



Superintendent's Corner

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Superintendent

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I hope everyone enjoyed the long weekend with their families. While the weather wasn't great for much of the weekend, Monday was beautiful... great day to get outside and enjoy the fall season!

School Visits

This week, I visited two of the schools to meet with the principals: Amesbury Elementary and Amesbury Innovation High School.

Amesbury Elementary... Mr. Helliesen and I reviewed ten key elements that we are focusing on this year to observe, evaluate and provide feedback to teachers. We also examined the five competencies for social emotional learning (which is a key focus area for curriculum development and implementation this year). Mr. Helliesen has devised a form that he will use to collect data and provide feedback around the observations. We had the opportunity to walk through five classrooms and discuss what was observed in the classroom as well as strategies to promote continued educator growth. I enjoyed learning from students in a few classrooms about their recent walking field trip through the trails behind the school where the students completed a scavenger hunt and some measuring exercises. The students are beginning to discuss habitats and the teachers felt that this would be a great way to provide some hands-on learning and help the students better understand different habitats. I was also impressed with a visit to Ellen Elliott's classroom. Ms. Elliott is incorporating movement breaks throughout the school day using an online resource. There is a lot of research around the positive impact that movement breaks have on brain development and memory.

Amesbury Innovation High School... During my meeting with Ms. Maguire, we discussed a variety of topics including building social emotional competencies for students, current student needs, identifying strategies for building resiliency in the staff, and weekly curriculum development that is occurring to develop multi-disciplinary project based learning opportunities for students. I continue to be impressed with the strength of the program at AIHS. This school meets a very specific need for students in our community who would be unsuccessful in a traditional high school program. Ms. Maguire and her staff are very skilled at supporting each student and helping the students to be able to self-identify goals and measure individual progress. I want to share a story about how much this school supports its students and how valued the level of support is from the students. This week, Ms. Maguire was visited by a former graduate. This student was experiencing some significant social-emotional struggles and did not have the capacity at this particular time to be able to handle the current issues. The student had not reached out to parents yet, but felt very safe to reach out to school staff that had been so supportive during this student's time at the Amesbury Innovation High School. Ms. Maguire took the time to help the student process current challenges and helped the student to access the needed community resources to ensure safety; this included helping the student reach out to the student's mother to share the challenges. I truly believe that if there was not a program in place for this student such as the Amesbury innovation High School, there would have been some serious consequences.

This is just one story of many that the staff responds to on a daily basis. I am proud to be part of a community that not only has this school, but also has a variety of community service agencies that provide support to our students and families daily.

Pettengill House Donor Luncheon

I was invited to attend the Pettengill House donor luncheon at the Blue Ocean Events Center Thursday afternoon. It was a special event where volunteers were recognized for their support to the organization. Pettengill House is an excellent example of the type of community service agencies that we have in Amesbury that support our schools. They provide support through a program called School Link Services. To learn more about this program, check out: [http://pettengillhouse.org/school link service program.aspx](http://pettengillhouse.org/school_link_service_program.aspx)

Be well and have a great weekend!

Gary