

School Committee Newsletter Notes

Willard School: We hope you had a chance to visit the fabulous new Willard School at its "grand opening" on Sunday November 1. Students gave a great presentation on many of the green features of the building and a chorus of young voices shared the new Willard song. Thanks go all around to the PTG for organizing a great day and to the many who over the past five years worked to make this new elementary school a reality. We heard students and speakers throughout the day echoing the thoughts of the School Committee each time they said "Thank you, Concord." It is an effort about which we all can be proud.

CCHS Facilities Master Plan: On another facility matter, voters in Concord and Carlisle voted last spring to support a CCHS Facilities Master Plan. In late June the School Committee appointed members to the Master Plan Committee and created a charge for the committee's scope of work. The committee began its work in July and has recently selected the Office of Michael Rosenfeld (OMR) to furnish the Architectural and Engineering services for the study. The Committee was uniformly impressed with the energy and thought the firm brought to its proposal.

The Master Plan Committee expects to examine opportunities for a "transformative renovation" at CCHS and compare the costs of such work (which might be staged over many years) with the costs of constructing a new facility at CCHS. The Master Plan Committee meets twice monthly, and we will report on their progress over the coming months as the work of the committee unfolds. More than 50 from Concord and Carlisle gathered on Saturday November 14 for a "visioning session" with the OMR staff to discuss key goals for the facility and the process of developing a high-school plan.

In the meantime, the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) recently added Concord-Carlisle Regional High School to its list of schools with which MSBA will consider partnering on an extensive Repair project. The Regional School administration and

school committee will continue to engage in a dialogue with the Authority, and supply whatever information necessary to move this funding evaluation ahead. MSBA has advised the Regional School Committee that we can continue working the Facilities Master Plan process without in any way jeopardizing potential Authority funding.

Superintendent's Teas: Last year Diana Rigby, Superintendent of the Concord and Concord-Carlisle Schools, introduced an informal monthly tea for community members interested in learning more about the schools or sharing their observations. The Superintendent and members of the School Committee are available at these teas to answer questions, listen to concerns, or share a cup of tea. Diana has sought out the opinions of school stakeholders in a variety of means - surveys, community meetings, teas, and high visibility at a variety of school functions. If you have something on your mind, you will usually find the Superintendent and often a few members of the school committee at one of the school sites, usually on the first Friday of each month. We encourage anyone and everyone - parents, faculty, staff, students, neighbors - to stop by for tea, conversation, and time to share your thoughts on our schools. The schedule she has planned for this year follows - we encourage you to add one or more to your calendar.

Friday, December 11; 3:30-5:00; Thoreau Library

Friday, January 8; 3:30-5:00; Willard Library

Friday, February 5; 2:45-4:00; Sanborn Library

Friday, March 5; 2:45-4:00; Peabody Library

Friday, April 9; 2:30-4:00; CCHS Library

Friday, May 7; 3:30-5:00; Alcott Library

Friday, June 4; 2:45-4:00; Sanborn Library

School Committee Business: The School Committee and Administration continues to prepare budgets for next year in an environment where state revenues are plummeting, and we anticipate declines both in state aid, regional transportation assistance, and the circuit breaker reimbursement for special education expenses. Our administrative team has recommended

modest increases in budgets both at the K - 8 and the 9 - 12 levels. At this early stage in the process, we anticipate a 0% increase at K - 8 and up to a 5% increase at the high school. A long-anticipated shift in population toward Carlisle (meaning a greater percentage of the total high school enrollment is attributable to Carlisle residents) will mean a particularly burdensome increase for Carlisle taxpayers. We encourage interested parents and citizens to become familiar with our budget and to follow its development by way of public hearings early in 2010. We will advise readers of hearings as they are scheduled later in the year.

The School Committee meets twice each month – our schedule is posted on the [website](#) and we welcome the participation of interested Concord, Carlisle, and Boston families. Please feel free to attend any meeting, or contact us through the Chairs with any questions or concerns you may have. We welcome your input and involvement in our deliberations.

Sincerely,

Jan McGinn, for the Concord and Concord-Carlisle School Committees