

School Committee Newsletter Notes For Inclusion in Upcoming Newsletter

End of 2009/Start of 2010: As is always the case just before the holiday break, performances are in the air. Musicians, artists, athletes, thespians, and choruses at all levels of the system offered ample opportunities to demonstrate, even show off, their achievements. We hope you had some chance to observe first hand the many talents found throughout our K - 12 system. We applaud the work of faculty in creating great performance venues for our students, and we know their work is made possible in part by the continued assistance of parents. We thank you too for your help.

FY 2011 Budget Development: 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.

On December 8 the School Committee recommended budget proposals that will require a 0% expenditure increase at K - 8 and a 5.2% expenditure increase at the high school. The budget voted by the School Committee brings expenditures for the high school in *below* the Concord Finance Committee guideline but above the spending level that the Carlisle Finance Committee had hoped could be achieved. Over the coming months we will keep a careful eye on state fiscal conditions, current spending, and all assumptions for next year's budget, as we prepare for Town Meeting in April.

CCHS Facilities Master Plan: As previously explained on these pages, 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: The Superintendent and members of the School Committee are available at informal monthly teas to answer questions, listen to concerns, or share a cup of tea. Our Superintendent Diana Rigby 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

| DATE | TIME | LOCATION |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| 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: 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. The Finance Committee hearing on public school budget issues is scheduled for Wednesday, February 24, 2010 (snow day February 25). This is a wonderful opportunity for parents and other interested groups to become familiar with the issues driving costs at our schools - we encourage your participation.

The School Committee meets twice each month – our schedule is posted on the website (www.concordpublicschools.net) 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