



## **Superintendent's Corner**

**Gary S. Reese, Ed.D.**  
**Interim Superintendent**

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### Amesbury Elementary School – Statement of Interest

On Tuesday afternoon, Mayor Gray, Assistant Superintendent Deirdre Farrell, AES Principal Walter Hellieson, Amesbury Facilities Norm Fredette and I met with senior staff members from the Massachusetts School Building Authority to discuss our submission of the statement of interest to MSBA for the funding of improvements/additions to the Amesbury Elementary School. Late last winter, we submitted the statement of interest on behalf of the Amesbury Public Schools. In total, 97 SOIs from across the state were submitted for consideration. MSBA conducted an initial review of the submissions through the lens of need and urgency. From the initial submission, MSBA selected approximately 35-40 applications for further review. As part of this secondary review, MSBA scheduled visits at each of the schools to spend time further exploring our submission, clarifying aspects of our submission, as well as taking the opportunity to tour the facilities to understand the complexities of how our building issues can impact student learning. I want to compliment our Amesbury team for their detailed articulation of the needs of the building. I believe a strong case was made for needed improvements at Amesbury Elementary. Official notification to schools moving forward in the process will be made by the MSBA board at their meeting in the end of January 2016.

### Mu Alpha Theta Math Honor Society

On Tuesday evening, I attended the Mu Alpha Theta Math Honor Society induction ceremony. Under the direction of advisor Jess Regis, students were inducted into the honor society. We are proud of these students and their commitment to their education, with a particular focus on math learning!

### ESE Annual Fall Convening 2015

Wednesday, Lyn Jacques, Director of teaching and Learning, and I attended the Annual Fall Convening sponsored by ESE. This annual conference helps educators explore different aspects of curriculum, instruction and assessment and the impact on student learning. Commissioner Chester provided a welcome to attendees. The focus of his presentation was high stakes

testing. The commissioner's introductory comments were followed by the opportunity for participants to attend more specific breakout sessions. I attended the following four sessions:

- Identifying Root Cause to Accelerate Student Learning
- Observation in Elementary Grades and the Impact on Student Learning
- Developing a Shared Understanding of Quality Practice
- Social and Emotional Learning and its Impact on Student Learning

### Payroll Department

After 20 years of dedicated service to the Amesbury Public Schools, Patrice Pierce has announced her retirement. We thank Patrice for all of her efforts over the years in working with our staff members and supporting the growth of our payroll and human resources functions. Over the last month, we screened and interviewed a number of candidates for this opening. Potential candidates possessed a wide range of experiences and skills, many holding degrees in finance/business as well as demonstrating significant past experience with payroll processing and management. We are pleased to announce the selection of Candace MacLean for the payroll supervisor position. Ms. MacLean holds a bachelor of arts in Economics degree from Bates College. She also has over 25 years of experience working in human resources/payroll related fields. We welcome Ms. MacLean and look forward to the opportunity to work with her as we continue to refine our practices in the area of payroll/human resource management.

### Central Office Administration Staffing

It is with mixed emotions that I announce the resignation of Mr. Kevin Pierce, Director of Special Education. Mr. Pierce has accepted a new position in a technical high school in another community. We wish Mr. Pierce the best of luck in his new position. The central office is currently meeting to discuss a replacement strategy and will work with the school committee to identify the plan and secure a strong replacement.

### In our Schools



Today, I got the opportunity to see first-hand the strong sense of school culture in the Amesbury Public Schools. In the morning, I attended the Cashman Elementary Halloween parade. Students walked around the facility, displaying their costumes for parents and other family members. At the conclusion of the parade, students gathered at the main entrance of the building and performed *Watch Me Whip/Nae Nae* under the direction of music teacher, Johanna Kimball (known today as Wonder Woman).

In the afternoon, I attended the Rally at the high school. The long standing tradition for Halloween is for the seniors to dress up in costumes (many of them collaborating with their friends to dress in themes, ie. The Scooby Doo Gang, Charlie Brown and the Peanuts, The Wizard of Oz). The students had

a great time and demonstrated (respectfully) enthusiasm for their school and community.

It was a nice way to end the week, celebrating with one another. Some times in schools we get so focused on the demands of the academics, that we miss some important opportunities to let loose and 'act like a kid'.

Enjoy the 'holiday' weekend and be safe!