



Superintendent's Corner

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Superintendent

March 31, 2017

As I am writing this message, I am looking out of my office window and watching the snow fall... it made me think how happy I am that tomorrow is not a school day! I hope that you all stay safe in this upcoming storm... I think tomorrow will be a good day to stay at home and enjoy a nice cup of hot chocolate with your family.

ASCD Conference

Over the weekend, I attended the ASCD (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) annual National conference. The theme of the conference was Empower 17, and workshops focused on the following themes:

- The Whole Child
- Transformational Leadership
- Poverty and Equity
- Teaching and Learning Environment
- Redefining Student Success
- Global Engagement

I am pleased to share that Eryn Maguire, Elizabeth McAndrews and I were selected to present at this conference. Our workshop focused on the work we are doing with Ronit Carter from McTighe and Associates, as we redesign our curriculum, incorporating social emotional learning competencies directly into the curriculum. We haven't been able to identify any other community in Massachusetts that has undertaken this work through this lens, so there was a lot of interest from conference participants in our work. We had approximately 125 conference participants select our session. There was a great level of interest in the SEL component of our work and how we were accomplishing this initiative. After our presentation, each of us received many more questions from participants. I believe this is a reflection of the strong need and desire from educators to incorporate SEL into our daily practices. As a reminder, SEL is not a special education initiative – learning about the competencies and applying that understanding to real life situations is something that can benefit every student. For more information about SEL and the competencies (including some research about the impact of SEL on academic achievement), go to www.casel.org

Leadership Team Meeting

Our leadership team, comprised of principals and central office staff, meets every two weeks to address a variety of issues and to continue to develop our skills as educational leaders. This week's meeting, we spent a lot of time processing where we were with the curriculum development process and what next steps we should be taking. The inclement weather this year has impacted some of the work, as well as the momentum of the work. We spent time discussing how to re-energize this effort and get back on track. We revised our implementation schedule and process in order to address this challenge.

MSBA – School Building Project (Amesbury Elementary)

We continue to make progress with our projected building project for Amesbury Elementary School. There were a few loose ends that needed to be tied up as we complete the eligibility process. We are working with MSBA (Massachusetts School Building Authority) to respond to those issues; however, we continue to be within the required timeframe for completing our action steps. In May, we will go before the MSBA board to seek approval to move into feasibility. During this period, the district, under the direction of the building committee, will explore various building and grade-level configuration options with the assistance of an owner's project manager and architect firm.

Rotary

This week in Rotary, I had my classification talk. Each Rotary member is asked to present about themselves so that club members can learn more about one another, as well as identify areas of strength that members can bring to the club. One of my least favorite things is to talk about myself, but I got through it. When I finished, I actually learned about potential opportunities and areas of support from club members for the district. It turned out to be an area of benefit, so I guess it was a good thing to complete!

North Shore Superintendents' Round Table (NSSRT)

This month, the NSSRT invited our local legislators to attend a luncheon with us so that we could share some challenges around special education funding and legislation. Both Senator Katie O'Connor-Ives and State Rep Jim Kelcourse were in attendance. Some of the topics that we discussed included:

- Circuit Breaker funding
- Transportation Costs
- The changing demographics of our students with special needs and programming challenges
- The increase in students identified with social/emotional and behavioral disorders

Upcoming Events

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 28th. 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.



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

Be well and have a great weekend!
Gary

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.