



Superintendent's Corner

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Interim Superintendent

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I hope everyone is enjoying this beautiful fall weather! It's so nice to be mid-October and not have to be wearing jackets/sweatshirts yet!

City Council

On Tuesday evening, I attended the City Council meeting. There were two items on the agenda which impacted the schools. The first item was the second reading of an order to establish a special education stabilization fund to support the schools if we were to encounter any extraordinary, unanticipated special education costs (such as exorbitant costs for new students moving into the district during the school year). There was much discussion from the council about the establishment of the fund, how it would be accessed, etc. In the end, this order passed 9-0. This represents the first step in the process. The council had to first establish the account (line item in the budget). The next step would be to fund this account. That will be a lengthier discussion and will likely occur towards the end of the fiscal year.

The second item on the agenda related to schools was a resolution to release the funds that had been appropriated for our technology capital improvement plan. Last spring \$106,000 was appropriated for technology improvements in the schools. For this school year, these funds were going to be spent in three ways: purchase of mobile carts (Chromebooks), hardware/network switches, and wireless connectivity. The council voted to approve the release of the funds, 8-0. While this was approved during the FY16 budget development, we were required to go before the council as a matter of protocol.

Finally, City Council President Joe McMilleon established an ad hoc committee on schools. He identified the goals of this committee to engage in ongoing communication with the school committee and superintendent, particularly around budget and operations of schools. The establishment of this committee was viewed very positively by other committee members, as they suggested it would be a great way to engage in open and cooperative communication with the schools. There were some questions from members about the specific charge of the committee. Mr. McMilleon did not identify a specific charge beyond promoting a dialogue with the schools. I think this fits very well with the discussion from the school committee at a recent goal setting session regarding establishing a communication channel with the city council. It

provides an excellent opportunity to promote ongoing dialogue between the school department and the city council.

North Shore Superintendent's Round Table Legislative Breakfast

Friday morning, I attended the NSSRT Breakfast in Danvers. It provided me with an opportunity to meet some area superintendents. The focus of this session was on "Conditions and Considerations for a New Generation of Student Assessment in Massachusetts". This focused on the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents' position paper on state-mandated testing. Our legislators, Senator O'Connor Ives and State Rep Kelcourse were also at this meeting. We had a very lively discussion about changing the conversation from PARCC vs. MCAS to "What are our goals in administering a next generation high-stakes test and what would the appropriate instrument look like to measure those goals?"

Poet Laureate

As you may know, I was asked to participate in the selection of a Poet Laureate for Amesbury. This individual will help promote the appreciation of poetry in the community and in the schools. A couple of weeks ago, the committee reviewed the applications and discussed the selection process. Potential candidates for this position are being interviewed this week. This has been a great opportunity for me to be part of a community project and to work cooperatively with a community group to establish supports for the schools.

Athletics Hall of Fame

On Thursday evening, nine individuals were inducted into the Amesbury High Athletic Hall of Fame. These individuals were recognized for their contribution to our sports program, either as a coach, participant or contributor to the program. This year's inductees included:

- J. Sandy Roy (Class of 1924, deceased and represented by a family member) – former football, hockey, and baseball player; Mr. Roy also served as assistant football coach
- Ralph Divito (Class of 1958) – former baseball, basketball and football player
- David Lahait (class of 1959) – former football, basketball and track player and coach
- Murray Johnson (clas of 1963) – 4 sport athlete! – football, basketball, baseball and track. First Amesbury athlete to be named an all scholastic.
- Terry Fortin (class of 1989) – played soccer, basketball and softball
- Michelle Cassavaugh (class of 1994) – soccer, basketball and softball athlete
- Tiffany Clark-Nigro (class of 1994) – softball, field hockey and basketball player
- Gail Kelleher – former field hockey coach (for 39 years!)... five time CAL Coach of the Year
- Doug Wood – former athletic director



Gail Kelleher was also recognized by the schools on Thursday afternoon through a dedication of the field hockey field in her name. Please check out the attached picture of Coach Kelleher standing next to the field hockey sign.

School Safety

Friday afternoon, the school department met with Chief Ouellet, Lt. Worthen and Chief Berkenbush to discuss school safety and collaborations between our three departments. We drafted up some initial goals for our safety group which included:

- Review and refinement of safety response protocols and procedures
- Scenario planning and practice drills

The meeting this afternoon was a good first step in promoting a collaborative effort across agencies to ensure student safety. We will be meeting throughout the year to continue this dialogue.

School Visits

My school visit for this week was focused at Amesbury Elementary School. Mr. Hellieson (building principal), Ms. Farrell (Assistant Superintendent), Norm Fredette (Facilities) and I walked the building with a focus on identifying the key areas of need that we want to point out to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) when they visit on October 27th.

Upcoming Dates

- October 19 – AEFI Evening of Giving Fundraiser (6:00 – Ale House)
- October 20 – School Committee Meeting (7:00 pm)
- October 23 – Be a Buddy, Not a Bully Breakfast (City Hall)
- October 26 – Personnel Subcommittee Meeting (4:00 pm)
- October 27 – MSBA Site Visit to Amesbury Elementary School
- October 27 – Mu Alpha Theta Math Honor Society (7:00 pm)
- November 2 – Finance Subcommittee (Meeting of the Whole) (5:30 pm)
- November 2 – School Committee Meeting (7:00 pm)
- November 4 – Personnel Meeting – *Executive Session* (3:30 pm)
- November 4 – 7 – MASC/MASS Joint Conference
- November 12 – Policy Subcommittee Meeting (8:00 am)
- November 12 – School Committee Goal Setting Meeting (6:00 pm)
- November 16 – PARCC Public Comment Session (4-7 pm Malden High)