



Superintendent's Corner

Gary S. Reese, Ed.D.

Superintendent

March 3, 2017

School Committee Meeting

Monday evening, the school committee met for a regular meeting. At this meeting, I presented my proposed budget for the 2018 fiscal year. This budget included maintaining programs and staffing that were added during the fiscal year 2017 budget process, and included a request to add some additional programming for the district. The requested additions included:

- Middle school autism program – the district has a population of students that are currently in the elementary schools that will be transitioning up to the middle school in September. In order to maintain an appropriate level of service for those students, we need to create a specialized program, staffed by a special educator and paraprofessional who have specific training and experience in working with children with autism.
- Out of District Coordinator – Currently, we have over forty students who special education needs require instruction in out of district placements. In order to effectively meet the needs of these students and in order to continue to examine opportunities to transition these student back to the public school setting (when appropriate), we need a staff member who can devote time to help support those students and their families. Currently, our Director of Student Services, Ms. Mary Houde, oversees out of district programming, but these responsibilities can be more effectively met if the district had one person specifically assigned to working on out of district programming and services.
- Innovation High School Staffing – The special education staff at the Innovation High School currently consists of one special education teacher and one special education paraprofessional. Given the number of students on individualized educational plans, the special education teacher is overburdened with completing testing, meeting and paperwork documentation requirements. I am requesting that the staff be restructured so that the program will have two certified special education staff who can share in the mandated state responsibilities and continue to provide quality direct service to our students. This request will not change the number of staff, as the paraprofessional position will shift to a certified educator position, but it will enable our certified staff to better support our students and families.
- High School department heads – The high school does not have department heads who can support the administration in overseeing the implementation of curriculum and instruction within each department. I am requesting the reinstatement of department heads for the upcoming school year. This will provide more specialized support to the teachers within each department as they will have access to and support from an individual within their department who has specific content level expertise.

At Monday's meeting, the school committee voted on reappointing Mr. Charles Labella as an Amesbury Representative to the Whittier Tech School Committee. Mr. Labella has been serving on the committee and his term was set to expire at the end of this month. The committee unanimously voted to reappoint him for a three year term.

The school committee's next meeting will be on Monday, March 13th at 7:00 in the Amesbury High School library. The purpose of this meeting is to provide the opportunity for public comment on the proposed budget. A copy of the budget is available at the Amesbury Public Library for review. Additionally, the budget, along with my budget presentation, are posted on the district website at:

<http://schools.amesburyma.gov/amesburypublic.cfm?subpage=1416626>

NECC Presentation

Wednesday evening, I attended a presentation from NECC regarding the continued opportunity for our students to participate in Early College High School programming. Parents and students had the opportunity to learn about NECC's career and college pathways options. A number of people spoke about the program, including NECC President Lane Glenn, AHS Principal Elizabeth McAndrews, teacher April Rivers, and representatives from NECC, Lyndon State College and Regis College. I was most impressed with one of the speakers, Matt Gingras. Matt is a graduate of Amesbury Innovation High School who spoke about his experiences as he pursued post secondary options, ultimately ending up at NECC. From there, he transferred to UMass Amherst and earned a bachelor's degree in journalism. Matt was such a great advocate of the college, sharing how NECC works so closely with students to promote success at NECC and beyond. More importantly, Matt was an incredible representation of the typical hard-working and motivated student from Amesbury!

Upcoming Events

Jeanne Geiger White Ribbon Breakfast

The logo for the Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center features the name "Jeanne Geiger" in a large, purple, serif font, with "CRISIS CENTER" in a smaller, purple, sans-serif font below it. The text is set against a light purple rectangular background.

A local organization that provides support to our schools is the Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center. On March 21st, the organization will be holding its annual White Ribbon Breakfast. This event is held in recognition of a worldwide campaign for human rights that engages men to help end violence against women, men,

and children. The breakfast is being held from 7:30 – 9:15 am at the Ipswich Country Club. For more information, please go to: <http://jeannegeigercrisiscenter.org/>

AEFI Hall of Honor Celebration

On behalf of the Amesbury Education Foundation Inc (AEFI), I would like to invite parents and community members to AEFI's Hall of Honor celebration on April 29th. At this event, AEFI recognizes three individuals for their contributions to the schools and community. This is a special year for AEFI, as it is celebrating 15 years of supporting the schools. I am pleased to announce

that the AEFI board has selected three outstanding recipients for this banner year's celebration. Peter Hoyt (former educator, principal and current school committee member), Graham McKay (AHS Alumni and Executive Director of Lowell's Boat Shop) and Joan Miller (founding AEFI board member). I am pleased with these selections as each person embodies a true spirit of caring and each has made substantial contributions to the students of Amesbury. Watch for more information to come regarding this exciting event.



Pettengill House Fundraiser

Tonight, I will be attending the Pettengill House fundraiser at the Blue Ocean Music Hall in Salisbury. For more information about this event, see the flyer below. Pettengill House is a wonderful community organization that provides invaluable support to our schools, students and families.

Different Kinds of Minds Contribute to Society

Saturday morning, I will be driving to Old Colony Regional Technical High School in Rochester, Massachusetts to watch a presentation from Temple Grandin. For those of you unfamiliar with Dr. Grandin, she is an amazing individual – she is internationally recognized spokesperson for autism. Dr. Grandin, while never formally diagnosed with autism, displayed many of the characteristics of an individual with autism and did not even speak until she was 3 ½ years old. She is a remarkable example of an individual who, with the support and dedication of her family, did not let her disability or labels deter her from achieving her dreams. She is a professor of animal science at Colorado State University and is a renowned consultant to the livestock industry on animal behavior. I am extremely excited to hear Dr. Grandin speak – she is an inspiration!

Girls' Basketball

Saturday afternoon, I will be attending the division 3 north sectional finals for girls' basketball. Our ladies have had an incredibly successful season and will be playing against Bishop Fenwick. The game is being played at Wakefield High School (60 Farm Street, Wakefield) at 4:00 pm. Come show your support and cheer on our athletes. MIAA Ticket prices are \$10 for adults and \$7 for students. Tickets are sold at the door.

Please see the attached flyers for some other upcoming events that support our schools and community.

Be well and have a great weekend!

Gary



The Pettengill House, Inc.



invites you to join us for the 6th Annual
Pettengill House Fundraiser

with Honorary Chair, Billie McLane

dancing, two live bands, food, silent and live auctions
and a night filled with fun!!!

Friday, March 10, 2017, 7-11pm

Blue Ocean Music Hall, Salisbury, Ma

Thomas Machine Works Band



Live Music from

Higher Ground



Buy your tickets

at www.pettengillhouse.org or 13 Lafayette Rd., Salisbury

\$50 in advance, \$60 at the door.

*You are invited to support this wonderful event through your attendance, sponsorship
or auction donations.*

For more information visit www.pettengillhouse.org, call The Pettengill Family Resource Center
at 978-792-5205 or email blueocean@pettengillhouse.org

All proceeds to benefit area children and families.

ONE GREAT NIGHT! ONE GREAT AGENCY!

Thank you to Platinum Sponsors:



Stunning Waterford Crystal Footed Bowl

Generously donated by: Rosey & Jack Werner
in honor of Patty & Peter Hoyt to benefit AEFI

\$500 Value



Tickets are \$5.00 each or 3 for \$10.00

Tickets are available at Flatbread Fundraiser on March 7th. and from Central Office, Stone Ridge Property, or any AEFI Board Member.

Winner will be picked at AEFI's Hall of Honor Celebration on Friday, April 28, 2017.