

# VOTERS GUIDE

**Concord Special Town Election**  
**Thursday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022**  
**7 am to 8 pm**

## On the ballot:

- Debt exclusion for the building of the Concord Middle School
- Election of a School Committee member for a 1-year term

## Candidates Forum

Thursday, January 27<sup>th</sup>  
7:30 – 8:30 pm

In addition to this guide, the League of Women Voters Concord-Carlisle is hosting a virtual, moderated Q&A session with the candidates running for a one-year term on the Concord School Committee.

**Register for this Zoom event:** [lwwcc.org](https://lwwcc.org)

Available for viewing after the event at [lwwcc.org](https://lwwcc.org)

## In this guide:

- General voter information for the upcoming election
- Sample ballot
- Q&A with the candidates

The **League of Women Voters**, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

## General Voter Information

### Voting in Person

Polls are open 7 am to 8 pm

#### Check your polling location!

#### It has changed for almost half of us.

The Special Town Election is the first election since the changes to precincts and districts resulting from the 2020 Census. There have been changes to precincts and all of Precinct 4 has a new polling location.

Before going to the polls, please check your precinct and polling location by viewing the precinct map online or the new precinct app at the town web site [www.concordma.gov/vote](http://www.concordma.gov/vote) or in person at either of Concord's post offices.

Polling locations for each precinct are provided here and on the town website.

The deadline for registration for this election was January 14<sup>th</sup>.

### Absentee voting

Absentee ballots for this election are now available upon signed application or written request.

A mailing in mid-January from the town to each Concord household included an absentee ballot application for all elections held in Concord in 2022 which can also be accessed on the Town website: [www.concordma.gov/vote](http://www.concordma.gov/vote).

The deadline to apply for an absentee ballot by mail is Friday, January 28, 2022 at 5:00 pm. After Friday the 28th, you can still apply in person to vote absentee at the Town Clerk's Office up until 12 noon on Wednesday, February 2, 2022.



Absentee ballots must be returned to the Town Clerk's Office by 8:00 pm on February 2nd to be counted.

## Polling locations beginning in 2022

<b>Precinct 1</b>	Dept. of Planning & Land Management 141 Keyes Road
<b>Precinct 2</b>	Harvey Wheeler Community Center 1276 Main Street
<b>Precinct 3</b>	Harvey Wheeler Community Center 1276 Main Street
<b>Precinct 4</b>	Hunt Recreation Center 90 Stow Street ( <b>new location!</b> )
<b>Precinct 5</b>	Hunt Recreation Center 90 Stow Street

## Concord Special Town Election Voter's Guide

### Sample Ballot

 <p><b>SAMPLE BALLOT</b> <b>SPECIAL TOWN ELECTION</b> <b>TOWN OF CONCORD</b> <b>THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2022</b></p> <p><small>A. To vote, fill in the oval <input type="radio"/> to the right of your choice <input checked="" type="radio"/>. B. Follow the directions as to the number of candidates to be marked for each office. Vote for no more than the number specified. C. To vote for a person whose name is not printed on the ballot, write the candidate's name and residence in the blank provided and fill in the oval to the right <input checked="" type="radio"/>.</small></p>		 <p>Town Clerk</p>
<p><b>SCHOOL COMMITTEE</b> Vacancy</p> <p>TODD L. BENJAMIN, 333 Sudbury Road</p> <p>CARRIE JAMES RANKIN, 95 Upland Road</p> <p>(Write in)</p>	<p><b>QUESTION 1</b></p> <p>Shall the Town of Concord be allowed to exempt from the provisions of proposition two and one-half, so-called, the amounts required to pay for the bonds to be issued in order to construct a new middle school, to be located at 835 Old Marlboro Road, Concord, Massachusetts (the present site of the Sanborn Middle School), including, without limitation, the costs of engineering, design, site preparation, construction, landscaping, paving, furnishing and equipping, demolishing the existing school, construction of recreational fields, driveways and parking lots, and all other costs incidental or related thereto?</p> <p>Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/></p>	

**SAMPLE**

### On the ballot: Question 1 Funding the building of a new Concord Middle School

The construction of a new middle school in Concord has been a topic of study and planning since 2018. Now designed, the Town must vote to appropriate the funds for the building phase of the project. The approval from the Town requires two votes: a two-thirds majority at a Special Town Meeting (held January 20<sup>th</sup> 2022) and a simple majority at the Special Town Election on Thursday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> 2022. The vote at Town Meeting received an ample two-thirds majority.

To find out more about the project, visit the website [www.cmsbuildingproject.org](http://www.cmsbuildingproject.org) or on social media @cmsbcinconcord.

## Q&A with the Candidates running for a 1-year term on the Concord School Committee

### TODD BENJAMIN

Address: 333 Sudbury Road  
Email: [Todd4Concord@gmail.com](mailto:Todd4Concord@gmail.com);  
Website: [www.Todd4ConcordSC.com](http://www.Todd4ConcordSC.com);  
Facebook: [Facebook - Todd for School  
Committee](https://www.facebook.com/ToddforSchoolCommittee)

### CARRIE RANKIN

Address: 95 Upland Road  
Phone: 617.485.4544  
Email: [carriearankin@gmail.com](mailto:carriearankin@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.carriearankin.com](http://www.carriearankin.com)

#### **Questions for the Candidates:**

1. *Why are you are running for the School Committee and what qualifications will you bring to the position?*
2. *What issues do you think will be the most pressing for the School Committee in the upcoming year? What is your current view on those issues?*
3. *How do you plan to contribute to the on-going Middle School project?*

**Question 1: Why are you are running for the School Committee and what qualifications will you bring to the position?**

#### **Todd Benjamin:**

As a father of 3 kids in our schools – 1 in CMS and 2 in elementary school – a Cub Scout leader, and a Little League coach, I want to continue to be an advocate for our kids, our families, and our community.

Qualifications: I have a deep record of service to our Town that qualifies me to be on the School Committee. My experience includes:

1. Twice elected to the Concord Housing Authority
2. Chair of the Capital Planning Task Force
3. Chair of the Affordable Housing Funding Committee

In addition, I have attended or viewed the recording of every School Committee meeting since December 2020.

Results from these roles include:

- 1) Speaking up for our kids and our families, following the science, and advocating for our kids' education. This included coordinating parents to support our kids, the administration, and teachers by starting a petition to get our kids back to

school full-time last year. This garnered almost 400 Concordian signatures.

2) Driving changes in efficiency, transparency, and communication leading to greater citizen involvement while at the Concord Housing Authority.

3) Consistently speaking out about the tax burden facing families and seniors. While supportive of the middle school, I shared my concerns about the high cost. I applaud the CMSBC in finding an additional savings of \$1.7MM to help lower the cost.

4) Actively worked for and implemented greater diversity, equity, and inclusion in Town. Worked with the Finance Committee, Select Board, and voters to pass 4 articles at Town Meeting promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion.

5) Experience working with state and federal budgets.

**Carrie Rankin:**

My husband, Jonathan, and I moved to Concord in 2013 before we had kids. We were excited about the vibrant community and, certainly, the incredible schools. We have had three children here – Cooper (8), Leah (6) and Micaela (2). I'm running for School Committee because I want to give back to this place my family and I call home.

I have spent my professional career working in government, most recently serving as Congressman Seth Moulton's chief of staff. I believe in the importance of public service, the power of good leadership and the critical role an education plays in developing tomorrow's leaders.

Here in town, I am a poll worker. I also serve as the communications chair at Concord Children's Center and I am an involved parent at Thoreau Elementary School. I have also worked with First Parish in Concord to help welcome and support the needs of an Afghan family seeking refuge in our area.

I would be honored to serve this community as the newest member of the Concord School Committee.

***Question 2: What issues do you think will be the most pressing for the School Committee in the upcoming year? What is your current view on those issues?***

**Todd Benjamin:**

Students first - The educational, social, & emotional wellbeing of our kids should be our top priority. We need to diligently work to address these needs. A key component of this is prudently using the \$1.2MM in federal funds the schools received. I am currently evaluating ways to do this.

Personnel – Having the right people in the right roles to support students and staff is important. My experience on boards dealing with personnel topics will help here. This is an area where transparency and communication between the School Committee, the administration, and the town will be important.

Fiscal responsibility with the best educational outcomes for our kids. - We all want the best for our kids. But we must strike a balance with the other needs of our community and with the burden on

taxpayers. I will continue my focus on fiscal responsibility on the School Committee.

***Carrie Rankin:***

There are a number of issues that I believe are of critical importance, including:

- Covid: I have been so grateful to live in Concord where the Superintendent and School Committee's science-based approach kept our kids both safe *and* in school. Still, the impact of covid has taken a toll on families, kids, teachers, the entire community in ways that we will be navigating for years to come.
- Mental Health: We were approaching a mental health crisis before covid and we are in one now. Prioritizing mental health resources for children of all ages will be critical in the coming years.
- Teachers: Teachers are our greatest asset and many are exhausted. We need to proactively address teacher burnout and retention as a School Committee and community.
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Dr. Laurie Hunter has made DEI a priority of her administration. I fully support her efforts and will work to create policies that ensure all children and families feel, and truly are, welcome in Concord schools.
- Fiscal sustainability: I understand that the decisions the School Committee makes impact the entire community and I take that responsibility seriously. I will look at the impact on the entirety of Concord - not just those with school aged children - when making financial decisions.

These are tough issues to which there are no perfect solutions. I will approach this position with curiosity and a willingness to listen and learn, compassion for our kids and teachers, transparency, and in collaboration with town leaders, my colleagues on the School Committee and all citizens in this community.

***Question 3: How do you plan to contribute to the on-going Middle School project?***

***Todd Benjamin:***

Much work for the middle school project lies ahead. I will contribute my background in real estate finance and development to helping maintain fiscal prudence of the project. I will also contribute my experience with solar power – both from having it on my home and from serving on boards where solar power was implemented on institutional/commercial buildings.

My background and experiences prepare me to meaningfully contribute to the pressing issues facing the School Committee and our Town now. We need to make the most of this 1-year term.

***Carrie Rankin:***

The debate in town was less about the need for a new Middle School, and more about the design and cost of it. The process - led by the Concord Middle School Building Committee - was transparent, thorough, and it resulted in unanimous support from

the Finance Committee, School Committee and Select Board.

As the project continues to develop, I will work with this same collaborative, transparent spirit to ensure we build a Middle School that supports student achievement and success, is beneficial to the whole town - and not just those with school age children, and uses sustainable materials to protect our planet.

**PLEASE  
VOTE!**