

# My Turn: St. Paul's School is working hard on community relationships

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For the Monitor

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Facts and transparency have never been more important than they are in the fall of 2020.

Over the past several months, St. Paul's School has continued to make important strides in strengthening the culture of our school as well as improving the safety and well-being of all of our students, faculty, and staff.

Our relationships with the entire community continue to progress, including our efforts underway with nonprofit partners, city leaders, the Concord Police Department, and the New Hampshire attorney general.

We are proud of our progress, which has been well documented by recent reports issued by the state's independent compliance overseer.

In that regard, I write to offer some factual corrections to the information the *Concord Monitor* published Sunday in the "My Turn" article appearing on the opinion page, ["St. Paul's School and accountability."](#)

First and foremost, St. Paul's School fully respects the Office of the Attorney General and our obligations under the Settlement Agreement. This work is ongoing despite the pandemic, which has forced a new and unique approach to learning these past nine months.

We work very hard to ensure the safety and well-being of all students at St. Paul's School and to document that work for the state and this community. We object strongly to any assertions to the contrary, as they are unsupported by any facts.

The high-profile departure of the overseer was well documented in local media. We have been working closely with the Attorney General's Office and will continue to do so, and the search for the new overseer is ongoing. What is important is that the oversight work continues uninterrupted. This is what our parents, our students, our alumni, our faculty and staff, and our board all want.

In addition, there is misinformation about taxes and payments made by the school. St. Paul's School is a tax-exempt institution and pays no income taxes, but in the last fiscal year we paid approximately \$672,000 in property taxes to the city of Concord. In 2018, based on available information, the school was the seventh largest payer of property taxes to the city.

St. Paul's is also the fifth largest employer in the city, which contributes meaningfully to the local economy.

The article also falsely states that the school has been given interest-free loans by the state. In 1998 and 2010 St. Paul's raised money through the New Hampshire Health and Education Facilities Authority, which was set up to facilitate financings by educational institutions. These loans were not interest-free and have been repaid in full with accrued interest. To suggest otherwise is misleading and wrong.

We work hard to be a good citizen of Concord and a good neighbor to businesses and not-for-profits alike. Thousands of New Hampshire residents are alumni of our Advanced Studies Program which, for 62 years, has offered rising high school seniors from around the state the opportunity to learn together and experience a pre-college, residential school experience that many have found to be transformational.

Sunday's article goes on to make some outrageous claims, which come from an author whose family has had a deeply painful experience at St. Paul's School. But facts and transparency are critical in moving forward. St. Paul's School is not above the law. We welcome and embrace efforts by New Hampshire officials to ensure the safety and well-being of students; it goes to our core mission. We respect the people of New Hampshire and their leaders and wish to work collaboratively. We are making documented progress, and there is more work to be done.

We hope the above offers better information about realities of St. Paul's School.

(Archibald Cox Jr. is president of the St. Paul's School board of trustees.)