

**2011 Annual Report
Concord, Massachusetts
Concord School Committee**

Pamela Gannon, Chair
Maureen Spada, Vice-Chair
Peter Fischelis
Fabian Fondriest
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The strong support of Concord citizens allows 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 the very best teachers, introduce new curriculum and technology, and provide a safe and healthy environment for our students.

This year, Pamela Gannon was re-elected to a second term on the School Committee. She continues to serve as committee chair, with Maureen Spada as vice-chair. The School Committee is grateful to have exemplary school leadership and an exceptional faculty and staff who make our schools among the top 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.

The School Committee uses the vision provided by the district's mission statement and core values to guide our decisions. The mission statement reads: 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 and beliefs are: academic excellence, empathic and respectful community, professional collaboration, educational equity, and continuous improvement. In addition, the School Committee and administration set goals every year in the areas of student learning, information technology, professional development, human resources, and finance and operations.

Concord Public Schools (CPS) serves 1957 students in grades K-8 and an additional 38 students in the integrated preschool program. CPS has experienced significant increases in enrollment. Over the last 5 years, the enrollment has increased by 109 students in grades K-8. Our students continue to perform at the top of the state in standardized exams such as MCAS. Efforts are underway to address specific sub-groups that do not perform as well in these tests. However, MCAS exams are only part of the assessments used by the district to monitor student progress. Our students score well in enrichment activities such as the International Math Olympiad, National French and Spanish exams, Massachusetts Science Olympiad, and the First Lego League Robotics Competition. In addition, most students participate in supplemental music programs for orchestra, band, and chorus that are offered during the school day from 4th through 8th grades.

Our students are involved in many activities both inside and outside the classroom that expand their knowledge and participation in the local and the global communities. Students at Alcott assembled Kid's Bags for Open Table, created over 1000 origami cranes to raise money for Japan relief, and hosted a variety show to raise money for a children's center in Argentina. Thoreau students provided lunch and entertainment to the Council on Aging and raised money for Gaining Ground in the Read for Seeds project. Students at Willard collected food for Open Table and created care packages for soldiers in Afghanistan. The Alcott Green Monsters, Thoreau Green, and Willard Earth Care Club help with reuse and recycling in the schools. Middle school community service efforts raised money for Haiti and Japan relief, Buddy Dog, and Coats for Kids. CMS students visited China as part of an annual exchange program, and students from China and France came to visit CMS. We are grateful to the teachers who facilitate these extracurricular activities and to the parents who support their students and the community.

During these times of economic uncertainty, the School Committee and school administration have made a concerted effort to develop budgets that meet the needs of our students and are respectful of the taxpayers. CPS operating budget increases have been minimal: 2007-8 (3.78%), 2008-9 (2.96%), 2009-10 (1.8%), 2010-11 (0.0%), and 2011-12 (2.8%). Two major factors contributed to these minimal increases in the school budget. The school administration, through years of prudent and insightful management, was able to lower special education costs by developing in-house programs to decrease the expenditures for some out-of-district placements. In addition, the School Committee worked long and hard to negotiate a reasonable and sustainable three-year contract with the Concord Teachers' Association in 2009.

After years of minimal increases, the Concord Public School budget is under tremendous pressure. The combination of increased student enrollment and mandated special education expenditures mean that in order to maintain level services, the operating budget must be increased. For 2012-13, the School Committee has approved a CPS operating budget with a 4.5% increase. For the 6th year in a row, the school budget is within the levy limit and does not require a Proposition 2½ override. This budget preserves current programs and meets the needs created by our increased enrollment and special education costs.

For many years, the School Committee and administration have worked to reduce the energy consumption of school buildings. With three new elementary schools, we have realized significant progress in this area. The new Alcott and Thoreau schools are each 50% larger than the old schools, but have the same energy consumption. The new Willard school, which has the same square footage as Thoreau and Alcott, uses 35% less gas for heating and 25% less electricity. Solar panels were installed on the roof of Willard in 2010. Over the past few years, capital projects at Concord Middle School have focused on the safety and energy-efficiency of the buildings and grounds. Previously, at both Sanborn and Peabody, in a multi-year project, single-pane glass was replaced with double-pane insulated glass. This year, the boilers were replaced and the play and parking

areas were improved. In the upcoming years, we are planning to replace the flooring and ventilation systems at both buildings. In addition, renovation of the Sanborn auditorium is being staged over multiple years.

The School Committee is very interested in enhancing communication with citizens. School Committee meetings are open to the public and we encourage your attendance. The meetings are broadcast on CCTV and are available for video on demand at www.concordtv.org. The district web site (www.concordpublicschools.net) contains updated information on school events and meetings.