



## Superintendent's Corner

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Interim Superintendent

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### In Our Schools...

On Tuesday, I had the opportunity to walk through a number of classrooms at Cashman Elementary with Principal Lou Charette. We were completing a structured observation in order to engage in a conversation about differentiation practices. I was very pleased with the instruction we observed. In particular, we visited a fourth grade classroom where the students were interacting with the teacher on the topic of metric vs. English system of measurement. I was impressed with the student dialogue and the way they were engaged with the lesson. I attribute some of their engagement to the classroom teacher's instructional approach. Of particular note was her use of wait time. Research shows that students often need more time to process a question and formulate a response than teachers typically provide. Some research suggests that teachers often wait less than two seconds between asking a question and calling on a student for a response. Wait-time refers to an educational strategy where teachers provide additional time in a non-threatening way in order for more students to develop a response. During my visit to this classroom, this teacher, Ms. Cavalier, skillfully provided students with the time necessary between questions. This increased class participation as well as the quality of responses from the students. For more information about the benefits of wait time, go to: <http://www.ericdigests.org/1995-1/think.htm>

Tuesday morning, I also had the opportunity to spend some time in the classroom of Mr. Thibodeau. I was a guest 'judge' for his students' culminating project entitled "The Big Pitch: Starting a Business Project". As part of this assignment, the students were asked to create a business plan for their very own startup company. The students had worked in groups to identify a product, design promotional materials for their product, and develop a business plan for the product. I was impressed with the students' abilities to articulate their product, as well as to answer questions from me, Mr. Thibodeau and their classmates. This creative project was a great way to keep the students engaged and help them to understand the 'big picture' of business.

### End of Year Celebrations for our Seniors

Monday evening, I attended the Top Ten Dinner at Molise. This dinner is a celebration of the top ten graduating seniors. These students are excellent representatives of our schools, both in terms of their academic performance, as well as their involvement in extra-curricular activities. The event is a great way to recognize the students, but also for the students to acknowledge one teacher who made a significant difference in their lives. Each student shared a brief description of the teacher and



the impact that the teacher has made on their lives. The teachers then each took an opportunity to speak about the students and how the students have grown into mature, respectable adults over the years.



Friday afternoon, I attended the AHS Sing Out. This event is a celebration of all of our graduating seniors and provides an opportunity for students to share their musical talents, with a number of students singing, playing instruments and even dancing. During this event, the students also identify who the yearbook has been dedicated to, recognize our retiring teachers, and acknowledge various individuals that have helped support them over the past four years. This year, the yearbook was dedicated to Ms. Carol Bartlett in the main office. Ms. Bartlett is a true gem that exemplifies all that is

great in the Amesbury Public Schools. It was nice to see that the students recognize her contribution to our schools. I was sitting next to Ms. Bartlett when this dedication was announced and I can share that she was very surprised and moved by this recognition. What a great way to end this week and to celebrate our graduating class of 2016!

### Excellence in Education Awards

As we approach the end of the school year, there are many opportunities to acknowledge and celebrate our students. The school community also is very committed to recognizing our teachers that work hard every day to provide students with a safe, supportive learning environment where all kids can thrive. Each year, teachers are recognized by their colleagues for their contribution to the Amesbury Public Schools through our Excellence in Education awards. This year, thirteen staff members were recognized and celebrated at a luncheon at Flatbread Pizza. This award is particularly special to our teachers because the recipients are nominated and selected by their peers.



### Director of Finance and Operations

This week, a search committee interviewed candidates for the position of Director of Finance and Operations. This was the first step in the process. Finalists will be identified and will spend some time in our district next week meeting groups of teachers, administrators and central office staff; all of these groups will have input into the selection of the candidate that will be moved forward to the school committee on Monday, June 6<sup>th</sup>. The anticipated start date for the successful candidate will be July 1<sup>st</sup>, or as soon thereafter, based on the candidate's commitments in his/her current place of employment.

The end of the year is busy with events and celebrations – attending these events is probably one of the best parts of my job as I get to interact with students... this is what it is all about!!

Be well and have a great **LONG** weekend!

Gary