



## **Superintendent's Corner**

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Interim Superintendent

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### **Grant Opportunities**

We are continuing to make work on grant proposals to support our students and families in Amesbury.

The first grant is being awarded through the Department of Justice. It is a grant entitled Comprehensive School Safety Initiative. If received, it will help the schools explore best practices in working collaboratively with local law enforcement and community service agencies to proactively support students and minimize student involvement with the legal system. We have been having weekly meetings with each of the agencies (Pettengill House, Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center, and the Amesbury Police Department) to craft and refine our grant application. With multiple people working on the grant narrative, we are able to strengthen our proposal. This grant will be submitted at the end of May.

The second grant is being awarded through the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. It is a two year mentoring matching grant with a goal of increasing the number of high-quality mentoring programs as a strategy to assist in closing the persistent achievement gap among Massachusetts youth. After having some phone conversations with staff members from NECC, we decided not to apply for this grant. There were some concerns that we might not meet some of the eligibility criteria in order to be considered for this grant. However, we continue to feel strongly that our intended goal under the grant continues to be worthwhile. We were going to use funds from the grant to establish a mentoring program between NECC and Amesbury High School to support the learning needs of students in the Early College High School program. We will explore other avenues to support this effort, including other grant opportunities as well as ways that it might be sustained through our proposed budget for the upcoming year.

### **Amesbury Innovation High School**

I continue to be impressed with the quality of our Amesbury Innovation High School. Under the direction of principal Eryn Maguire, we have seen this program grow into one that provides a quality, rigorous curriculum to students, while at the same time being sensitive to the individual social/emotional needs of the students. AS part of their continued work, principals from the middle school, high school and Amesbury Innovation High School met this week, along with representation from Pettengill House and our school resource officers, to discuss students that might benefit from the structure of the Innovation school. This marks the first time that such a thoughtful approach has been initiated to enroll students. Rather than waiting for students to struggle in an environment that is not appropriate for their needs, the school will reach out to the students and families and offer the opportunity for them to learn more about the program and how it might benefit each child.

Other happenings at the Innovation High School include a field trip to Salem State University. This college visit helped to promote higher level education and show the students what to expect from college and what they might gain from a college education. One of the students, Charles, commented about how much he enjoyed the visit, as it went beyond just what to expect from the academic program, but also included an opportunity for our students to learn about 'a day in the life of a college student'. This field trip is a wonderful example of how the programs at the Innovation High School support our student needs and promote long term growth.

Students at the Innovation High School have the opportunity to participate in programs through our high school, such as athletics. This afternoon, a number of our innovation students will be getting ready to attend the prom. The school is setting up structures to support the students. Many of the students will get ready at the school and have help getting their hair, makeup, and nails done. Parents have been invited to come and help out. Pictures will be taken there and the students will take their transportation right from the school. This is a prime example of how our schools are entities that provide more support than just meeting academic needs of students.

### **PRT Day**

Wednesday was a half day for our students; the staff, however, worked a full day and completed a variety of professional development activities. These activities included transition planning for our students. Teachers spend a lot of time talking about students transitioning from one grade to another and one school to another to identify how to best meet the needs of the students.

### **City Council Finance Subcommittee Meeting**

Last night, the administrative and school committee members attended the City Council meeting to present our budget. The types of questions from City Council members were thoughtful and reflected a deep analysis of our budget proposal. We received positive feedback about both the process and the final proposed budget. I am confident that this is a step in the right direction and that the City Council will look favorably on our proposed budget. I want to thank all of our teachers, administrators, school committee members and community members for their feedback and support in this year's budget process. Our final proposed budget represents the work and input of a number of individuals. It is through this collaborative effort that we are able to strengthen our schools.

Tonight, I am off to Amesbury's junior prom. I always look forward to these types of events – it is great to see the students all dressed up. I'll share some pictures in next week's report.

Be well and have a great weekend!

Gary