



Superintendent's Corner

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Interim Superintendent

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It is hard to believe that it is already November – where did the first two months of school go? This has been an exciting week both in terms of the elections and the great opportunity for professional development for our staff. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate all our elected officials – new and returning. I look forward to working with you to improve opportunities for the children of Amesbury.



Snow removal

Yes, it is already that time of year again for the district and the community to be discussing snow removal. On Monday, Deirdre Farrell and I met with Rob Demaris from the Department of Public Works to discuss plans for this year. The goal of this meeting was to ensure that we had an identified procedure for the removal of snow and for safely getting our students to school. While I am keeping my fingers crossed for no school closings this year, I am confident that we have a protocol in place to make informed decisions to promote student safety.

Professional Development

On Tuesday, while voters were coming out to the polls to register their selections for city leadership, our staff members were engaged in professional development and parent activities. I know there was some discussion at the school committee meeting on Monday evening about the impact on families, I would encourage the committee to consider the value of having a staff day when making any decisions about school year calendars. This week, teachers had the opportunity to participate in the following:

- Cashman Elementary and Amesbury Elementary – Teachers in grades 1-4 held parent conferences. Kindergarten teachers worked on the MKEA-Gold Assessment. Most specialists worked on curriculum and DDMs.
- Amesbury Middle – AMS Staff held parent conferences during the day. This provided the opportunity to meet individually with parents, discuss student progress and develop strategies to work together to promote student success.

- Amesbury Innovation High School – The AIHS performed a variety of professional development activities on Tuesday, including:
 - Innovation Plan review
 - Implementation Grant
 - MAP Data (Measures of Academic Progress... student data)
 - Student Review (Collaborative review of student learning/needs)
 - Reading Program (Implementation of new program/approach to teaching reading across the content areas)
- Amesbury High School – The AHS teachers were trained by our Mentors for Violence Prevention (MVP) to facilitate discussions in advisory. These students have been through a Train the Trainer model of MVP so they are able to work with other students at AHS, and possibly AMS in the future, in addition to working with the teachers. This is a program that Robert Kraft and professional sports teams in the NFL, MLB, and NBA are participating in.
- Additional Opportunities – we also recently became members of a collaborative of districts called NPEN (Northeast Professional Educators Network). This group was organized to provide professional development opportunities to low incidence content areas (such as art, music, physical education, etc) as well as special education areas (including training for paraprofessionals). While we were late this year getting involved in the group, we did have some staff members take advantage of the offerings, including presentations by Charlie Applestein, author of *No Such thing As A Bad Kid*, and Jessica Minahan, author of *The Behavior Code*.

MASS/MASC Joint Conference

On Thursday and Friday, alongside Deb LaValley and Rob Chamberlain, I attended the joint conference between MASS and MASC. These are the Massachusetts organizations that provide advocacy, support and professional development for school superintendents (MASS) and school committee members (MASC). This conference provided a wonderful opportunity for me to collaborate and network with educational leaders from across the state and to continue to develop my skills as a superintendent. The workshops I attended included:

- Understanding the Redesigned College Board Assessments: PSAT and SAT
- Meeting the Needs of Students Living in Poverty
- School Law 201
- Boys in Crisis, Boys at Risk
- Strategic Leadership in Challenging Times
- Knotty and Emerging Issues in Collective Bargaining
- World Class Learners: Educating Creative and Entrepreneurial Students
- Difficult People: Keeping Conflict at a Minimum

Foundation Budget Review Commission

The Foundation Budget Review Commission for the State, established by legislation in 2014, has researched and developed a report with recommendations which analyzes how the state calculates the per pupil expenditure of delivering education in Massachusetts. Their report suggests that the current foundation budget underestimates the cost of education by at least one billion dollars. Particular areas of focus during this study were health insurance costs and special education costs. These findings are just the first step in the process of more adequately funding educational costs from the state level. It is now incumbent on our legislators to consider these findings and to determine if there is any way within the state budget to support the needed funding to address this identified discrepancy. It is not clear how any changes would impact Amesbury. It will be important to communicate with our state legislators to encourage them to support the findings of this report.

Enjoy the weekend! I will spend much of my weekend raking my yard – hopefully, the beautiful weather will continue through the weekend.

Gary