

Concord Public Schools and Concord Carlisle Regional School District

NEWSLETTER

Fall 2022



Happy New Year!

The coming school year allows us opportunities to reflect on our successes and challenges and to plan for the vision of the coming years. It goes without saying that the pandemic brought unimaginable hurdles. The school community's collective energy to support its children was extraordinary. We process the positive outcomes and lingering needs while seeing the progress we made in planned and unplanned goals.

In 2018, the districts built a Strategic Plan for 2018-2023 through an inclusive process. Those goals focus on the following main areas: student support, mental wellness, cultural competency, facility needs, and outdoor opportunities. This Fall, we will document the accomplishments and efforts in these areas. Simultaneously, we will kick off a collaborative structure to craft the vision for the next five years.

At the center of all of our efforts are students. Thank you for your support in joining us on this journey.

With deep appreciation,
Dr. Laurie Hunter
Superintendent of Schools

**CONCORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS and
CONCORD CARLISLE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS Dr. Laurie Hunter

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Update from Bob Conry, Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations

Greetings, I am excited to be part of the Concord / Concord-Carlisle School community! I have a few updates to share for the upcoming school year.

TRANSPORTATION

Thanks to Transportation Director John Arena for working diligently to create the bus routes for the 2022-23 school year. This is an extensive process, John balances many factors in building routes, starting with the needs of students and families, while also considering route safety, efficiency, district policies, and various other factors.

There are currently a couple vacancies for bus driving positions that we are urgently seeking to fill; if you know anyone who may be interested in a bus driving position, please reach out to John Arena directly (jarena@concordps.org).

FACILITIES

A big shout out to our Facilities Director Russ Hughes and his team of maintenance staff, building service supervisors and staff who have all been very busy preparing our buildings for the upcoming school year, and completing various summer projects. Thanks to the team for their efforts this summer, and throughout the year!

FOOD SERVICE

I am pleased to share that Jess Brown has accepted the role of Interim Food Service Director for the upcoming school year, after the resignation of Bryce MacKnight. Jess has extensive culinary experience in the private sector, as well as the past two and a half years in Concord / Concord-Carlisle schools, most recently serving as Assistant Director, working closely with Bryce. She is very familiar with the operations in our six schools, and we are glad to have such a talented and creative individual leading our food service team.

While the federal program for universal free school lunch ended, and was not renewed, the state of Massachusetts has passed a bill that will continue to allow MA schools to offer free meals during the upcoming school year.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/free-school-meals-massachusetts-students/>

Details are still being worked out, and have not yet been disseminated to schools. We will share more information when it becomes available.

Food Service menus can be accessed here: [School Lunch Menus](#)

BUDGETS AND FINANCIAL PLANNING

One month into my time here and I am already digging into the FY23 budget, with help from staff and administrators. Many changes have occurred from the time the budgets were established and approved, and over the summer a large focus has been on identifying those changes, and ensuring they are accurately reflected for future budget planning. More

information on the budget process will be shared at upcoming School Committee meetings, and we'd welcome community feedback and participation throughout the budget process.

Sincerely, Bob Conry, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations

Elementary School Happenings

Alcott



At Alcott, we will be welcoming several new faces to our community this fall, two of whom work across all grade levels and interact with all students. In the spring, we said goodbye to Alcott's Assistant Principal and Math Curriculum Coordinator, Judy Olson. This fall, all students and families will have the opportunity to get to know our new Assistant Principal and Math Curriculum Coordinator, Taryn Moon. Similarly, at the end of the last school year, we said goodbye to longtime school adjustment counselor, Sherree Foye. I look forward to introducing everyone to Rene Kashmiri, who will begin in the role in the fall. Both Ms. Moon and Ms. Kashmiri come to Concord highly recommended and are sure to bring a high level of expertise and care to the Alcott community.

From a curriculum standpoint, Alcott is about to embark on a pilot of the new social/emotional curriculum, Fly Five. This curriculum teaches the social/emotional skills students need to be successful, including cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy and self-control. We are excited for this pilot year and look forward to sharing our progress with it as the year progresses.

Alcott is also working to implement the district's updated MTSS framework. As such, staff will be screening students three times a year using the Star 360 assessment. We will be matching Tier

2 and 3 interventions to specific student needs as well as progress monitoring using identified monitoring tools. Student progress will be communicated with families during each intervention cycle.

Finally, Alcott is excited to be partnering with Concord's new K-8 METCO Director, Felicia Pasley. Our work this year is to ensure that Alcott's resident Boston students and families feel valued, respected and welcomed at all grade levels.

Thoreau



At Thoreau Elementary, after spending last year in the aftermath of the fire in the 94 wing, we are thrilled to be starting the year with all of our students, faculty and staff teaching and learning in their intended spaces. The installation of our new, fully accessible, lower playground has been delayed but we look forward to seeing it completed this fall. Our PTG, in collaboration with our facilities department, has been hard at work this summer cleaning, updating and adding sensory features to our Grounds for Learning. We are sure our students will love taking advantage of this previously underutilized outdoor space.

Regarding curriculum, Thoreau will be implementing the Great Body Shop health curriculum in grades K-5. We will also have teachers piloting Responsive Classroom and Fly Five. Responsive Classroom is a student-centered, social and emotional learning approach to teaching and discipline and Fly Five is a curriculum that teaches the social/emotional skills students need to be successful, including cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy and self-control. We are very much looking forward to implementing these new tools and strategies and evaluating their level of effectiveness in creating a safe and supporting learning environment for every student.

Finally, along with our colleagues across the district, Thoreau will be working on implementing the district's updated MTSS framework. As such, staff will be screening students three times a year using the Star 360 assessment. We will be matching Tier 2 and 3 interventions to specific student needs as well as progress monitoring using identified monitoring tools. Student progress will be communicated with families during each intervention cycle.

Willard



Professional Development and Student Achievement

The Willard teaching staff will be partnering with Landmark School Outreach to strengthen the programming for students with language-based learning disabilities inclusive of school-based training and consultation to general education and special education teachers to best ensure we meet the educational needs of students with language-based learning disabilities, specifically SLD/Dyslexia. This consultation will focus on targeted professional development for the existing Language and Beyond programming while introducing best practices for regular education teachers to use to support these students. Throughout the year, faculty meetings will be designated for in-depth presentations while smaller working groups will meet to discuss implementation and progress monitoring.

Building Community

This past June, all rising 4th graders were given the book, *We're Not From Here* to enjoy as a summer read. The title, also available as an ebook and audio book, is a critically acclaimed best seller, and was selected using the district's new anti-bias criteria. It tells, "the story of a family of humans who immigrate to an alien planet after Earth is destroyed...only to discover that the aliens who invited them have changed their minds about opening their society to a species that just blew up its own planet". The shared read will provide a bonding experience for all fifth graders while also introducing the students to age-appropriate complex ideas to discuss and consider.

Innovative Learning

As part of our goals promoting well-being and innovation at Willard, we'll be focusing on using the school grounds as our outdoor classroom, both as a catalyst for learning and a laboratory for studying the natural environment. Out of their experiences, our vision is that children will become stewards of the campus, its wildlife, trees, and landscape surrounding the school, and play an active role in shaping the campus they learn in. We're eager to create partnerships within and outside of the school community with the goal that Willard becomes a place not only of innovation, but also of environmental awareness, stewardship, and care.

Three specific avenues toward realizing these goals are:

1. Continuing our exploration of project-based learning (PBL) across the grade levels, identifying opportunities for innovation that are inclusive and empowering for children and adults alike, and are linked to outdoor learning. This past year, Grade 5 students presented their study of water to the School Committee, and also used nearby White Pond as their field work site in their exploration of Thoreau's legacy as a naturalist and writer. Working with Concord's Natural

Resource Officer, other Willard-specific environmental projects (such as identifying and eradicating invasive plants) may be developed as well. In addition, a district-wide professional development workshop on PBL, led by Chris Price, Willard Assistant Principal and Math Specialist, will offer a forum for teachers to develop their own project-based experiences. This workshop will meet 3 times in 2022-23 and is open to all grade levels.

2. We will expand our school garden, thanks to funding provided by the Concord Education Fund, adding two additional raised beds and plantings that emphasize Willard's agricultural history and its legacy as a place of Native cultivation and community. Our planning of the expansion includes installing a wheelchair-height raised bed and a wheelchair-friendly ground cover to access it. Plantings in this bed will provide both sensory and historic experiences, by planting herbs and plants that Native peoples and colonists might have planted and used in their everyday lives. In the second raised bed we'll plant the traditional "3 Sisters," corn, beans, and squash, the crops planted by Native people that symbiotically promote their growth.

3. We will be exploring possibilities for permanent outdoor learning spaces, with the goal of seeking funding for installation in 2023. This initiative dovetails neatly with our PBL focus, with classes having opportunities to identify, research, and design an outdoor classroom, and present their research to their peers, teachers, and district leaders.

Concord Integrated Preschool Highlights



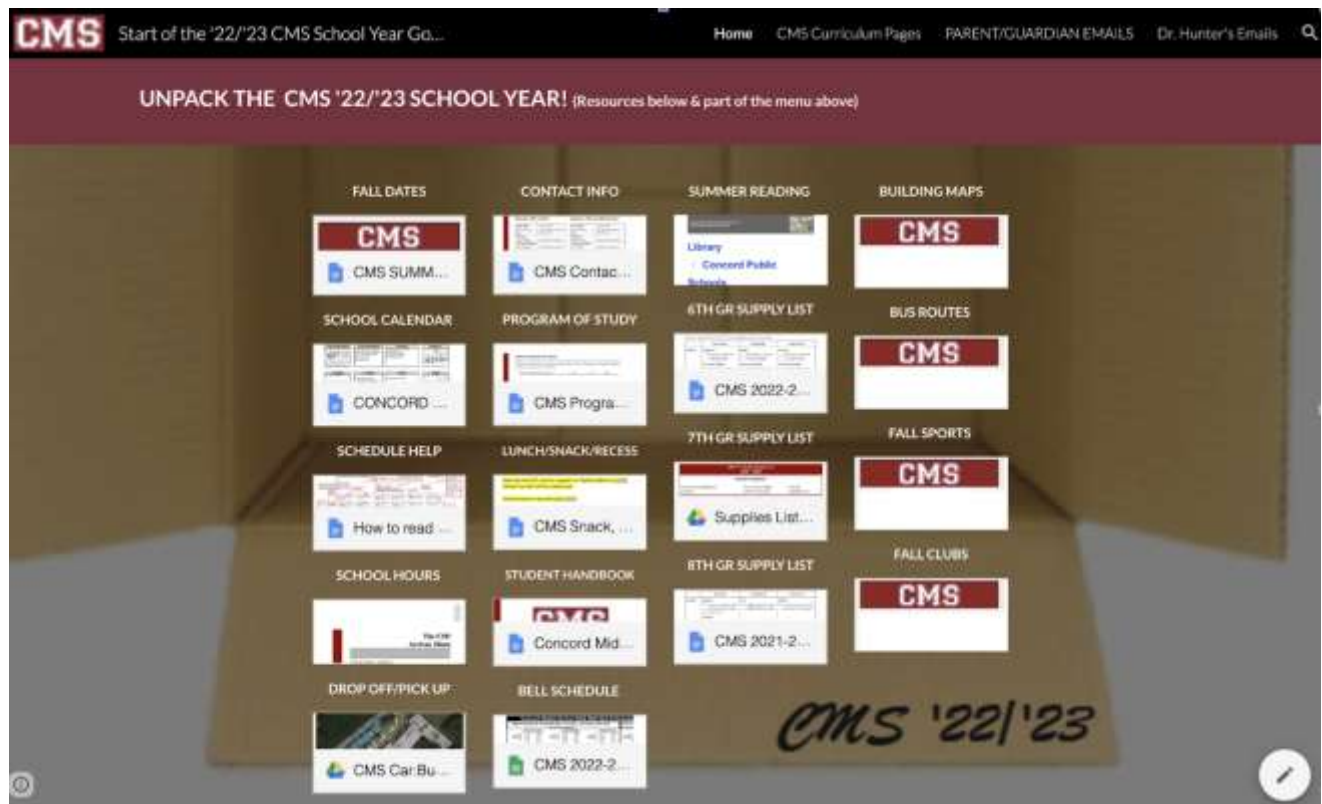
Concord Integrated Preschool is excited to welcome our new students and families to the 22/23 school year! This fall will be filled with enriching learning experiences for our preschoolers. All classrooms will focus on getting to know each other and learning the daily routine. Students will be engaged in singing, dancing, playing games, playing indoors and outdoors and having lots of fun! Some fall activities will include making lemonade, applesauce, leaf collecting and pumpkins! Our therapy dog Ibbby will be returning this year to visit each classroom with her handler and local Concord vet Dr. Chandler! Our bookshelves will be stacked with a variety of new preschool books that celebrate diversity and represent the many cultural backgrounds of our students and families. We also have a new social skills curriculum that we will be introducing in all classrooms this year!

Happy New Year from Concord Middle School!

Middle school is a time to develop new friends, try out new ideas and activities, and solidify academic skills. We strive to help achieve and develop habits of mind necessary for leadership and lifelong learning through academic and social opportunities. We place a high value on the development of the whole student and foster a middle school teaming approach that supports the growth of the student as a citizen of the community. Toward that end, CMS is piloting PBIS (positive behavior incentives supports) as a school-wide, social emotional learning framework for all students in the upcoming school year.

PBIS is central to the 2022/2023 Concord Middle School Improvement Plan. PBIS is a researched and evidence based program that supports students' maturation of their social pragmatics. Executive functioning, pragmatic social skills, and the ability to resolve conflicts are hallmarks of PBIS. These are also skills many experts believe are areas of focus needed coming off of the Pandemic. The middle school would like to thank Concord Education Fund (CEF) and its Parent Teacher Group (PTG) for its support of PBIS in the upcoming school year.

For more practical support of the new school year, middle school families are reminded of the Start of the 22/23 CMS School Google Site that launched early August. The site will be live through September and is linked off our website: <https://cms.concordps.org/22-23-school-year>. We look forward to a great school year! Go Panthers!



News from CCHS



Dear CCHS Educational Community:

It is with great excitement that we open our doors for the 2022-2023 school year. For students, staff, and families with school-age children, the start of school marks the unofficial end of summer, and, with that, comes excitement, enthusiasm, a little anxiety, a slight longing for the summer months, and a reminder that time is a relentless opponent.

Soon, the quiet hallways of July and August will give way to the energy and enthusiasm that accompanies the arrival of students and staff. In a few days, we will greet our incoming first-year students from Boston, Carlisle, and Concord, welcome the returning sophomore and junior classes, and collaborate with the class of 2023 to provide the leadership necessary to make every student's high school experience positive and memorable.

We are confident that all new students and staff members, along with the current staff, students, parents, and the community, will continue to make Concord Carlisle High School one of the best in Massachusetts and the country. As a team and also as individuals, we will continue to work hard to meet the noble mission of our school:

"Concord Carlisle High School is committed to excellence in and out of the classroom. Our mission is to inspire our students to strive for and meet the highest levels of academic and personal achievement while nurturing a respectful, supportive, engaged, curious, and passionate learning community."

This year we strive to improve upon our successes, address areas in need of improvement, and take on new challenges. If nothing else, a new school year brings optimism, and it is hard to be anything less than optimistic when entering 500 Walden Street. A beautiful campus, a majestic building, and a warm and welcoming place for students and staff.

All of our goals support the overarching objective of preparing Concord Carlisle High School students to be productive citizens of the school, community, and beyond. Educating students today is a monumental task that requires a hardworking, dedicated staff committed to not only student achievement but also to our own personal and professional growth. Outcomes are not guaranteed, but hard work and commitment are, and we welcome the excitement and difficulty a new year brings, and realize any challenge in which a successful outcome is assured is not a challenge at all.

Three necessary components of any successful school system are safety, organization, and high expectations for teaching and learning. I assure you that these three factors will guide our daily decision-making in the months and years ahead. We look forward to your input, participation, and support as we work together to achieve our goals.

Sincerely,

Michael Mastrullo, Principal
Brian Miller, Assistant Principal
Katie Stahl, Assistant Principal
Frances Wooff, Special Education Administrator

Back to School Dates - Fall 2022

Please remember to review the entire calendar on the [District Website](#).

For specific high school events, please visit the [CCHS website calendar](#).

9th Grade Transition Website

There is a [9th Grade Transition website](#) to serve as a resource for rising 9th graders. Key information may be found here and will continue to be added throughout the summer. The website may also be accessed directly from the banner at www.concordcarlisle.org

Bus Transportation Schedule

Bus schedules are posted to the website.

<http://www.concordps.org/transportation-2/>

Special Education

What is Inclusion?

In the early 70's, we spoke of "mainstreaming" students with disabilities. In the 80's, the term morphed to "integration". The term we use today "inclusion" - but what does that mean? Nowhere in state or federal special education regulation is inclusion defined. The closest guidance is found in the following citation taken from the federal law addressing educating children in the least restrictive environment which states, "*To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled.*"

Dr. Tom Hehir was a lifelong and passionate advocate for students with disabilities. He was Massachusetts native, a former Harvard Graduate School of Education professor and researcher, served as the director of the U.S Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs, authored books, and advocated mightily against "ableism". Sadly, this giant of a man in the world of special education passed away in June of this year. In one of his many articles, he shared the meaning of inclusion which has resonated with me over a decade.

Inclusion means...

- Offering *the same opportunities for people with and without disabilities*
- Welcoming *everyone*
- Building *a community where everyone feels respected and valued*
- Emphasizing *cooperation*
- Seeking *to understand, celebrate and support everyone's differences*
- Presuming *everyone's competence*
- Ensuring *a safe and socially comfortable environment for all*
- Teaching *that all people deserve respect, understanding and dignity*
- Reaching *out to people who are excluded and marginalized*
- Honoring *the intrinsic value of each person's life*
- Providing *training and support so that everyone can feel successful*

Inclusion is not a place. It is a belief system.

As we move into the new school year, we are excited that we have more inclusive special education opportunities, programs and enhancements to offer from preschool through high school, including our 18-22 year-old program. Programs have expanded and new programs created to ensure students with disabilities are able to be educated alongside their non-disabled peers and remain in our schools and in our community. In Concord and Concord-Carlisle, we will continue the challenge to embrace inclusionary practice, honor Dr. Tom Hehir's vision, and include all.

Launch Program Overview

The Launch Program is a highly structured, specialized program for students with an eclectic range of abilities, who exhibit significant academic, cognitive, neurological, medical, social needs that require them to participate in skills based remediation classes and access general education classes on an individualized basis. The program provides enhanced learning experiences that link students in transition from school to career and independent living, and supports students to become active and independent community members. The Launch Program also provides support and resources to students and their families for transitional related services. Our goal is to provide experiences in an age-appropriate and integrated setting, prepare students for post-high school employment; increase independent living skills; increase knowledge and utilization of community resources, and educate community members on individual strengths and ways to enhance inclusion and independent living. To achieve these goals the Launch program consists of components such as Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Functional Academics, Pre-vocational/Vocational, Life Skills/ADLs, Social Skills, Self Determination, and Community Integration/Awareness.

Update on Professional Learning for Faculty

*From the Office of Teaching and Learning
Assistant Superintendent Kristen Herbert*

During the 2022-2023 school year, the themes for professional development for the faculty of Concord Public Schools and Concord Carlisle High School continue to be: diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging; working with students with learning disabilities; mental health and wellness; interventions for students in reading, math, and socio-emotional behavior; and techniques for making learning more engaging for all students.

On their first day of work, our faculty will hear a conversation on the history of “African Americans, Abolitionists, and the Story of Concord” from Dr. Maria Madison.

	<p>Dr. Madison is the Brandeis University, Heller School Interim Dean. Prior to this role Dr. Madison was the Associate Dean for Inclusion, Equity and Diversity and Director for the Institute for Economic and Racial Equity. Her graduate school teaching experience includes courses on Intersectionality and Bioethics, Anti-bias/anti-racism workshops and Pro seminars, Discrimination Analytics, Clinical Trial Design Optimization and Problem Solving at Northeastern University as well as Evidence Based Research Methods at the University for Global Health Equity/Partners in Health in Kigali Rwanda. Dr. Madison's career spans decades in health research including clinical and public health research in Africa and Europe, where courses on ethics are part of annual corporate responsibility best practices (e.g., Good Clinical Practices, GCPs, and the Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences, CIOMS guidelines, and Brandeis Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative, CITI), https://www.brandeis.edu/ora/compliance/rd/training.html. She is also a co-founder and co-President of a nonprofit, The Robbins House, Inc. located in Concord, MA. The nonprofit focuses on the long civil rights movement in America, through the lens of African descended inhabitants of the eponymous 19th-century house, including a black woman activist who attempted to challenge the nation's first civil rights act of 1866.</p>
<p><u>Video of Dr. Madison curating at the Robbins House</u></p>	
	
<p><u>African American History and the Story of Concord</u></p>	

Over the course of the school year, faculty will also choose which of the professional development “paths” they would like for further study on a given topic. These paths all for all faculty preK - 12 and meet on Wednesday afternoons. The choices are listed below.

Title	Workshop Leader
African American, Abolitionists, and the Story of Concord	Susan Foster and other faculty from Concord Museum
Instructional Practices to Support Equity for All Learners	Adam Hickey from Landmark School Outreach
Social Thinking	Nancy Clements
Choosing and Using Inclusively Diverse Literature	Dr. Kim Parker
Co-Teaching (Extra session Aug. 29)	Dorsey Yearley
Building Thinking Mathematics Classrooms	Sarah Khan & author of Building Thinking Classrooms by Peter Liljedahl
Mindfulness Self Regulation in Schools	Dr. Chris Willard
Developing Executive Function	Dr. Sarah Ward
The Vital Do's & Don'ts of School Mental Health	Lynn Lyons (<i>Anxious Kids, Anxious Parents</i>)
Architects for Learning- Empowering BrainFrames	Jess Curtain
Enhancing the Middle School Classroom with Technology	Liz Rose
Enhancing the High School Classroom with Technology	Terry Smolka
Enhancing Your Professional Productivity with Technology	Genoveva Matheus, John Peachey, and Lisa Bailey
Project Based Learning	Dr. Chris Price
IDEAS 1 course 22/23 (1pm - 4pm)	Dr. Paula Martin & partner IDEAS 1 (CONCORD FELLOWS)