



## Superintendent's Corner

Gary S. Reese, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

November 10, 2016

### AEFI Autumn Evening of Giving

Monday evening, AEFI held its annual Autumn of Giving. During this event, AEFI awarded two \$5,000 grants to educators and awarded the Jordan Shay Grant in the amount of \$10,000. This year's recipients of the \$5,000 grants were Kate Bernadoni, for her grant entitled *Sending TEXTile Messages*, and Lisa Dupere and Katie Ankiewicz, for their grant entitled *Putting the Fun Back into Fundamentals*. The Jordan Shay \$10,000 grant was awarded to Bruce McBrien and Amy Mitchell, for their proposal in collaboration with John Mayer from the Carriage Museum on a grant entitled *Museum without Walls*. I am very proud of all of our educators that took time to submit grant applications and I am incredibly appreciative of AEFI for supporting our educators.



In addition to the grant awards, two Peter Gray Award recipients were announced. This award was designed to recognize others who have given so much to the care and education of our children. According to the AEFI website, *Peter Gray was truly a "friend to education."* Peter served twice on the Amesbury School Committee from the 1980s until the early 90s. During that time he was the chairman as well as a member. It was during this time that a school committee member saw a need for the establishment of an educational foundation. In 1981, the Amesbury Educational Foundation, Inc. (AEFI) was created, and Pete soon became involved in the organization. He was a member, a board member and an officer of this organization until his death.

*AEFI wasn't the only innovative venture of Peter Gray. In the late 70's he coached the seven and eight year-olds in Minor League baseball, a forerunner to T-Ball. He was an active Rotarian and helped organize Amesbury*

Youth Rotary Basketball League (AYRBall) of which he was a charter member. Pete also helped build a branch of First and Ocean Bank within Amesbury High School. The bank branch thrives at the school to this day because of Pete's efforts.

His contributions to education and the quality of our schools were recognized by the then Amesbury Chamber of Commerce in 1994 when they named Peter Gray the Citizen of the Year.

Is it any wonder when asked to comment on their father, his son said, "Dad was a well-rounded citizen. He was a banker, farmer, baseball coach, school committee member, husband and father. He had friends of both collars and didn't have a bad hook shot when he felt the need to show it." His daughters used these words, "honest and true to oneself, perseverance, creative, able to bring together disparate opinions, ideas and agendas."

Friends, neighbors and colleagues characterized Pete as a loyal friend and mentor. He cared deeply for his family and the "community family." Pete saw the good in everyone. "He's the kind of person who, when gone, leaves a great void in all the places he touched."

The first recipient was Richard "Dick" McAllister, long time teacher and supporter of the Amesbury Public Schools. The second award was presented to Harry Lucier, one of the most memorable substitutes to walk the halls of the Amesbury Public Schools. Both Dick and Harry's family were there to accept these awards in their honor.



### **Election Results...**

With the election behind us, there has continued to be much buzz and reaction, regardless of one's political views. On Wednesday following the election, I sent out a reminder to our staff to encourage students and staff to be respectful of the opinions of others. I also reiterated the district's commitment to providing our students with a safe and supportive learning environment where we will continue to help them access the many opportunities that are here for them in Amesbury and beyond. In addition to the presidential election, many people were invested this year in the five ballot questions, of which, one of them would have lifted the cap on charter schools in the Commonwealth. The Commissioner of Education, Mitchell Chester, released the following message in response to question number two on charter schools:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wlfEzWawyX4>



### **What were our teachers doing during Election Day?**

The elementary and middle schools used the day to conduct parent conferences. The high school took the opportunity to provide some building based professional development for staff members. As we try to become more technologically savvy, the high school provided training to staff members in the use of Google and its various applications. There are teachers who are already using this tool as a method for students to turn in work and to be able to work collaboratively with one another. This training helped teachers further explore the Google applications.

### **Leadership team Meetings**

Our leadership team meets twice a month for at least an hour and a half each time. We are working hard to make these meetings more meaningful and substantive and trying to avoid just reporting out information that could be easily transmitted via email. This week, our leadership team completed an evaluation calibration activity. Calibration involves making sure that our administrators that evaluate are giving common feedback and utilizing consistent approaches to conduct observations in the classrooms. For this meeting, we watched a fifteen minute video of a 7<sup>th</sup> grade math lesson and, using an observation template developed by one of our principals, we engaged in a conversation about what we identified as areas of strength as well as opportunities for growth for the observation feedback. The discussion was very thought-provoking and it helped our administrators understand areas that each person focuses on when conducting an observation. This provided us with the opportunity to further process how we can be more uniform in our observation write-ups for our teachers. Next month, we will complete this activity again utilizing a calibration tool developed by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

### **Curriculum Facilitators Training**

As I have reported in previous weekly communications, we continue to examine and revise our curriculum from grades prek-twelve in all content areas. This week, our curriculum facilitators (teachers that have been identified as leaders in different content/grade levels) got together with our trainer, Ronit Carter from McTighe and Associates to discuss the work for the next couple of months with staff members. Over the next couple of months, teachers will continue to work within content area groups to finalize transfer goals. At our next school committee meeting on November 21, Our Director of Teaching and Learning, Lyn Jacques, will present on the work that has been completed to date and will provide the school committee with an overview of the work that will continue over the next few years.

### **Girls' Soccer**


Our Girls' soccer team have continued their post season action with wins this week against Matignon on Monday afternoon (3-1) and against Austin Prep on Wednesday evening (2-0). The team has advanced to the finals against St. Mary's on Sunday afternoon.

### **DESE Problem Resolution System Conference**

On Thursday, Director of Student Services Mary Houde and I attended the Problem Resolution System Conference sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The purpose of this conference. This conference addressed the following topics which will assist us in being compliant with state and federal rules and regulations:

- Problem Resolution System (PRS) Interface/Overview
- Discipline Regulations/Initiatives
- Bullying Regulations/Discrimination/Harassment
- Restraint Regulations/Revisions
- Homeless Regulations/Foster Care

A couple of Upcoming Events that you might be interested in...



THE PETTENGILL HOUSE, INC.  
Children & Family Services


**11<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL WINTER COAT PROGRAM**

Collecting new and gently used warm winter jackets, parkas, snowsuits, heavy winter sweatshirts for teens, ski jackets and waterproof gloves to support community adults and children in need.  
All sizes from infant to XXL are needed.

PLEASE DROP OFF AT:  
**Millennium Engineering, Inc.**  
(Go to the back of the building.)  
62 Elm Street (rte. 110) Salisbury, MA  
(across the street from Merrimack River Feline Rescue Society)

Monday, November 7<sup>th</sup>  
Wednesday, November 9<sup>th</sup>  
Thursday, November 10<sup>th</sup>  
10am to 2pm

Direct inquiries to Peg Brown, Coat Volunteer Coordinator at:  
[coatdrive@pettengillhouse.org](mailto:coatdrive@pettengillhouse.org)  
Or call Pettengill Family Resource Center at:  
978-792-5205



**Christmas Family Faire 2016**  
**Saturday November 12th**  
**9am-1pm**  
**Senior Community Center**  
**68 Elm Street, Amesbury**

- The BIGGEST "Raffle Table" EVER!
  - Mr. & Mrs. Santa Clause
  - Mrs. Clause Bakery Table
  - Blankets for Kids Table
  - FCOA & Frosty Luncheon
- Jewelry table, Knitted items, Blankets, Christmas décor  
.....and so much more

Co-Chairpersons: Sally Morrill & Margery Young  
978-388-8139 ext.557

Proceeds Benefit the Friends of the Amesbury Council on Aging

No School on Friday in Observance of Veteran's Day



Be well and have a great weekend!

Gary