

Elementary School Consolidation is Progressing

Elementary school consolidation is well underway this fall, with the closing of Kimball School and the combining of student populations on the west side of the Merrimack.

This year, the third through fifth graders who previously attended Kimball have moved, along with their principal, teachers and books, to the Rumford School building. Almost all of the students who used to attend Rumford now go to Conant. The names of the schools have changed slightly to reflect their new populations: Rumford is now referred to as "Kimball Walker at Rumford" and Conant is "Conant-Rumford."

Consolidation, once just a concept developed to address significant problems at

the smaller schools, is now proving to be the solution to other issues such as overcrowding of some classes, inadequate numbers of PTO volunteers, teacher isolation and student conflicts. Combining the school populations of Walker and Kimball and of Rumford and Conant has smoothed out imbalances in class sizes and eliminated the necessity of having split classes, because now there are a sufficient number of children at a given grade level in each school to create multiple classes.

Walker and Kimball combined their neighborhoods

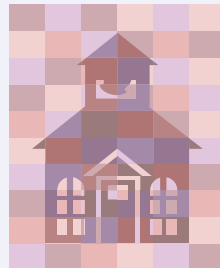
several years ago, and now all students from kindergarten through second grade attend Walker, while the third through fifth graders attend Kimball Walker at Rumford. In the past, because of dwindling numbers of students in the smaller schools and the common occurrence of having only one class at each grade level, principals wrestled with the difficulties of student placements. There was no option to separate children into different classes or to match children with differing learning styles. Now with three or four classes of each grade, Kimball Walker Principal Sue Noyes has noticed fewer behavioral problems.

Principal Deb McNeish has seen the same happy outcome at Conant-Rumford.

Some specialists who had been itinerant are now staying put in one building and have expressed relief that they can have a consistent schedule and presence among the students. With several classes of each grade, teacher collaboration is now possible and is enthusiastically welcomed by staff.

By the fall of 2012, when Dame and Eastman will combine into one new school adjacent to Broken Ground, we can expect the same positive results on the east side of the Merrimack.

Kassandra Ardinger
President, Concord School Board



How Will We Pay for the New Schools? What Will Three New Schools Cost the Concord Taxpayer?

There are three sources of funding for the three new elementary schools:

- State Building Aid
- Capital Facilities and Renovation Trust Fund
- Local Taxes

State Building Aid

Concord School District

qualifies for 40% building aid. This means the State will reimburse the District for 40% of the actual cost of the project. For the three schools estimated to cost approximately \$62 million, this means that State building aid will cover approximately \$26.8 million of the project. State funds are paid over the

life of the bond and are applied only to offset the principal cost.

In addition, if the three schools meet the requirements to be "high performance" or "Green" schools, the State will reimburse an additional 3%, or approximately \$1.8 million, bringing

total State reimbursement to close to \$28.6 million.

School District's Expendable Trust Fund for the Facility Project

The School District has paid off the bonds taken in the 1980s to renovate and expand Rundlett Middle School

(continued on page 2)

Additional Tax Impact Per Year

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
\$52.50	\$52.50	\$52.50	\$52.50	\$52.50	\$77.50	\$52.50

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	TOTAL
\$40.00	\$32.50	\$25.00	\$15.00	\$7.50	\$507.50

** Chart assumes the bonds are sold in 2010 and the current valuation of the City and the assessed value of the property are the same for 30 years.



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PERSPECTIVES



Kimball (N. Spring Street)



Kimball (Rumford Street)



Dame Eastman



Conant

What will three new schools cost? *(continued from page 1)*

and is in the process of paying off the bonds taken in the 1990s to renovate and expand the high school. Several years ago, the School Board, anticipating the need for major work for the elementary schools, established an expendable trust fund for this purpose which now stands at \$5.1 million. These funds will be used to offset costs of the elementary schools, especially during the early years when interest payments will be highest.

Local School Taxes

The owner of a property assessed at \$250,000 in Concord is currently paying approximately \$207.50 each year in local taxes for school debt payments. The chart on

page one represents the additional tax impact, by year, to cover the peak years of a 30-year bond before returning to the current debt payment level. The total additional tax paid during these peak years will be \$507.50.

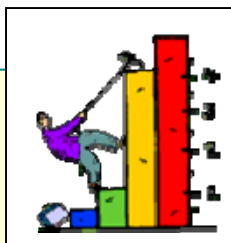
School District Bond Rating Increased

These numbers are still estimates. The School Board plans to issue bonds for the projects in October to capitalize on interest rates that are the lowest they have been in many years. The District recently received a higher bond rating, which will also help the Board and community secure advantageous financing at this time.

The projects will be bid in November at which time the Board will know the true costs of the project. Two firms, Hutter Construction and Harvey Construction, have been selected to bid on the projects.

For more details, visit www.concordk5project.com for an interactive version of this letter.

*** Disclaimer: All numbers used are forecasted based on today's values and assumed for the life of the 30-year bond.*



Concord Educators Commit to Three Improvement Goals for 2010-2011

Is every student being taught the District curriculum?

Are we coordinating our instruction when a student is being taught by more than one of us?

Do we change our instruction or the student's program if our data tells us the student is not making enough progress?

This year, Concord educators throughout the School District are asking these questions. The District's educators identified these three goals as a result of a year-long evaluation of our school district and the education our students were getting.

Not satisfied with our results on the state tests, in August 2009 the District engaged West Ed, a national consulting group, to help us identify the key areas where we needed to improve to ensure that all our students were becoming proficient readers, writers and mathematical problem solvers.

The state tests measure student performance for all students in the grades tested as a whole school, as well as for subgroups of students. These subgroups include racial and ethnic groups, English language learners, students with educational disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students. If even one of these

groups does not meet the performance target, then the District is determined not to have made AYP (Annual Yearly Progress).

In Concord, when considered as a whole district, the vast majority of students are proficient in reading, writing and math. When we disaggregated our results, however, we found too many students in our subgroups were not yet proficient in these areas.

The results of our self-study indicated that in some cases these students were not being taught the full curriculum. When we had several teachers working with a student,

we were not always coordinating the instruction. We also found we were collecting data on our students' achievement but we were not responding quickly enough and making the necessary changes in our instruction or our program when a student was not progressing.

We have initiated changes throughout the District this year, including the expectation that all teachers will teach the District curriculum, better coordinate instruction with one another and be ready to modify a student's program when needed.

Christine Rath
Superintendent of Schools

2010 CHS Graduates Fare Well on National Tests

Each fall the School District receives reports from the College Board and American College Testing Service with information about how our recent high school graduates did on their national exams. The reports enables us to see how our graduating seniors did compared to students who

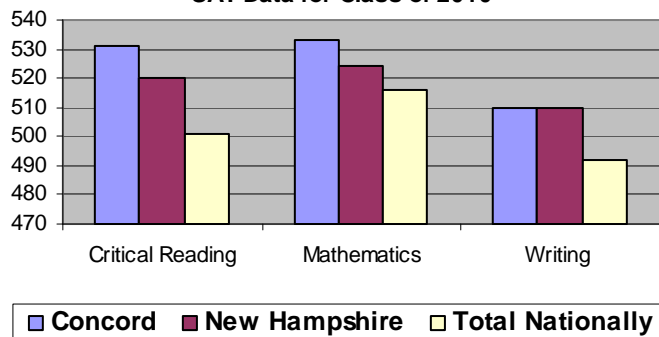
took one of the national tests throughout New Hampshire and throughout the nation.

This year we were pleased to see that Concord seniors once again performed well, compared to their peers in New Hampshire and in the nation. While our overall scores in

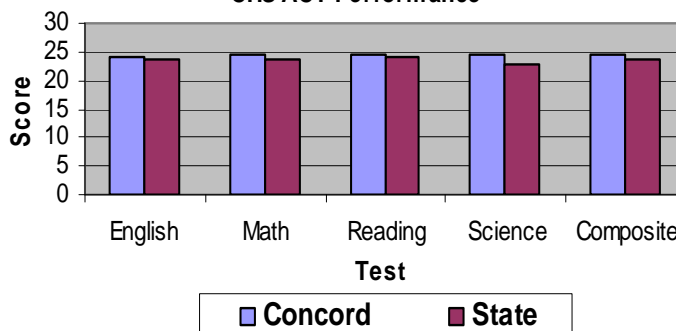
writing were similar to statewide results, we outperformed both the national group and the statewide groups on the essay portion of the test. Two hundred and thirty three (233) students took the SAT and 70 students took the ACT test.



SAT Data for Class of 2010



CHS ACT Performance



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New Policies Address Bullying, Truancy

Two laws passed by the New Hampshire legislature in 2010 require school districts to adopt policies on bullying and truancy before the end of the calendar year. The Board's Communications Committee is working to get these policies before the Board, and their text can be found on the District's website at www.concordnhschools.net. Comments should be directed to Jennifer Patterson, Communications Committee Chair, jpatt@csd.k12.nh.us.

Concord's existing policy against bullying will become even stronger with the changes required under the Pupil Safety and Violence

Prevention Act, H.B. 1523. The revised District policy defines bullying to include a single significant incident or pattern of incidents that physically harms a student or damages the student's property, causes a student emotional distress, interferes with educational opportunities, or creates a hostile educational environment. Cyberbullying, or bullying using an electronic device such as a telephone, computer or webpage, is also prohibited, as is retaliation against a student who reports bullying or cooperates in an investigation into bullying. In conjunction with the new policy, the District will engage in educa-

tion efforts aimed at ensuring that all District staff are familiar not only with the new investigation and reporting requirements, but also with ways of encouraging behaviors that make the school environment a positive and supportive one for all students. We want every student to be aware that bullying will not be tolerated in Concord's schools, and that each person can play a role in preventing this destructive behavior.

A second focus this fall is the District's policy on Attendance, Absenteeism and Truancy. Under H.B. 154, school district policies must define

"excused absence" and provide that ten half days of unexcused absence during a school year constitutes habitual truancy. The new policy limits excused absences to those related to personal illness, medical appointments, family emergencies, religious holidays, required court attendance, and similarly serious circumstances. This is an area that will require the District to work closely with parents and guardians to ensure that the policy is clear and fair, and that all students understand that a note or phone call stating that a student will not be in school must also include an acceptable reason for the absence.