

# CONCORD EDUCATION UPDATE



CCGS Newsletter – March 17, 2025



## VOTING STARTS TODAY!

We have endorsed two candidates for School Committee. [More](#)

Vote in-person starting **TODAY March 17 at 22 Monument Square**. Mon-Thu 8:30am-4:30pm and Fri 8:30am-12:30pm. Simply request a ballot and vote. Voting at your usual polling place is **April 8th**. You can access the Town's election website or email the Clerk for questions by clicking [here](#).

[Watch The LWV Forum SC Candidate VIDEO HERE](#)

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](#).

## ISSUES WE ARE TRACKING:

### The New Ellen Garrison Building at Concord Middle School: Family Tours

Have you seen the new Ellen Garrison Building? CMS is offering self-guided tours of the new building on **Wednesday, March 19**. From the CMS PTG, "Explore the new school building at your own pace and experience the updated learning spaces designed to support our students. Current CMS students can lead families. Families can complete [this form](#) so they know you plan to attend".

### METCO Progress: Boston Meeting, New SC Rep Steps Up, New Directors Appointed

**What Happened:** After months of reported turmoil and the resignation of METCO SC Rep Domingos DaRosa in November, it seems real progress is being made. A Feb 26 SC meeting in Boston yielded indications of progress and improvement. As reported in the Bridge, "After recent tumult, some Concord METCO families say the district is making progress." Student METCO ambassadors called the recent response to hateful graffiti "very productive" and that school leaders "definitely acted faster". Read more [here](#).

At the last SC meeting March 11, current, serving METCO SC Rep Ayesha Lawton announced that an Alcott School METCO parent is interested in joining the SC, serving with her as a new METCO rep. She also described the Boston February 26 meeting by saying, "We had a full house. It was awesome."

On March 7, by email, Superintendent Hunter announced the new METCO Directors, writing, "We are pleased to share the formal appointment ..of Malinithi Fernando as METCO Director at Concord-Carlisle High School (CCHS); Solange Benjamin as METCO Director for Concord Public Schools, K-8 (CPS) and Andre Thomas as Assistant METCO Director."

**Our Take:** This progress is good news. CCGS wants all families to feel their voices are heard, and is eager for successful partnerships between METCO reps, the SC and school administrators.

## Vote April 8 (Or before): Contested School Committee Election Update

**What Happened:** There are three candidates running for two open School Committee seats. Want to get to know the candidates? You can watch the SC candidates at yesterday's LWV Candidate Forum [here](#). Mark your calendars for April 8<sup>th</sup>. In-person Remote/Absentee Voting begins at the Town House TODAY March 17.

**Our Take:** This is a very important election and every vote matters. CCGS supports [Alexa Anderson](#) (a former chair of the SC nominated for her “collaborative nature” and an “ability to tackle complex issues with both heart and pragmatism.”) and Thoreau school parent/coach and PTG member and Treasurer of the Concord Education Fund [Sandeep Pisharody](#). His campaign slogan is “*Strong Schools, Strong Community*”.

Collaboration and good communication are **essential** in this role. It is perhaps worth noting that all three current, sitting SC members (who will serve with the elected candidates) **support Alexa and Sandeep** for the open seats. Tracey Marano [letter](#). Carrie Rankin [letter](#). Andrew Herchek [letter](#).

## School Admin Cuts Additional \$95,000 From FY26 Budget

**What Happened:** To counter an unanticipated student enrollment shift (that means less money will be contributed by Carlisle in 2026), Dr. Hunter has cut \$95,000 from the **at-guideline** FY26 budget. According to Bridge coverage, the new cuts will take the form of a \$50,000 reduction in the contribution made to retirement obligations and \$45,000 worth of interactive boards teachers use in the classroom from the technology budget.

**Our Take:** Our Take: This re-enforces the school's commitment to meet the **town's lean requested** budget, to avoid going over the agreed-to FinCom guidelines. More cooperation. More progress.

## Superintendent Hunter Reviews Goals

**What Happened:** At the March 11 SC meeting, Dr. Hunter was asked to provide an update on her on progress toward her goals. You can watch this on video [here](#).

**Our Take:** Very few likely understand the depth of work involved with being Concord's Superintendent of Schools. It is a massive job and this update provides a window into the breadth and depth of what she does.

## New Thoreau Playground Fundraising in the Home Stretch

**What Happened:** The Concord community is coming together to raise money from private donations to help build a new playground at the Thoreau Elementary School, a space that is inclusive, nature-inspired, and fun! Construction is planned for summer 2025, and the [grass-roots group](#) leading this needs help to purchase materials, build the equipment, and landscape the site. They are at 75% of their \$610K goal, with just a few weeks left.

**Our Take:** This group of energized parent/caregiver volunteers has raised an incredible \$460,000+ and is seeking additional donations. Taxpayer money is not being used and we hope anyone who can help, will help. A vibrant outdoor play space is a part of the educational experience and, as you are able, please consider donating [here](#).

## Action Items: What Can You Do?

- 1) **PLEASE VOTE! Mark your calendars to Vote April 8<sup>th</sup>, or before!** In-person absentee voting is open **now** at the Town House 22 Monument St in Concord. Eligible to vote? Deadlines? You can check your status and get all voting information [here](#). LWV candidate forum video [here](#).
- 2) **Attend an Upcoming Candidate Forum:** By being there in-person or by Zoom, you can learn more about the candidates and get a “sense” for things. There is an event tomorrow morning. There is a Joint PTG Event March 31 at CCHS 7-9PM. More event information [here](#).
- 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](#).