



Superintendent's Corner

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Superintendent

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Welcome to the 2017-2018 school year. As we finish our first full week for the year, I thought it was time to get my weekly newsletter up and running. Lots of great things are going on in the Amesbury Public Schools and I am thrilled to share this information with you. For those of you new to the Amesbury Public Schools, welcome! At the end of each week, I write a 'week in review' newsletter. This newsletter provides information to families and the community about the different areas of work I focused on during the week, as well as information about some of the learning, events and activities happening across the district.

North Shore Superintendents Round Table / CREST

I attended two different meetings this week with organizations outside of Amesbury to discuss professional development opportunities that will benefit our staff. The North Shore Superintendents' Round Table is focused on meeting the needs of area superintendents as well as advocacy of issues with key legislators in the area. In addition, there are meetings held that will benefit different administrators, ie. Special education, and the group invites individuals serving those roles in each district to attend those meetings.

CREST is the special education collaborative for which Amesbury is a member. CREST provides services and supports to some of our students with special needs. In addition, CREST also provides professional development opportunities to its member districts. On Wednesday, I attended a meeting to discuss a joint application for Title III funds through the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Title III provides support for students for whom English is a second language. Through this grant application, we are hoping to provide staff with some targeted professional development to meet the needs of our English Learners (ELs). We are also looking to increase support for families. We also hope to provide some direct instruction to EL students, through a school vacation camp program (in February and April).

AES Project – Update

The Amesbury Elementary School building project continues to move forward. At this time, a subcommittee of the School Building Committee had been identified to select an owner's project manager (OPM) for this project. This company will help to manage the project from start to finish, including acting as the liaison between the architects, contractors, and the Massachusetts School Building Authority. On Monday, the subcommittee met to interview the three finalists for the OPM position. The full school building committee will be meeting on Tuesday, September 19th @ 6:30 pm at Amesbury High School to approve the recommendation of the subcommittee. As always, all school committee meetings are open meetings, unless an executive session has been called for a specific purpose. All are welcome to attend. For more information about the building project, go to: <http://schools.amesburyma.gov/amesburypublic.cfm?subpage=1545467>

School Visits

One of the favorite parts of my jobs is to get out into the schools and directly observe the instruction and learning of the students. This week, I was able to get to all of the buildings.

This morning, I visited both Cashman and Amesbury Elementary School. Both schools were holding their fundraiser, the FunRun. I don't know how much was raised, but I have been told that it is pretty substantial. During this event, students get pledges for running laps. The students were so excited during the event and many students ran the entire time! As with any new fundraiser, the schools will be evaluating FunRun to determine the strengths and weaknesses of this activity and whether it is something that they feel should continue in an upcoming year. The best part of these events – both principals were directly involved and good sports about the type of participation. Mr. Helliesen agreed to have pies thrown in his face and Dr. Charette will be slimed by one class. Way to go principals!

At the middle school, kids and teachers were hard at work. Mr. Goodwin, 7th grade English teacher was working on descriptive language. The students were in groups trying to select words that more accurately describe a situation (such as to run). They even were using thesauruses – that's right, those books that many of us remember from our days in school before technology. I then visited Mrs. Hill's math class and was challenged to solve a problem in front of the class. Fortunately, I was paying very close attention when Mrs. Hill had modeled the steps for the students (and me). It was a great example of teachers modeling metacognition strategies with students.

All was quiet at the high school and the Innovation High School. I walked around and peeked into classes, but did not have an opportunity to spend time in any one particular class... next week!

Below are some pictures from this week:



Many students ran over 30 laps in this FunRun.



The fans were out to cheer on the athletes!



Mr. Helliesen with pie on his face!



Mrs. Hill 'schooled' me on evaluating expressions.

Be well and have a great weekend!
Gary