

The Public Schools of Brookline
School Committee Meeting of Thursday, May 4, 2017
Superintendent Report
Andrew J. Bott
Superintendent of Schools

Learning Walks at Pierce and Lincoln Schools

Our very successful series of Learning Walks in schools across the district continue. On Monday, I joined a team of educators in a Learning Walk at the Pierce School hosted by Principal Chris Kelley. Teams fanned out to classrooms throughout the school to observe kindergarten and 1st grade classrooms in the historic building, Pierce open space with the 4th and 5th grade, a 2nd grade class in the main building, a 7th grade math class, and Art classrooms.

Today, Deputy Superintendent Nicole Gittens led a Learning Walk with Principal Brian Denitzio at Lincoln School. In both schools, student work was displayed throughout the building, educators were conferring with students, students had ownership of their learning, clear differentiation of instruction could be observed, and there was evidence of cooperative learning and many interdisciplinary lessons.

The Learning Walks have been a wonderful opportunity for educators and administrators to forge close working partnerships with, and learn best practices from, each other.

Upper Devotion School Visit

Today I joined Principal Monica Crowley in visits to several classrooms at Upper Devotion School. We visited 8th grade science and observed a lab where students were working to understand the phases of the moon. Students then used what they learned in this lab to explain both solar and lunar eclipses.

We observed 8th grade students working collaboratively to solve an extremely complex and challenging math problem, and we observed both Spanish and French students highly engaged in their work. I received a letter from Upper Devotion students, written completely in Spanish, asking that our district do more to recycle plastic to benefit both the Devotion School and the global environment. I have attached their letter for your reference.

Lastly, I want to share with the committee that Upper Devotion's art teacher, Priscilla Kwok, has worked with students to create and display throughout the school significant amounts of fantastic student artwork. This work brings to life many of the spaces at the Upper Devotion School.

Lawrence Principal Search Update

Last week, Senior Staff completed second round interviews with the semifinalists for the Lawrence School principal position. Two finalists have been identified and tomorrow a small team of parents and teachers will join me in visiting their current schools.

Following tomorrow's site visits, final steps in the selection process will be determined. I expect to be able to name a preferred candidate at our next school committee meeting.

Water Testing Update

You are most likely aware of an article published in the *Boston Globe* on Wednesday concerning water testing results for school districts across the Commonwealth, including Brookline. The article was based on water testing done by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) in late June, 2016. At that time, water sources at the Pierce School and Lower Devotion School has been identified as having lead levels that were above EPA requirements for safe drinking water. Immediately upon being notified of these testing results last June, the School Department worked closely with the town Building Department, Water Department and Public Health Department to remedy the issues.

On Wednesday, we sent letters to Pierce School and Devotion School families to make them aware of the specific steps taken at each school, and today we sent a letter to all families in the district that included the dates of all water testing done in our school buildings. Our top priority throughout the entire process was, and remains, to ensure that drinking water in our schools is safe for our students. To this end, the Town of Brookline will continue to test and monitor water sources in all buildings on a periodic basis.

I have attached copies of all three letters for your information.

3 de mayo, 2017

Querido Sr. Bott,

Estamos en el clase de español octavo uno de Profe Morales en la escuela Devotion. Recién nosotros estudiamos el medio ambiente. Nosotros aprendemos los efectos del plástico en el océano y los animales que viven en él. Cien mil animales se mueren por año en el mar porque los animales comen o se quedan atrapados en el plástico. ¡Nuestra escuela necesita ayudar a los animales y todo el ambiente!



En el mundo, hay muchos problemas sobre plástico y necesitamos una solución! Porque hay animales marinos como tortugas, pingüinos y peces muriéndose. En la tierra, solo 1-3% de las bolsas plástico son recicladas. Si queremos ayudar a los animales marinos, necesitamos limpiar los océanos. También podemos usar menos cosas de plástico y reciclar más. Por ejemplo, en nuestra escuela, podemos comprar más contenedores para el reciclaje .



En nuestra cafetería tenemos muchos plásticos para los bocadillos, las ensaladas, los tenedores, las cucharas y los cuchillos y la fruta! El plástico es muy malo para el medio ambiente. El plástico va a los vertederos de basura, pero no puede descomponerse hasta mil años. Necesitamos más contenedores de reciclaje en nuestro cafetería. También podemos tener una basura orgánica para las frutas y los desechos orgánicos.

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Primero, necesitamos reducir el uso de plástico en las cafeterías escolares. Por ejemplo, en vez de poner los bocadillos en un contenedor de plástico, pon los bocadillos en bolsas de papel. Y en vez de cubiertos plásticos, pon los cubiertos reutilizables, y lávalos en el lavaplatos. También puedes poner un contenedor de reciclaje en la cafetería. Así los estudiantes pueden reciclar el plástico en vez de contaminar el mar. ¡Nosotros podemos salvar la Tierra una escuela a la vez!

Gracias por leer nuestra carta y esperamos poder reciclar pronto en nuestra escuela.

Atentamente,

Los estudiantes ecologistas y fabulosos de la clase de 8-1 de español.

Juan P. Sosa

Eli

Leo

William Nolasco

Veronica Nolasco

Emily

Natalie

Gabriel A.

Sam Feldman

Anabel Cep

Betel



The Public Schools of Brookline
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617.730.2401

Andrew J. Bott
Superintendent

May 2, 2017

Dear Devotion School Families,

In response to this morning's article in the *Boston Globe* about water testing in schools, we want to reassure you that the water sources at the Lower Devotion School site are safe and conform to EPA requirements for safe drinking water. The *Boston Globe* reported on tests done by the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority (MWRA) on June 30, 2016. The results of these tests were shared with parent leaders at Lower Devotion in the fall and were addressed by a joint effort of the town's School Department, Health Department, Water Department, and Building Department.

As you may know, the Lower Devotion principals met with room parents and other parent leaders in September when concerns were raised after the original MWRA testing. At that time, the principals explained that there had been positive results for lead in a few drinking fountains, that the water to these fountains had been shut off and that no children had access to the water from these fountains. The principals also shared that the fountains had been replaced during the summer and that a water line that feeds these fountains had been replaced or were in the process of being replaced.

Between August and September the Building Department continued water testing and replaced water fountains on the 3rd, 6th, and 7th floors, and replaced a water line that fed these fountains and others. In August and September, these three water fountains passed the appropriate tests and were deemed safe by Barclay Water Management. Only after they were deemed safe were they turned on and used by students. A new water fountain was also added on the 8th floor and it passed its safety test on November 1, 2016.

We want to assure you that during the entire mediation process no children had access to any water fountains that had failed a water test. Water fountains were only turned on and made accessible after they successfully passed a test and registered below the mandated level of lead of 15 parts per billion.

The information included in the *Boston Globe* article did not reflect the test results from Barclays that occurred in August, September, and November. Today, the School Department has updated the MWRA with accurate test results.

If you have any further questions, please contact Dan Bennett, Building Commissioner: dbennett@brooklinema.gov, or Mary Ellen Dunn, Deputy Superintendent for Administration and Finance: maryellen_dunn@psbma.org

Sincerely,

Andrew J. Bott
Superintendent



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Brookline Town Hall
333 Washington Street, 5th Floor
Brookline, Massachusetts 02445
617.730.2401

Andrew J. Bott
Superintendent

May 2, 2017

Dear Pierce Families,

In response to this morning's article in the *Boston Globe* about water testing in schools, we want to reassure you that the water sources in the Pierce School are safe and conform with EPA requirements for safe drinking water. The *Boston Globe* was reporting on tests done by the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority (MWRA) on June 29, 2016 that were immediately addressed last summer by a joint effort of the town's School Department, Health Department, Water Department, and Building Department. While the issues raised in the MWRA test were resolved before school opened in September, I want to take this opportunity to let all families know what the town did once we were informed of one failed test at Pierce.

On July 8, 2016 the School Department was notified by the MWRA that one single-unit hallway sink/water fountain in the Pierce Primary building testing at a lead level of 20.7 parts per billion in its first draw, which is slightly above the 15 parts per billion threshold deemed safe by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The same single-unit sink/fountain tested below the EPA threshold in the second draw, called a "flush sample", at less than 1.0 parts per billion that same day. At that time, the sinks and water fountains were turned off in the Pierce Primary building. In July 2016, the Building Department replaced the plumbing, piping, and fixtures at this sink/water fountain. As an added precaution, the Building Department also replaced the plumbing, piping, and fixtures at three other similar sinks/water fountains in the building. After this work was completed, the Building Department had independent testing done by Yee Consulting Group on August 2, 2016. Their report on testing results is attached with this letter. Yee Consulting Group took a total of 12 samples from six different sinks/water fountains in the Pierce Primary building and all of the samples passed. The Building Department hired Yee Consulting Group because MWRA was not available for additional testing due to the department's resource constraints.

Prior to the opening of school, the issue was resolved and the School Department was assured that all tested water sources at the Pierce School are safe. The spreadsheet included in the Boston Globe article did not reflect the test results from Yee Consulting Group. Today, the School Department has updated the MWRA with accurate test results.

If you have any further questions, please contact Dan Bennett, Building Commissioner: dbennett@brooklinema.gov, or Mary Ellen Dunn, Deputy Superintendent for Administration and Finance: maryellen_dunn@psbma.org.

Sincerely,

Andrew J. Bott
Superintendent of Schools



THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BROOKLINE
333 WASHINGTON STREET
BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS 02445

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
Andrew J. Bott
Superintendent of Schools

Dear Brookline Families,

In response to the May 2, 2017 article in the *Boston Globe* about water testing in schools, we want to reassure you that the water sources that serve the public school students in Brookline are safe and conform to EPA requirements for safe drinking water. The *Boston Globe* reported on tests done by the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority (MWRA) on June 29 and 30 of 2016. The results of these tests were addressed by a joint effort of the town's School Department, Health Department, Water Department, and Building Department. The Town established a team to address and respond to water issues with the reopening of Old Lincoln School in 2015, for Upper Devotion in early 2016, and later expanded their review to spaces the Town both rents and owns. The team consists of: the Director of Public Health and Human Services, the Chief of Environmental Health, the Water and Sewer Director, an MWRA representative, the Director of Public Buildings, the Public Schools' Deputy Superintendent for Administration and Finance, and the Director of Operations.

The *Boston Globe* article linked to a table of Massachusetts' schools water test results. This table contained outdated information for Pierce Elementary and Lower Devotion Elementary schools, indicating that lead levels were above EPA requirements for safe drinking water. We have since communicated accurate test results to the MWRA, and will ensure improved communication moving forward. On May 2, the school department communicated with all Pierce and Devotion families to update them on the specific actions taken last summer and fall (2016) to address the test results and how we ensured that students only have access to safe drinking water. Water testing dates for all school department locations from the prior year can be found in the chart below. As reported in the *Globe*, only the Pierce "Primary" building and the Lower Devotion site at 30 Webster Street had tests that warranted further action. Water from all other sources was deemed safe by the MWRA testing.

The Town of Brookline will continue to test and monitor the water sources in all school buildings on a periodic basis. The School Department, Health Department, Water Department, and Building Department remain vigilant in ensuring that the water sources in our schools are safe. If you would like additional information about water quality in the Town of Brookline or the Commonwealth, the following websites may be of interest: <http://www.mwra.com> and <http://www.brooklinema.gov/460/Water-Sewer>

Should you have any further questions, please contact Pat Maloney, Health Department Acting Director: pmaloney@brooklinema.gov, or Mary Ellen Dunn, Deputy Superintendent for Administration and Finance: maryellen_dunn@psbma.org

Dates and Locations of Water Testing in the Public Schools of Brookline Facilities

School	Date(s) of Testing	Date(s) Results Reported to the Town
Baker	5/25/2016	6/2/2016
Baldwin	5/26/2016	6/2/2016
Lower Devotion at 30 Webster Street	6/30/2016 7/12/2016 8/15/2016 9/16/2016 9/20/2016 11/1/2016	7/8/2016 7/20/16 8/19/16 9/16/16 9/21/16 11/3/16
Upper Devotion at Old Lincoln	8/17/2016	8/19/2016
Driscoll	5/26/2016	6/2/2016
Heath	6/30/2016	7/20/2016
Brookline High School	5/25/2016	6/2/2016
BHS - Unified Arts Building	5/25/2016	6/2/2016
BHS - Tappan Gym	5/25/2016	6/2/2016
Lawrence	6/30/2016	7/20/2016
Lincoln	6/29/2016	7/8/2016
Pierce	6/16/2016	7/8/2016
Pierce Primary	6/29/2016 8/2/2016	7/8/2016 8/5/2016
Pierce Loft	8/5/2016	8/12/2016
Runkle	6/30/2016	7/20/2016
BEEP - Beacon	8/5/2016	8/12/2016
BEEP - Putterham	8/5/2016	8/12/2016
BEEP - Lynch	5/26/2016	6/2/2016

Testing done by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, Yee Consulting Group and Barclay Water Management

Sincerely,



Andrew Bott
Superintendent