

# GREEN TEAM

C O N C O R D

January 27, 2002

Subject: **The Design Process For Our Schools And Other Projects**

Dear Editor,

I am writing for Concord's Green Team to suggest that we require architects employed by the Town to provide a robust design process for high performance energy and cost efficient and attractive buildings. This will benefit the town by providing buildings that are less expensive to operate and maintain and that are more durable and suitable to this great community.

Concord has been known for the quality of its school system and we believe that buildings that do not reflect best construction practices could not only hinder the town's opportunity for outstanding schools, but will, in fact, limit the actual education experience provided to our students. This relationship has been increasingly shown in successive objective studies of the relationship between the school environment and the quality of the education received and the resulting performance of the students.

In particular, we believe that we must begin to look at projects from a life-cycle point of view, since we pay for these projects over a long period of time (the bond) and to achieve the least annual cost to the taxpayers.

Life cycle costing means that we evaluate the longevity of the building as well as the total cost of the project including capital and annual operation and maintenance costs. This cost analysis is necessary in order to evaluate alternative choices. We believe that many of the high-performance elements we have been advocating for will become compelling if this approach is taken. In addition, if we look at educational performance, we believe that other high-performance elements will prove to be very important as well.

It is necessary to start to consider capital projects using this criteria as early as possible in the process. Changing points of reference midstream is difficult at best and the electorate is likely to view such a change in presentation (from construction cost to life cycle cost) as duplicitous, even though it may not be so. It will entail more detailed cost estimating work by both the architects and the Town. But this is good; we need this information in order to make informed decisions and will be more likely to set aside appropriate monies for maintenance.

Sincerely,

Richard Keleher for the Green Team

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