**Superintendent’s Corner**

Gary S. Reese, Ed.D.

Superintendent

February 10, 2017

Well, winter has arrived! We had gotten through December and January without much difficulty opening the schools. This weather is reminiscent of our winter from a couple of years ago, when there was very little snow until the month of February and then we got hit pretty hard. It is my understanding that there may be some more snow coming in Sunday night into Monday. We will watch that storm closely and keep families posted about any school delays or closings. I often get asked from people about how the schools make the decision regarding delays or closings. While it is far from a perfect science, I thought you might be interested in hearing about some of the details that goes into this decision. On days when there might be some inclement weather, I begin my day around 4-4:30 am reviewing weather reports from the TV and on the internet. I look at multiple sources, as I find that there is not always consistency between the various weather channels. Then, I communicate with our DPW to get a sense of what the roads are looking like in Amesbury and any potential challenges with the road conditions. I am also in touch with about a half dozen superintendents in neighboring communities to discuss what they are hearing about from their safety officials. Once all of that information is gathered, a decision is made regarding the day. Sometimes, the call is pretty easy to make, as was the case for yesterday (Thursday, February 9th); other times, it is a little more stressful – as was the case for Tuesday, February 7th where we had to rely on the weather reports about anticipated snow conditions and make a decision when there was not even any snow on the ground. Ultimately, my goal is for students and staff to arrive and leave school safely. That being said, what I determine to be safe for the community as a whole may not necessarily always match what parents deem to be safe. I am not traveling every road in the city prior to making a decision. Parents are in the best position to determine whether or not they are comfortable with having their child attend school in inclement weather and I respect their right to make that decision for their child. I am hopeful that this wintery weather will slow down soon and the schools will be able to get back to our job of teaching your children.

**Upcoming Community Events…**

***State of the City Address***

On Wednesday, February 16th at 6:30 pm in the Nicholas J Costello Transportation Center (60 Elm St), Mayor Ken Gray will be presenting his 2017 State of the City Address. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn more about the areas to celebrate for the city and to learn more about current goals. For more information or to RSVP, please email Alyssa Premo at premoa@amesburyma.gov

***Pettengill House, 6th Annual Fundraiser***

On Friday, March 10th from 7-11 pm at the Blue Ocean Music Hall, the Pettengill House will be holding its 6th annual fundraiser. This organization does so much to support our schools and community. Tickets are $50 in advance and $60 at the door. The event promises to be a fun evening with music, dancing, food, and a silent/live auction. For more information about the event, go to: <http://www.pettengillhouse.org/featured_event.aspx>

***Jeanne Geiger White Ribbon Breakfast***

Another local organization that provides support to our schools in the Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center. On March 21st, the organization will be holding its annual White Ribbon Breakfast. This event is held in recognition of a worldwide campaign for human rights that engages men to help end violence against women, men, and children. The breakfast is being held from 7:30 – 9:15 am at the Ipswich Country Club. For more information, please go to: <http://jeannegeigercrisiscenter.org/>

***AEFI Evening of Giving***

On behalf of the Amesbury Education Foundation Inc (AEFI), I would like to invite parents and community members to AEFI’s Hall of Honor celebration on April 29th. At this event, AEFI recognizes three individuals for their contributions to the schools and community. This is a special year for AEFI, as it is celebrating 15 years of supporting the schools. I am pleased to announce that the AEFI board has selected three outstanding recipients for this banner year’s celebration. Peter Hoyt (former educator, principal and current school committee member), Graham McKay (AHS Alumni and Executive Director of Lowell’s Boat Shop) and Joan Miller (founding AEFI board member). I am so pleased with these selections as each person embodies a true spirit of caring and each has made substantial contributions to the students of Amesbury. Watch for more information to come regarding this exciting event.

Be well and have a great weekend!

Gary