

CONCORD EDUCATION UPDATE



September 2025

Dear Community Members,

We're writing to make you aware of a deeply troubling incident that occurred Monday morning in Concord Center and to address the circumstances that led to this unacceptable escalation.

The chairs of both school committees issued the following statement to our community yesterday:

September 23, 2025

To the Community,

On Monday morning, a scarecrow was found in Concord Center with a message containing demeaning language toward Superintendent Laurie Hunter. The Concord Police Department has been notified and is investigating.

This act crosses a line away from civility, to a much uglier and more dangerous place. As we have stated numerous times around a number of issues of late, there is no room for hate, harassment or intimidation in our community.

Public service depends on having a corps of people willing to lead and be held accountable through lawful and civil means. It does not require them to endure threats (implied, veiled or direct), targeted abuse, or attacks on their character.

We are writing as your elected School Committee Chairs to say two things plainly: First, the School Committees condemn this act in the strongest possible terms. Second, the Districts and we, the School Committee Chairs, stand with our dedicated Superintendent as she reports for work day-in and day-out as the head of one of the highest performing school districts, not merely in Massachusetts but indeed in the nation.

We welcome criticism and debate over policies, budgets and individual decisions. There should be a frank and open dialogue on the issues. There should not, however, be any room in Concord for attacks on people. We will take any steps necessary to protect staff and to ensure those responsible are held accountable.

We must shame this behavior, not normalize it. We will stand for community standards of decency, and we will not sit still when those standards are forgotten.

Concord and Concord-Carlisle are stronger when conversations about our schools are focused on facts, on policy, and on the best interests of our children. This has not been an easy year for our community, but if we are to heal the divide, we must recommit ourselves to that standard now.

With resolve,

Tracey Marano

Chair, Concord-Carlisle Regional School District School Committee

Andrew Herchek

Chair, Concord Public Schools School Committee

Our Take: This event did not occur in isolation. It represents a dangerous escalation of increasingly aggressive personal attacks that have been made against Superintendent Hunter at recent school committee meetings and in local media. Speakers at a recent school committee meeting made broad claims of an “ongoing crisis” and a “failure of leadership” in the schools. In a recent opinion letter to the Concord Bridge, the author demanded that the town “pay whatever it costs to terminate Dr. Laurie Hunter's contract.”

We cannot allow a small group of vocal critics to create a toxic environment that drives away quality educational leadership. The escalation from antagonistic public comments to written demands for her firing, and now to threatening displays, represents a dangerous deterioration of civil discourse in our community. While all community members have the right to engage in constructive criticism of our schools, parents and families whose children would be directly affected by leadership changes have a particular stake in ensuring our district maintains stable, effective, experienced leadership.

We stand firmly with the school committee chairs in condemning this behavior. Dr. Hunter has demonstrated exceptional leadership through our community's most challenging moments - from safely navigating COVID school reopening, to providing compassionate guidance after the tragic loss of three students, to successfully delivering our new middle school on time and under budget despite challenges and opposition. No educational leader should face character assassination disguised as policy disagreement. Concord is better than this, and we must recommit ourselves to respectful dialogue focused on the best interests of our children.

GET INVOLVED!

If you have concerns about school policies or decisions, we encourage you to engage through appropriate channels including by attending school committee meetings. The next meeting (Zoom) is tomorrow, September 25th. If you wish to send a message of support to Dr. Hunter, you can email her and the school committee at: concordcarliseschoolcommittee@concordps.org