

## Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee 2014 Annual Report

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We are grateful to the citizens in Concord and Carlisle for all you do to support the work of students, faculty and administrators. Your support helped make this year exceptional in many ways for Concord Carlisle High School (CCHS). This past year was marked by new accomplishments to celebrate and steady progress on goals and objectives to acknowledge. Near the top of the list of highlights is the new school building. With the installation of floors and fixtures, the new school is nearly ready for occupancy and faculty, students and members of school community continue to tour the building and prepare for the move in April. As noted in a thorough update from the Building Committee, the new building is exceeding expectations and with more than 88% of the project complete, it remains on budget, on scope and on schedule. As exciting as the prospect of the new school is, there are wide-ranging achievements of students, educators and staff to bring to your attention. Noteworthy work in classrooms and laboratories, in studios and on stages and out in the field and across varied athletic venues, made 2014 a remarkable year. The Concord Carlisle School Committee is profoundly pleased to be associated with a district comprised of teachers, administrators and staff who are tireless in their dedication educating all students to become lifelong learners, creative thinkers, caring citizens, and responsible contributors to our global society.

In May, we welcomed new School Committee member Wally Johnston and we continue to find our work more rewarding because of the positive impact each individual member has on the Committee as a whole.

### **Building Project Status**

The Building Committee, the Administration and the School Committee continues to work diligently to assure that in the final months, the project remains on scope, on budget and on schedule for an April, 2015 opening of a high-performing, flexibly-engineered and outfitted building that will meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning and be a community asset for generations.

### **Athletic Fields Renovation**

In June, the CC at Play organization broke ground on Phase I of the fields renovation project. At the time of this report, Phase I of this public-private initiative is substantially complete with six new tennis courts on the lower fields along with upgraded varsity softball and baseball diamonds. The enhancements include new and refurbished batting cages, dugouts and scoreboards. This work helped remedy existing gender inequities, which is another benefit of Phase II of the project, which includes enlarging and turfing the football field to make it available for multiple sports. Phase II will also include a new concessions and storage building

with bathrooms to enhance the experience of both athletes and spectators. For more information on this project, visit [www.ccatplay.org](http://www.ccatplay.org).

### **Student Achievement**

Academic achievement across grade levels and disciplines is well-documented. A full report on student performance on standardized tests appears in the Superintendent's Report. Highlights from this report include six students in the Class of 2014 qualified as National Merit Scholar Finalists, 92% of AP test takers, scored a 4 or 5 on the exam (5 is the highest) and 99% of Class of 2014 received a Competency Determination as a result of passing both the English Language Arts and the Math MCAS.

### **Enriching Experiences**

Qualitative measures of success at CCHS also abound and the School Committees and the Superintendent are particularly proud of the accomplishments of faculty and students beyond standardized tests. In fact, as a means of benchmarking performance, the members of the School Committees are working with colleagues in other districts, through the EDCO Collaborative, to better define what success looks like in high performing districts in which standardized test scores vary little and tell a limited story of the kind of unique accomplishments students aspire to.

In its third year, the school within a school, known as *Rivers and Revolutions*, continues to offer a rigorous and innovative interdisciplinary program to juniors and seniors. Led by a dedicated team of teachers across five subject areas, this semester course of study gives students academic experiences inside and out of the traditional classroom environment.

Thirty Biology students participated in the Environmental Field Studies project to protect Blandings' turtles. The Robotics team built an amazing robot to successfully compete at the regional competition at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. The CCHS Meteorology students and teacher presented at the American Meteorological Society conference. Forty student leaders completed "A World of Difference" program with Anti-Defamation League trainers, and they facilitated several sessions of the Sophomore Advisory Groups.

The CCHS Repertory and Concert Bands earned gold medals at the prestigious Massachusetts Instrumental and Choral Conductors Association (MICCA) State Concert Festival. In 2014, the CCHS Bands received the honor of being chosen to join 18 other high schools in the nation for a special competition in Indianapolis, IN. A record number of student musicians (band, orchestra, jazz band, and chorus) were nominated and accepted into the MENC All-eastern Honors Ensembles and twenty-six (26) students received All-State recommendations.

Student artists participated in the Boston Globe Scholastic Art awards regional exhibit and earned gold and silver keys. Student artists were also recognized in the Lexington Arts and Crafts Society Show for art majors and the year-end awards and retrospective at the Concord Art Association.

The drama and theatre programs thrived in 2014. More than 50 students worked together to build sets, coordinate lighting and sound for the production, and performed in *Nation*. In the winter, more than 150 students performed as actors or musicians, created technical designs, built sets and props, implemented theatrical lighting and sound, and served as stage crew for the musical, *Pirates of Penzance*. In the late spring, more than 30 students performed on stage and were involved as technical crew for Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

The CCHS Student Senate continue to take a leadership role in the school community and worked on many projects focused on student life, including programs to help manage stress, enhance communication among all school community members, and increase environmental sustainability initiatives.

Across playing fields and athletic facilities, Concord Carlisle teams and individual athletes broke records, attained personal goals and made it into many post-season play-offs. Several teams and athletes competed in regional and state competitions. Most recently, after an undefeated season, the Boys Soccer team beat Woburn to become the 2014 MIAA Boys Soccer North Division Two State Champions.

### **Community Service**

In even greater numbers every year, CCHS students demonstrate their commitment to social responsibility through participation in service projects, domestically and abroad. These activities include raising awareness of global warming here in Concord to raising funds to aid relief efforts abroad. Students participated in exchanges with peers from Ecuador, France, Denmark and Turkmenistan. Collectively, our students contributed more than 25,000 hours of service during the 2013-14 school year. Most students contribute far more than the graduation requirement of 40 hours of service. In recognition of this meaningful accomplishment and to foster student efforts to be responsible global citizens, Peter Badalament and his administrative team worked with community members to hold the second annual evening to celebrate service. It was a memorable event that inspired students and their families and will have a long-lasting positive impact.

### **Outstanding Faculty, Administrators and Staff Inspire Students**

These exceptional results would not be possible without our outstanding faculty, administrators and staff. Together, they create a learning environment that enables our students to engage in new experiences, take risks and achieve at extraordinary levels. The school district continues to benefit from a high (96%) teacher retention rate and 100% of employment offers to new teachers and staff were accepted this year. Most of these new CCHS teachers and staff filled vacancies created by retirees, for whom we owe a debt of gratitude for their years of dedicated service.

The administration, faculty and School Committee continue to make improvements to teaching and learning conditions a priority. In January, and a series of planning meetings with a Massachusetts Teachers' Association facilitator began to identify areas on which to focus efforts to address the findings of the TELL Mass teacher surveys. With priorities identified, this work continues at the high school. Although the TELL Mass survey will not be conducted by the New

Teacher Center (NTC) again, the district will conduct it's own survey midyear and in June, using questions from prior TELL Mass surveys, to track progress.

### **Budget and Finances**

Last year in this report, we shared results from a *Cost Growth Analysis* for fiscal year 2005 (FY05) through FY14, which showed the five year annualized cost growth rate dropping from 5.9% for the first five years to 3.4% from FY10 to FY14. We updated this analysis and the current five year annualized cost growth rate from FY10-FY15 is 2.9%. Recent budget requests have been below our fixed cost rate increases. These lower budget requests were in response to the economic down turn and are not sustainable. To view this year's historical cost growth analysis, please visit the district website, at [concordpublicschools.net](http://concordpublicschools.net), and look under Reports and Presentations.

The FY16 Budget request includes some funds to restore cuts made to instructional materials and it was reduced to meet the Finance Committee guideline. However, as citizens we fully understand the tax impact these increases have and we want to work with our colleagues on other town boards and committees to find ways to support public education without overburdening taxpayers. We have met informally with members of the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee to discuss this issue and anticipate a greater community conversation about affordability in 2015. We are fortunate to live in a community that believes in high-quality public education and we want to honor this community value while maintaining a sensitivity for the sacrifices it demands.

The audit firm of Melanson Heath reported a favorable opinion of the district's financials at a Joint School Committee meeting in June. Concord-Carlisle is one of only two regional school districts in the state that carries an Aaa bond rating (Moody's highest rating).

### **Donations Making a Difference**

Our school also benefits from the generosity of citizen-run, non-profit organizations, including the Concord Education Fund, the CCHS Parents' Association, the Concord-Carlisle Community Chest, CC at Play and the Community Preservation Committee. We are grateful to all of these organizations and to the generosity of individuals in Concord and Carlisle who donate to them. These donations allow us to enhance our students' experiences, despite budget pressures to reduce or level-fund existing programming.

### **Deep Gratitude to the Towns**

Again we offer the citizens of Concord and Carlisle our deep appreciation for your active support of the students and faculty at CCHS. We will continue to strive to find the appropriate balance between a shared desire to support a high caliber public high school and a collective responsibility to use public resources judiciously.