



Superintendent's Corner

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Interim Superintendent

February 5, 2016

Today marked our first real snowstorm for the year! I hope everyone is at home, staying warm and relaxing. Our maintenance staff have been working hard to keep up with the snowfall and to ensure that the facilities will be ready for students to return to school on Monday.

High School Principal Search Update

A community forum has been scheduled for Tuesday, February 9th from 3:00 – 4:30 in the auditorium at the Amesbury High School to meet our two finalists for the position of Amesbury High School Principal – Elizabeth McAndrews and Brendon Sullivan. Note – this is a change in location from what was initially reported last week. This will provide students, parents, and community members with an opportunity to meet both candidates, learn about their values and vision for the high school, and an opportunity to ask questions to the candidates. Following the forum, feedback from attendees will be sought by the administration and will be used to help select the best candidate to lead the high school.

We are delighted with the caliber of both candidates and are confident that we will be able to select the most qualified candidate to continue the good work happening at the Amesbury High School.

Massachusetts School Building Authority Workshop – The Story of a Building

This week, I attended a workshop presented by the Massachusetts Office of the Inspector General and the Massachusetts School Building Authority. This workshop provided me with some insight about key practices to ensure a successful school building project. The agenda of the day included presentations from:

- The inspector general
- MSBA Senior executives
- Principals, school committee members, and city/town officials from communities that have recently completed building projects
- Expert architects
- Owner Project Managers

We also had the opportunity to tour the Estabrook Elementary School in Lexington. This school project was completed less than two years ago. During the tour, we were able to hear from the architects and school officials about lessons learned and important considerations when completing a building project. I believe we are well positioned to move forward with a building project and gained valuable information about developing a building plan that engages all members of the community.

School committee vacancy

On Tuesday evening (February 9th), there will be a joint meeting of the school committee and city council to select a school committee member to complete the term of office vacated by Mr. Christian Scorzoni When he was appointed to the City Council in January. This meeting will occur at the city hall at 7:00 pm. The following residents have expressed interest in this opening and will be considered on Tuesday evening:

- David Andrews
- Nicholas Wheeler
- Jacob Karlins

If you didn't catch this week's school committee meeting, here are some things you missed...

- ***Elementary PTO*** – Elementary PTO co-presidents Tom Cassidy and Sara Graham presented an update to the committee on the activities of the PTO. They discussed the distinction between a PTA and PTO and their rationale for shifting to a PTO model in order to better meet the range of needs of the school communities. They also shared some of the upcoming activities for students and their families. Mr. Cassidy stressed that while he and Ms. Graham were at the meeting to present about the PTO, the strength of the PTO revolved around the membership – who put in significant time to plan and implement programs for our students.
- ***Early College High School*** – Ms. Marybeth Exner and Ms. April Rivers, staff members at the Amesbury High School, facilitated a presentation regarding the Early College High School Program. They gave an overview of the program, including a summary of student performance both within and beyond the program. Probably most powerful were the comments made by current and former students about the impact of the program on their academic performance and readiness to complete college level work. This presentation was well-received by the school committee; we will be having a follow up discussion at another school committee meeting where the committee will explore how to ensure the program sustainability and how to continue to promote student participation in this program.
- ***Mid-Cycle Review***: As part of the requirements under the statewide educator evaluation program, I presented the committee with a report of my progress towards meeting the goals that were approved by the school committee in October. A copy of this report can be found on my link (Office of the Superintendent – Superintendent's Annual Goals 2015-2016)

Cards for Soldiers

On Wednesday, I had the pleasure of reading through Valentine's Day cards written by students and other members of the community. These cards will be delivered to wounded veterans currently staying at the Walter Reed Hospital in Maryland. It was great for our students to have an opportunity to participate in this project. Thanks to Rosey Werner for coordinating this effort and including the schools in the project!

Be well and have a great weekend!

Gary