

CONCORD EDUCATION UPDATE



CCGS Newsletter – February, 2025



We Need Your Help

Please forward this email to 5 friends interested in supporting our schools and ask them to sign up for this email newsletter. Here is the [LINK](#) to subscribe.

We are seeking involved Concordians and fellow parents looking to be more-informed so they can help support our Great Concord Schools! Learn more about CCGS [here](#).

Our new Instagram account is live! Follow [here](#)!

ISSUES WE ARE TRACKING:

The New Ellen Garrison Building at Concord Middle School OPENS FEB 24!

What Happened: After nearly a **decade** of work by the volunteer [Concord Middle School Building Committee](#), and thanks to the support of Concord taxpayers, our new, unified middle school is set to open February 24. This quote was read today at the CMSBC online meeting, “A School is a building that has four walls-with tomorrow inside. Our deeds determine us, as much as we determine our deeds. There are many ways of going forward, but there is only one way of standing still. A lot of us would like to move mountains, but few of us are willing to practice on small hills.”

Our Take: The building committee has indeed moved mountains. This project is on-time and under budget and all-involved deserve thanks and appreciation. Take a Sneak Peek [Video Tour!](#)

2025 School Committee Race

What Happened: Being on the School Committee is a massive job! These five elected volunteers set the tone and steward our great schools. Three candidates are running for two open seats. Town elections are April 8th, 2025.

- [Alexa Anderson](#) is running for re-election. She is a former chair of the SC and was nominated by fellow SC member Carrie Rankin for her “collaborative nature” and an “ability to tackle complex issues with both heart and pragmatism.”
- Thoreau school parent/coach and PTG member and Treasurer of the Concord Education Fund [Sandeep Pisharody](#) is also running. His campaign slogan is “Strong Schools, Strong Community”.
- Longtime Concord resident and parent [Dr. Michael Williams](#) is also running. Dr. Williams is a retired pediatric surgeon and his children attended Concord Public Schools. His campaign slogan is “A Concord for All”.

2026 FinCom Guideline Will Be Met: No School “Budget Battle” at Town Meeting!

What Happened: The FinCom has asked the schools to hit a compromise [2026 spending guideline](#). The guideline will limit K-8 increase to 2.40% and the CCHS to 3.48% (and the towns increase to 2.85%). The combined 2026 increase is 2.79% (in a 2.7% inflationary environment). The SC/Schools have indicated they will/can hit these numbers, although there [will be cuts required](#).

Our Take: Great news! We remain pleased with the ongoing cooperative tone and fact that FinCom chair Eric Dahlberg “hopes to maintain lines of communication with...school leaders to avoid a frosty relationship going into Town Meeting”. FinCom member Lindsey Lis has also been outstanding, regarding constructive

communication of data and fostering a spirit of compromise. SC Chair Carrie Rankin has been mentioned as instrumental regarding fostering a theme of compromise. While some in town might not want our schools funded even at this level, it's great that the "tone" of acrimony and hostility towards the schools of past years seems to have dissipated. Bravo to all-involved.

METCO CEO Visits Concord, Gives Assessment

What Happened: For the last 3-4 months, a group of speakers at SC meetings have been critical of the Superintendent and the SC regarding our METCO program and raised concerns. As reported in [the Concord Bridge](#), the METCO parent group disbanded in November, 2024, citing dissatisfaction and turnover. On January 21, the President and CEO of METCO Milly Arbaje-Thomas came to Concord to provide an assessment. As reported in the Carlisle Mosquito, she said, "I can tell you that I am very impressed with the work that has happened here", [Full coverage in the Mosquito](#). As reported in [the Concord Bridge](#), Milly "praised Concord and acknowledged ongoing efforts to make improvements, even as some parents continue to raise concerns about issues involving race".

Our Take: There is more work to be done and concrete solutions are imperative. A METCO parent group to advocate for students is important and we hope the open METCO rep position will be filled soon. We urge Concordians to [watch this SC meeting](#) and the presentation by Milly Arbaje-Thomas and Andrew Nyamekye, Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging at Concord Public Schools and Concord-Carlisle Regional School District.

BREAKING NEWS: CCHS Amenities Building: CPC VOTES NO on Funding Help

What Happened: After nearly a decade of inaction, the SC is trying to have bathrooms (an "Amenities building") finally built at the CCHS fields/stadium, to replace rented (\$100k and counting) unlit porta-potties. They had a warrant article ready last year (\$2.3M), but pulled it after FinCom and SB resistance. This year, the plans are far-more refined and costs reduced (\$1.5 - \$1.8M). While originally given incorrect information about their ability to apply, they asked (and applied to) the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) to use some of their \$2M in (our) excess and unallocated taxpayer funds to cover a portion of the taxpayer burden (in the upcoming 2025 warrant article).

On Feb 4, despite pleas from CPC member Diane Proctor and others regarding the "fiscal and emotional imperative to help", the CPC met and voted 5:4 "no" to the SC application for funds. Most voting against cited procedural reasons (the application came in "off-cycle", or outside the normal date window for submissions). Paul Boehm (SB candidate) was a "yes" vote.

Our Take: This is/was a **big** missed opportunity for the town + schools to come together and foster cooperation while reducing taxpayer impact. Watch for details about the upcoming TM warrant article, to FINALLY address /replace the unheated and unlit plastic porta-potties. Currently, Concord is in violation of plumbing code and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The SC deserves praise for work to hone the details and reduce costs.

Action Items: What Can You Do?

Here are some things you can do to involve yourself and learn about the issues that impact our schools/education in Concord.

- 1) **Learn about the 3 SC candidates and mark your calendars to Vote April 8th.**
- 2) **Attend an Upcoming School Committee Meeting.** By being there in-person or by Zoom, you can learn about the issues and "sense" the energy in the room. Check the schedule [here](#). The next joint meeting is Feb 26th.
- 3) **Help us grow our mailing list.** Please pass this on to involved parents and Concordians you know and have them [join our mailing list here](#).