CONCORD EDUCATION UPDATE

November 2026

Happy late fall! We know life is busy and hope this is a helpful digest of local education-related matters. There's a lot to catch up on in this issue. Thanks for taking a look.

Construction of the New Amenities Building at CCHS (Finally) Underway

After **years** of School Committee advocacy and town meeting votes and funding wrangles, construction has finally started on ADA-compliant restrooms at the Memorial Field area at CCHS. This new facility will serve the school and community functions and replace the unlit, unheated plastic rented porta-potties in-use at this location for more than a decade.



2026 Youth Risk Behavior Survey: Bullying, Vaping Down, Less Screen Time

Every 2 years, a self-reported survey helps assess CMS and CCHS student mental health/stress, substance use, and well-being. Results showed concerning upticks in drinking at CCHS and increased stress among LGBTQIA+ students, but also significant improvements in bullying, vaping, screen time, self-harm, sleep patterns, and other areas, since 2024. As reported by the Bridge:

- Bullying dropped, with 5% of students reporting being bullied this year compared with 10% in 2024.
- Students who reported vaping in the past 30 days dropped to 3% from 6%.
- Reports of self-harm and suicidal ideation declined.
- Fewer students reported spending six or more hours a day on screens outside schoolwork.
- Students reported less marijuana use, less sexual harassment, and more/better sleep.
- 94% of CCHS students who participated reported having a trusted adult at school, while 98% said they had a trusted adult outside school.

In the Bridge, CCHS PTG President Alexa Anderson said, "We've come a long way." "We all began speaking the same language and were aligned on the mission, and you can see those accomplishments in the data."

2026-2027 Black Student AP Classes, Honors Class Enrollment Way Up

From the Bridge 11/3: The percentage of METCO students in 11th and 12th grade taking at least one AP class "rose dramatically" **from 4%** in the 2023-2024 school year **to 41%** in the 2026-2027. The number of METCO students taking at least one honors class increased **from 14%** in 2024 **to 58%** in 2026-2027.

Per the Bridge coverage, CCHS Senior and METCO student and president of the Black Student Union Mark Johnson said, "I think the hardest thing was to get the kids into the class, because I don't know that there was that confidence for them. Now students are like. 'Oh, I can do this.'"

SB Special Election: Elise Stone Running, Signals Support for Schools

Mary Hartman has stepped down from the Concord Select Board, triggering a special election Feb 2. Elise Stone is running for the seat. Collaboration and a constructive partnership between the School Committee and the Select Board is important and we were pleased to read this on her campaign website:

"Elise believes that excellent schools are one of Concord's greatest assets. Her four grown children all graduated from Concord public schools, and seven of her eight grandchildren live in Concord and attend, or will attend, Concord public schools. She has volunteered in the schools and coached a variety of youth sports, helping young people develop teamwork and confidence."

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2 New Subcommittees to Address Tech Concerns

Amid concern by parents and the Intentional Tech Coalition, two new subcommittees have been formed. According to the Bridge, "One group, the Instructional Technology Review Committee, will include district educators. The other, called the District Community Technology Committee, will include parents and students and provide feedback on the instructional group's work." These subcommittees have met and subcommittee member and Intentional Tech Coalition founder **Emily Lines** spoke about constructive progress and the challenging nature of the subject at the last SC meeting. You can watch the video of her public comment here.

CCHS Students Speak at Unveiling of Black Heritage Trail Markers

10/29: "Concord-Carlisle High School students want Concord's Black history to become as familiar to their classmates as the Old North Bridge and Walden Pond. Members and allies of the school's Black Student Union (BSU) joined Town officials and community members on Thursday, Oct. 22, to unveil Concord's Black Heritage Trail markers.

The trail's 10 markers tell the stories of Black individuals and families who helped shape Concord. They identify the house where Harriet Tubman stayed during her 1859 visit and recount Frederick Douglass' 1841 speech in town. Another tells how Shadrach Minkins found refuge in Concord while escaping to freedom in Canada. The markers also explore Black families' lives in Walden Woods and other neighborhoods, including their experiences with education, property ownership and the pursuit of equal rights". Read more here.



Announced: Coffees with the School Committee

Share your thoughts and suggestions. Ask questions. Get to know them. The Concord School Committee and Concord Carlisle Regional School Committee invite you to their upcoming community coffees:

1) **Carlisle** Town Hall Thursday, November 5 1:30pm 66 Westford Street
2) **Concord** Fowler Library: Friday, November 13 1:30 PM 1322 Main Street

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Solar on The Ellen Garrison Building: "Unequivocal" SC Chair Support

From the Bridge 10/5: "I unequivocally support putting solar on top of the Ellen Garrison building," Concord School Committee Chair Sandeep Pisharody said at the meeting. "It is consistent with what the community values. It is consistent with the school sustainability commitments that we've made."

While stakeholders have long-wanted solar on the roof, installation is a CMLP project (via a private 3rd party solar developer) and this means the SC and admin must/should ensure legal/liability issues like roof warranty risks, panel maintenance, construction related student safety, building access by workers from a 3rd party company, etc., are addressed. This is a 20-year proposed agreement, so getting it right is important. Hopefully the legal details can be worked out soon and the project will move ahead.

New SC Climate and Culture Working Group Framework Unanimously Adopted

This new subcommittee met 3 times over the summer and, as reported in the Bridge, was formed to look "at ways for the School Committee to more consistently track student experiences, bias and hate reporting, and other measures of how students are faring." You can read Bridge coverage here. At the 9/23 joint SC meeting, the SC unanimously voted to adopt the framework for metrics for success, the charge, indicators of success, objectives, etc. Great news. You can read it here.

Stay Connected

Please share this newsletter and consider joining our mailing list to stay informed.

Upcoming Dates

November 4: Joint School Committee Meeting: Clark Room. Carlisle Town Hall 6:00 PM November 4.

November 5: Carlisle SC Coffee: Town Hall 1:30PM 66 Westford Street

November 13: Concord SC Coffee: Fowler Library: 1:30 PM 1322 Main Street

Get Involved

It's important to stay informed and engaged. You can:

- Attend School Committee meetings in-person. Schedule.
- Consider writing a letter to The Concord Bridge, the Select Board, or the School Committee sharing your perspective on Concord's schools.
- Talk with neighbors and fellow parents about the issues shaping our school community.
- Sign up here https://www.concordcommunityforgreatschools.com/signup

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Community Corner

Nov 17: Free Seminar in Concord: Your Child’s Brain in a Screen-Saturated World

Raising kids in a fast-changing, tech-driven world can feel overwhelming. Neuroscientist Dr. Jared Cooney Horvath will give you clear, research-backed insight into how your child's brain grows and learns. You'll leave with practical strategies to support them at home and at school, from kindergarten through high school.

A 90-minute presentation followed by a 30-minute live Q&A. Bring your questions. Register here.

November 17, 2026
7:00 PM - 9:00 PM
Concord Middle School 923 Old Marlboro Road Concord, MA