



Superintendent's Corner

Gary S. Reese, Ed.D.

Interim Superintendent

May 20, 2016

This month is flying by! It is hard to believe that there are only 24 days left of school. Our last day is Friday, June 24th and it is a half day for students. Dismissal is as follows:

Elementary Schools - 11:30 am

Middle School - 10:50 am

High School - 10:50 am

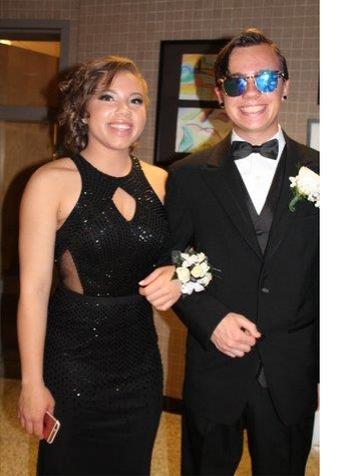
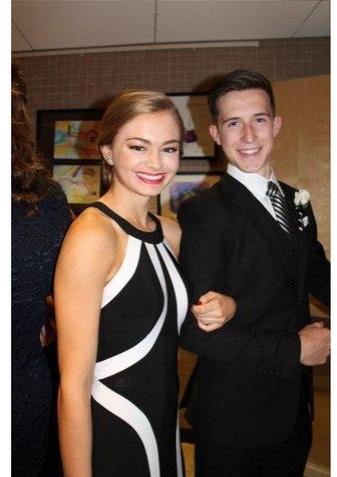
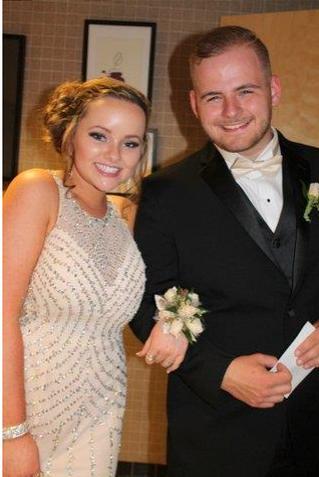
Grant Update – Comprehensive School Safety Initiative

We are continuing to make work on grant proposals to support our students and families in Amesbury. We have almost finished writing the narrative and budget proposal for the Comprehensive School Safety Initiative. If awarded this grant, we will be able to strengthen and coordinate existing networks and measure the effectiveness of implementing a comprehensive wraparound support model and coordinated community response, with the schools being the 'hub' for identification of and access to families in need.

Our grant work this week involved a couple of meetings attended by representatives from Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center, Pettengill House, and The Amesbury Police Department. During our second meeting, we were joined (via phone) by staff members from UMass Lowell. UMass Lowell is going to serve as our principal researcher for this effort. They were very helping in framing our research question and design. I am confident that it is a stronger application due to the collaborative efforts of all involved. We will submit the application next Friday.

Junior Prom

Last Friday, I had the distinct pleasure to join many of our juniors and seniors at the prom held at Atkinson Country Club. While the weather did not cooperate for promenade in the center, we were able to hold the event in the high school auditorium. It went off very well and staff members commented that they thought there might have been a larger audience than in past years. I want to commend all of the students for making this night special – they were well dressed and well behaved! Some pictures are on the next page...



PDESE Convening – Expanding Opportunities for Every Student, Every Educator, Every School

On Tuesday, I attended a conference sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The theme of the conference was around equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. Commissioner Mitchell Chester addressed the audience, acknowledging the hard work and growth across the state, but also identifying that there was still room for improvement. The keynote speaker was by Techla Connolly, an educator from Revere. Ms. Connolly shared her experiences as a new teacher advocating for a student that didn't necessarily fit the mold. Through her efforts, this student, who had been viewed as a behavior problem with limited academic potential, was able to successfully finish school with honors. It was a reminder to all in the audience that, as educators, we need to constantly promote the individual strengths of all students, even if that means approaching the student in a different way than you would typically work with a student.

I participated in three break-out sessions that involved using data, understanding the impact of poverty, and identifying *strategic* hiring practices. Each workshop offered practical strategies to meeting the needs of our diverse student population. I look forward to sharing this information with our leadership team and developing a plan for dissemination out to staff.

Thursday evening events

On Thursday, I had the chance to attend two different school events. The first was held at the Amesbury Middle School called Celebration of Student Learning. At this event, students and parents toured the building and classrooms where various student work products were displayed. What was most impressive about this event was the variety of subject areas that were represented. I think that I saw every subject represented – this evening offered a great chance for students to communicate with their families about their various learnings during this school year.

Immediately following, I returned to the high school where I was able to participate in the National Honor Society induction ceremony. This year, 36 students were being inducted into NHS. It is quite an accomplishment for our students. Not only do they need to demonstrate strong academic skills, but they also need to show leadership, character and service. This year's well-deserving inductees included:



David Blumsack
Jacob Blumsack
Hannah Breidenbach
Kelsey Buonodono
Becca Castonguay
Kimberly Croce
Abigail Davis
Eric Dawes
Kaileigh DeCosta
James Doherty III
Fiona Doran
Amber Finney

Brandon Frost
Kayleigh Hooper
Joy Jancewicz
Sydney Knowlton
Sadie Lambert
Julia LaMontagne
Molly Lynch
Skyla Lynch
Nicholas Marshall
Patrick McCue
Molly McElaney
Rebecca Mear

Madison Napoli
Catherine Peerson
Sydney Perkins
Janae Petipas
Molly Rains
Marianna Sanborn
Abigail Sartori
Tristan Sullivan-Parks
Jacob Sunnerberg
Bradlee Taylor II
Emma Theriault
Ally Willson

Be well and have a great weekend!

Gary