

The Public Schools of Brookline
School Committee Meeting of Thursday, January 16, 2020
Superintendent Report
Ben Lummis
Interim Superintendent of Schools

20th Anniversary Celebration of the Brookline China Exchange Program

School Committee members and school district educators and administrators were pleased to welcome the visiting delegation from Gao-Xin Number One High School in Xi'an, China last week. The delegation – including Principal Wang Fengjin, Vice Principal Yan Guangtao and Assistant Principal She Ying – was in Brookline to mark the 20th Anniversary of the Brookline China Exchange Program (CHEX).

In addition to a warm welcome by the School Committee at your meeting last Thursday, the delegation enjoyed a welcome dinner on Wednesday evening at the nearby Blossom Restaurant, the School Committee's reception on Thursday afternoon, a community celebration at Brookline High School on Friday night, panel discussions at BHS on Saturday morning, meetings at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and at the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and wonderful classroom visits at Driscoll School. It was a whirlwind visit made possible by the hard work of many of our staff.

In addition to PSB staff, I want to gratefully acknowledge the incredible efforts of the members of the CHEX Steering Committee, especially Karyn Wang and Blanka Bogdanovic. The CHEX program – designed to foster an increased cultural awareness between the people of the United States and China – is an integral part of the fabric of BHS and none of it would be possible without the support of the wider Brookline community through the work of the Steering Committee.

Out of Cycle Grant Awards from the Brookline Education Foundation

In mid-December, we received the exciting news that the Brookline Education Foundation had agreed to make special out-of-cycle grant awards to the district to fund important work.

The BEF awarded additional funds to support an increase in specialized reading intervention trainings for our teachers. This effort is designed to allow us to have a cadre of teachers trained in a variety of specialized reading intervention programs, including Wilson Reading System, Just Words, Lindamood Phoneme, Sequencing (LiPS Program), and Visualizing and Verbalizing.

The BEF also made a generous out-of-cycle award for mentoring and coaching of new principals and administrators. This funding includes mentoring for me (with Jim Marini of Teachers 21) and Torrance Lewis at Baker, and also coaching for newer school leaders including Dr. Suzie Talukdar at Driscoll and Jen Buller at Coolidge Corner School, in addition to coaching for Casey Ngo-Miller, Deputy Superintendent for Student Services.

This generous out-of-cycle grant support from the BEF is *in addition to* the almost \$50,000 in Teacher Grants and over \$157,000 in Collaborative Grants that the BEF already awarded in this fiscal year. We remain incredibly grateful to the BEF for their tremendous support.

13th Annual Young Women's Leadership Conference

The Brookline METCO and English Learner Education (ELE) offices hosted a fantastic leadership conference for young women of color from Brookline High School.

The conference was held in the Dell Suite at Fenway Park on December 17, overlooking a beautiful snow covered field (we were so grateful that school was not closed for a snow day!). The main goal of the conference was to support our young women in their academic and social development. The conference, through a series of panel discussions and workshops, served to empower the students to openly and honestly discuss the challenges they face and devise strategies to address them.

Lesley Ryan Miller, Pierce principal, moderated a panel, featuring special guests Rachel Rollins, District Attorney of Suffolk County, and Rebekah Splaine Salwasser, Executive Director of the Red Sox Foundation. Summer Williams, Associate Dean at BHS, presented a phenomenal workshop on Empowerment and Art, and Dr. Suzie Talukdar, Driscoll principal, led yet another exciting panel discussion. Finally, Audrey Spataro, BHS Steps to Success Advisor, moderated an informative workshop especially for 12th graders.

The conference was truly a celebration of *our* students, filled with unity *and* community. Everyone left with a palpable feeling of strength and brimming with self-confidence and pride of self.

Special thanks to Keith Lezama, METCO Coordinator, and Mindy Paulo, ELE Coordinator, for all of their hard work organizing this fantastic conference for our students. And thanks to the entire Boston Red Sox organization for providing such a wonderful venue for this great event.

Congratulations!

I want to take a moment to congratulate Gail Corcoran, Heath School nurse, and Betty Bekker, BEEP nurse, on their becoming Nationally Certified School Nurses (NCSN). This credential is granted to registered nurses who meet educational and employment criteria and who successfully pass the national examination. The credentialing standards of the National Board of Certified School Nurses meet or exceed industry standards for certification. The NCSN examination reflects the knowledge expected of the proficient school nurse. Congratulations to Ms. Corcoran and Ms. Bekker on this significant achievement!

Meetings with Parents and Guardians

In my continuing effort to meet with parents at every school, I met with parents and guardians at Pierce School on December 6 and at Lincoln School on December 13. I look forward to meeting with METCO parents on February 4 and with Heath parents on February 7. All of these meetings give me a chance to update parents on district initiatives and hear directly from them with their questions and suggestions.