOWN REPORT

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Concord School Committee

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CONCORD-CARLISLE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE



Seated from left: Jennifer Munn, Pamela Gannon, Melissa McMorrow. Standing from left: Phil Benincasa, Johanna Boynton, Louis Salemy, Chair; Kathleen Snook

Due in large part to the strong support of the community, it was an exciting and rewarding year at Concord Carlisle High School. The most visible sign of the productive year at the high school is the rapid rise of the new building structure, which proceeds on scope, on budget and on schedule. More noteworthy, however, are the wide-ranging achievements of students, educators and staff who are engaged in teaching and learning in the current building and beyond.

Outstanding work in classrooms and laboratories, in studios and on stages and out in the field and across varied athletic venues, made 2013 a remarkable year. We are grateful to the commitment of teachers, administrators and staff for their efforts to work together, to deliver on our collective mission to educate all students to become lifelong learners, creative thinkers, caring citizens, and responsible contributors in our global society.

In May, we welcomed new School Committee members Johanna Boynton and Kathi Snook, both of whom have already had an immediate positive impact.

Building Project Status

State Treasurer, Steve Grossman and leadership from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) joined local officials, parents and community members for a Topping Off ceremony on December 9, marking the successful completion of the framing portion of the building project. Over the next 18 months, the Building Committee, the Administration and the School Committee will continue to work diligently to keep the project 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.

Student Achievement

Despite the current building's shortcomings, 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 show that 99% of 10th grade students scored proficient or advanced on the English Language Arts MCAS and 95% percent scored proficient or advanced on the Math MCAS and 96% of 10th grade students passed one of the Science MCAS exams. Once again, 100% of the CCHS class of 2013 received a Competency Determination as a result of passing both the ELA and Math MCAS. Even more than standardized test scores, we take pride in the fact that of the 95% of CCHS graduates who will continue their education in post-secondary placements, 82% reported they were admitted to their first or second college choice.

Enriching Experiences

Qualitative measures of success at CCHS also abound. In its second

year, the school within a school, known as Rivers and Revolutions, is exceeding expectations and having a profound impact on student learning. Led by Peter Badalament, Michael Goodwin and a dedicated team of teachers across subject areas, this interdisciplinary, semester program gives fifty juniors and seniors a rigorous and innovative academic experience inside and out of the traditional classroom environment. In October, we learned that Michael Goodwin was selected as one of 50 teachers featured in a new book entitled, *American Teacher, Heroes in the Classroom*.

CONCORD-CARLISLE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT ENROLLMENT					
October 1, 2013					
Resident Students	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
Concord	213	219	199	214	845
Carlisle	88	78	72	73	311
Non-Resident Students					
METCO	13	12	18	18	61
Tuition Waived	3	3	4	1	11
State Wards	0	0	0	0	0
Total Non-Resident	16	15	22	19	72
Total Enrollment at CCHS	317	312	293	287	1,228
Out of District Special Education Students					45
Grand Total - CCRSD					1,273

We are amazed at the rapid success of the CCHS Robotics team, which won its regional competition and competed successfully in the “FIRST” (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) national competition. The CCHS Meteorology students were among only two high school groups to present at the American Meteorological Society conference.

The arts continue to be another area of excellence at CCHS. Once again, the CCHS Repertory and Concert Bands earned gold medals at the prestigious Massachusetts Instrumental and Choral Conductors Association (MICCA) State Concert Festival. A record number of CCHS student musicians were accepted into the MENC All-eastern Honors Ensembles. Student artists participated in the Boston Globe Scholastic Art awards regional exhibit and earned gold and silver keys. Student artists also participated locally in the Lexington Arts and Crafts Society Show for art majors as well as the Concord Art Association’s year-end awards and retrospective show. Throughout an active year, students worked on all aspects of three theater productions: *Rumors*, *A Chorus Line* (which was featured on WCVB TV as an event not to miss) and *A Midsummer’s Night Dream*.

Across playing fields and athletic facilities, Concord Carlisle teams

and individual athletes made it into post-season play-offs and several competed in regional and State championships.

Community Service

In even greater numbers every year, CCHS students demonstrate their commitment to social responsibility through participation in service projects, domestically and abroad. These activities include raising awareness of global warming here in Concord to raising funds to aid relief efforts abroad. Students participated in exchanges with peers from Ecuador, France, and Turkmenistan. In the summer, students traveled to Bolivia to perform service in rural areas. Collectively, our students contributed more than 25,000 hours of service during the school year. Most students contribute far more than the graduation requirement of 40 hours of service. In recognition of this meaningful accomplishment and to foster student efforts to be responsible global citizens, Peter Badalament and his administrative team worked with community member, Tim Dibble, to develop a special evening to celebrate service. It was a memorable event that inspired students and their families and will have a long-lasting positive impact.

Outstanding Faculty, Administrators and Staff Inspire Students

These exceptional results would not be possible without our outstanding faculty, administrators and staff. Together, they create a learning environment that enables our students to engage in new experiences, take risks and achieve at extraordinary levels. The School District continues to benefit from a high (97.6%) teacher retention rate and 100% of employment offers to new teachers and staff were accepted this year. Most of these new CCHS teachers and staff filled vacancies created by retirees, for whom we owe a debt of gratitude for their years of dedicated service.

September marked the beginning of the second full year of implementation of the new teacher supervision and evaluation system, which complies with state regulations under the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). CCHS is also in the midst of a multi-year, re-accreditation process through the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). We deeply appreciate the commitment of time and intellectual capital these two, comprehensive undertakings represent. In addition to the major DESE and NEASC demands, the administration, faculty and School Committee are working to address issues related to the findings of

the 2012 TELL Mass teacher survey. Positive results from early efforts were evident in the optimistic tenor and tone of Opening Day remarks made in September and administrators, union leadership and School Committee members continue to meet regularly.

Budget and Finances

We are fortunate to live in a community that believes in supporting high-quality public education, even during economic downturns. To ameliorate the impact of the downturn, we endeavored to reduce expenses and postpone new programming, with the exception of the Rivers and Revolutions initiative.

In October, the School Committee performed a Cost Growth Analysis for FY05 through FY14, with an estimate for FY15, based on these data. Annualized cost growth for the first five years was 5.9%. Then, the growth rate dropped sharply to 3.4%, from FY10 to FY14. While we are pleased with these results, drivers, like a 3% annual increase in employee costs, make this trend impossible to sustain (this analysis can be found within the attachments to the Joint School Committee Meeting Agenda for October 8).

A close look at the FY15 budget request reveals that after the contribution to Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB), the increase is only 1.7% over the prior year. These historically low increases will be detrimental to the high school if continued, especially with increasing enrollment pressure. At a School Committee meeting in November, a student gave an impassioned request for more computer programming courses and his parent noted that many surrounding school districts offer more robust courses in this area. We must find prudent means to continue to honor our commitment to offer opportunities to gain the skills necessary to be successful after graduation. The School Committee looks forward to collaborative work with the Finance Committee to seek remedies for the growing divide between operating expense growth and proposed budgets.

Because of unpredictably favorable State reimbursement for Chapter 70 and Circuit Breaker allowances, we were able to reserve \$300,000 for the OPEB account, which went underfunded last year. The 2014-2015 Concord Carlisle Regional School District budget includes a full OPEB contribution.

The audit firm of Melanson Heath reported a favorable opinion of the District's financials. Concord-Carlisle is one of only two regional

school districts in the State that carries an Aaa bond rating (Moody's highest rating).

Long Term Transportation

Despite accomplishments on many fronts, one issue eluded resolution, despite sustained effort. School Committee and community members devoted extensive hours to trying to identify a viable location to park and maintain our Districts' school buses. At present, we are still working on this issue, but have plans in place to assure we will provide on-going transportation services.

Donations Making a Difference

Our school also benefits from the generosity of citizen-run, non-profit organizations, including the Concord Education Fund, the CCHS Parents' Association and the Concord-Carlisle Community Chest. Additionally, the CC at Play organization is working diligently with the Town and the School Committees to renovate the outdoor facilities at CCHS, including adding new tennis courts, improving the lower fields, installing artificial turf on the football field, and building an outdoor amphitheater. We are grateful to these organizations and to the generosity of individuals in Concord and Carlisle for these donations that allow us to enhance our students' educational experience, despite budget pressures to reduce or level-fund existing programming.

Deep Gratitude to the Town

We thank all the citizens of Concord for their continued active support of our students and our high school. We will continue to strive to find the appropriate balance between a shared desire to sustain a high caliber public high school and a collective responsibility to be respectful of limited public resources.