

The Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee is asking for \$750,000 from the two towns to fund capital expenses at the high school. These funds will be borrowed as a five year bond and the cost will be born by both communities in a ratio established by the actual enrollments. Over the past several years, this ratio has been approximately 70% Concord students and 30% Carlisle students. The impact of this additional debt will be minimal due to a declining debt service schedule.

The CCRSC maintains a five year capital plan and typically asks for debt exclusions to fund this work. In recent years we have asked for funds to replace the bleachers at the football stadium, new bleachers in the gymnasium, replacement of light fixtures with high efficiency ballasts, communication and fire alarm systems, and new finishes and furnishings in the cafeteria. For the past five years, we have tried to identify projects that were either essential to address life safety issues, showed a very short payback, or were "transportable" in the event we moved forward with a new building. Last year we did not ask for any money for these types of projects, so the projects on our five year plan for last year were not addressed. We can not adequately maintain our facility without annual progress towards these projects.

We have been working hard to put these projects into the context of an overall master plan for the facility. Five years ago, it was recommended by our feasibility study committee that we build a new high school on our property and tear down our existing structure. We have not yet been able to get support for that plan from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, an important funding source for such a project. We are also working closely with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, our accreditation agency, who has put the high school on warning status for not fully addressing concerns from their ten year study completed five years ago. Many of NEASC's remaining concerns can not be addressed without a major project.

Given the length of time that we have been waiting to hear from the state's Massachusetts School Building Authority, and given the lack of progress in meeting the concerns of the NEASC, the school committee must now move forward. This debt exclusion article asks for funds to address three areas.

- 1) Worn out infrastructure: \$250,000 of the request will be spent on refurbishing old and worn out areas with new carpet, furniture replacement, toilet partitions, and mechanical equipment.
- 2) Life Safety: \$250,000 of the request will be spent on extending the fire alarm system to the classrooms, so that the entire building will have a serviceable fire alarm system.
- 3) Planning: \$250,000 of the request will go toward a planning process that will ultimately outline a major renovation or reconstruction project.

This appropriation will require approval from Concord and Carlisle voters both at their town meetings and at the polls. Concord has scheduled a vote on this article for March 31st as part of the annual town elections. Carlisle will hold their vote at the polls the week after their town meeting. Question regarding this request may be brought to the town hearings or by contacting John Flaherty, Deputy Superintendent in charge of Finance and Operations.

The Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee thanks our communities for their generous past support of our facility and asks for your serious consideration of this request.