



# 2013 CONCORD ANNUAL TOWN REPORT

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# SCHOOLS

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## CONCORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The strong support of Concord citizens allows the Concord Public Schools to provide 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.

In 2012, we welcomed new School Committee members, Johanna Boynton and Kathi Snook. We recognized retiring members, Fabian Fondriest for six years of service and Maureen Spada for three years of service.



*Seated from left: Jennifer Munn, Pamela Gannon, Chair; Kathleen Snook. Standing from left: Phil Benincasa, Johanna Boynton*

### *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 (CPS) serves 2152 students in grades K-8 and an additional 53 students in the integrated preschool program. CPS experienced a significant enrollment increase (+145) in 2012 and another increase in 2013 (+50). Since 2007, the enrollment has increased by 19% with an additional 343 students in grades K-8. Student enrollment is projected to increase for the next five years, and the Superintendent and School Committee are carefully monitoring the situation. The proposed FY2015 budget includes additional staff and materials to address increased enrollment.

### *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, 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.

We are 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. In 2013, the middle school added a wind ensemble and jazz ensemble. Arts Night Celebrations highlighted the work of 5th graders. The Willard Chorus sang at a Town-wide celebration of Martin Luther King, Thoreau students performed in theatre productions, and Alcott students wrote and illustrated fairy tales for a school in Boston.

Activities beyond the school day extend the learning experience for students. At the middle school, students participated in Model UN, Rubik's Cube competitions, Math Team, LEGO Robotics, national French and Spanish exams, Science Olympiad, Future Cities and an annual musical production. Young musicians performed in Junior District and MICCA festivals. Many of these activities are funded by resources outside the school budgets, such as the Parent Teacher Groups (PTGs) and the Concord Education Fund. We are grateful to the teachers, parents and citizens who facilitate and support these opportunities for students.

### *Superintendent Evaluation and Contract*

The School Committee voted to extend the contract of Superintendent Diana Rigby for an additional three years. The Committee utilized a thorough and thoughtful process and updated the contract language. 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 implemented the new procedure for the 2013 superintendent evaluation.

#### CONCORD PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

October 1, 2013

Elementary Grade Level	K	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
Alcott	71	81	64	75	83	88	462
Thoreau	80	82	87	84	74	93	500
Willard	82	72	84	107	90	65	500
<b>Total</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>1,462</b>
Middle School Grade Level	6	7	8	TOTAL			
Peabody	103	112	115	330			
Sanborn	109	123	128	360			
<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>690</b>			
<b>METCO (included above) Non-Residents (included above)</b>							
Alcott	29			<b>Tuition Waived Students (included above)</b>			
Thoreau	24						
Willard	22						
Middle School	25						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>			<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>38</b>
<b>TOTAL - CPS</b>							<b>2,152</b>
Out of District Special Education Students							34
<b>GRAND TOTAL CPS</b>							<b>2,186</b>

### *School Budget*

The goal of the School Committee is to develop budgets that meet the needs of our 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 FY15 CPS operating budget of \$32.4 million represents a 4.17% increase for a 5-year average increase of 3.23%.

Major cost drivers are teacher salaries, staffing and curriculum materials for increased enrollment, the technology replacement cycle, building maintenance, and transportation costs. Salaries for faculty and staff comprise 79.5% of the proposed CPS budget increase and 79.3% of the total proposed FY15 operating budget. At Town Meeting, the Committee intends to request a \$75,000 allocation from the CPS Technology Stabilization Fund. The proposed FY15 budget meets the Finance Committee's guidelines and, for the 8th year in a row, does not require a Proposition 2½ override.

### *Long Term Transportation*

The School Committee devoted extensive hours to identifying a viable location to park and maintain the Districts' school buses. At present, the District is leasing temporary facilities in West Acton and Billerica, to park and maintain the fleet. The Committee re-examined more than 20 public and private properties and considered new sites to analyze options for retaining in-house transportation services. A special Town Meeting granted authorization for the Town of Concord to proceed with negotiations to purchase a parcel of land on Knox Trail Road in Acton, abutting Concord.

Operation of a CPS transportation department in West Acton and Billerica is financially unsustainable. As a back-up plan, to ensure a permanent solution to this issue before the temporary parking and maintenance facility leases expire, the School Committee retained the services of a national school transportation consultant to assist with a request for bids for outsourcing transportation services. If the Knox Trail property cannot fulfill the District's needs or if the purchase cannot proceed, then the District will need to contract for private transportation services in order to provide transportation for students.

### *Communication and Community Engagement*

The School Committee set a goal to explore new initiatives to improve communication with stakeholders. The Committee held three Community Coffees to provide the public with a forum to comment and ask questions of members of the School Committee. The Committee plans to continue this initiative in 2014. In addition, the Committee is submitting regular articles to the Concord Journal to update citizens about School Committee news. School Committee meetings are open to the public and agendas and attachments are posted on the District web site ([www.concordpublicschools.net](http://www.concordpublicschools.net)) (<http://www.concordpublicschools.net>). The meetings are broadcast on CCTV and are available on demand at [www.concordtv.org](http://www.concordtv.org) (<http://www.concordtv.org>).

### *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.