

The Public Schools of Brookline
School Committee Meeting of Thursday, October 17, 2019
Superintendent Report
Ben Lummis
Interim Superintendent of Schools

News from the Brookline Education Foundation

It was a true pleasure to join the BEF as they feted this year's Margaret Metzger Fellows. The fellows read their thought-provoking essays to a full house on October 4 in the Lincoln School auditorium. The Metzger Fellowship is one of the highlights of the BEF's work and captures the essence of their mission to support excellence in teaching. Each essay was incredibly personal and engaging, written so authentically by our colleagues as a reflection of their profession.

Please join me in congratulating the 2019 Margaret Metzger Fellows:

- ❖ Mireille Blau, Coolidge Corner School
- ❖ Rebecca Hayden, Brookline High School
- ❖ Paul Epstein, Brookline High School
- ❖ Lauren Ockene, Pierce School
- ❖ Meghan Walsh, Runkle School
- ❖ Evan Mousseau, Brookline High School

And special thanks to John Andrews, the High School English Chair, for his dedicated work over the last five years with the Fellows.

I was also pleased to be able to attend the BEF's October board meeting and potluck dinner on Monday evening, October 7 at the home of board chair Emily Dolbear. It was a great opportunity to meet the board of directors, hear about their plans for the year ahead, and share some of the district's priorities for the coming school year.

BHS Scheduler App

Brookline High School junior, Yuen Ler Chow, has developed an amazing app for use by BHS students and teachers alike. The app - called the Brookline High School Schedule Tracker and available for iPhone users - allows students and staff to easily track the daily schedule ("A" week, "B" week) and location (OLS or 115 Greenough). Given the complexity of the high school schedule this year, this app has been very well received.

Yuen Ler rolled out the app to 9th graders on convocation day to great applause. One of the biggest worries for a 9th grader is the schedule and so Yuen Ler's app has been very helpful in that regard. He is still working to address some minor glitches to make the app even more user-friendly.

Boston 25 News: Visit to Runkle School Kitchen

As part of a story about health and safety inspections of local school kitchens, the Town's Assistant Director of Public Health, Pat Maloney, worked with us to accommodate the request of a news crew from Boston 25 to visit the Runkle School kitchen to film the mandatory health inspection.

It will come as no surprise that our health inspection was successful! The Runkle School kitchen, and indeed all of our food service facilities across the district, are well-managed, properly supervised and strictly adhere to all health regulations. Following the inspection and filming, Mr. Maloney wrote to share his thanks for our willingness to accommodate the news team. He specifically commended Sasha Palmer, Food Services Director, Tess Washburn, Food Services Assistant Director, and Matt Gillis, Director of Facilities and Operations, for ensuring such high-quality supervision and operation of the kitchen at Runkle School.

We have been told that the news segment will air in early November; we will share it with you as soon as it's available.

School Visits

On Tuesday, October 8, I joined Dr. Asa Sevelius in visiting several classrooms at Heath School, and on Tuesday, October 15 I visited Pierce classrooms with Principal Lesley Ryan Miller. I was also able to join the Pierce faculty meeting this past Tuesday afternoon.

On Wednesday, October 2, I joined METCO Director Keith Lezama for some school visits: we met METCO advisor Veronica Kimbro at Driscoll School, and also visited BHS to meet with Malcolm Cawthorne, Kendall Jones and James Cradle. It was a great opportunity to spend some time with our high school students in METCO, hear about their plans beyond their senior year, and learn first-hand about some of the great initiatives and projects planned for the year ahead.

The Runkle PTO hosted me at a parent coffee on Friday, October 4, in the school library where I shared an update on our long term capital plan, the renaming of the Coolidge Corner School, the fiscal challenges that are ahead, and our professional development work that's underway. My next parent forum is Tuesday, October 22 at Driscoll School.

Kindergarten Information Sessions

While the 2019-2020 school year has only just begun, the Office of Registration and Enrollment (ORE) is already busy planning for the arrival of the kindergarten class in September 2020! ORE has scheduled five information sessions for prospective parents and guardians. These sessions are a great opportunity for parents and guardians to ask any questions they may have about the registration process, buffer zones and school assignments, and general questions about our school district. Over the years we have found these information sessions to be very well received - new families really appreciate the opportunity to meet our staff in-person and ask questions as they prepare for this major milestone.

The information sessions, all to be held in the School Committee Room, are scheduled for:

- ❖ Thursday, December 5 at 8:30am

- ❖ Friday, December 6 at 8:30am
- ❖ Wednesday, December 11 at 5:30pm
- ❖ Tuesday, December 17 at 5:30pm
- ❖ Wednesday, December 18 at 8:30am (*specifically for current BEEP families*)

As we did last year, we also videotape one of the sessions and post-it on our website so that those who are unable to attend can still access this important information.

The actual kindergarten registration process will open in mid-January 2020.

Renaming of the Coolidge Corner School

As you know, the Town of Brookline Naming Committee held a public hearing last night, October 16, at the Coolidge Corner School to consider a new name for the school.

The Bee-lievers of Change, the student group who worked so diligently and thoughtfully last winter and spring to gather finalist names, spoke eloquently about their work and the importance of the new school name to the entire community. Principal Buller explained in detail the work that the Bee-lievers in Change did including how they, on their own, vetted and discussed all 119 nominations. Debra Brown and I opened the public hearing by speaking about Florida Ruffin Ridley and the inclusive, open, and transparent process that resulted in this School Committee voting to recommend Florida Ruffin Ridley for the school's new name.

School Committee members Barbara Scott, Suzanne Federspiel, and David Pearlman all added remarks strongly in support of the Bee-lievers in Change, the thorough and inclusive process, and the incredible example Ms. Ruffin Ridley is to our students and community.

Malcolm Cawthorne who has many roles relevant to this process (Town Naming Committee member, Devotion School graduate, father of two Devotion School graduates, and BHS staff member) spoke eloquently about the example of Florida Ruffin Ridley, the irony of comments that claimed that somehow an African-American women had advantages over other nominations, and his concern about how we have erased the history of leaders like Ms. Ruffin Ridley, and that it is time that we restore that history by honoring her contributions.

Girls on the Run

Following a rigorous practice in dreary weather yesterday afternoon, Pierce students were on hand as the Girls on the Run Program was presented with a \$20,000 donation from the Women's Foundation of Boston.

PSB students from Pierce, Lawrence and Baker participate in the Girls on the Run Program, and so we were thrilled that the donation to the program was made at one of our schools! Now in its third season, Girls on the Run provides our 3rd – 8th grade students with an opportunity to develop confidence, teamwork, and other important life skills through a fun, experience-based curriculum which creatively integrates running. Currently, over seventy PSB students from Baker, Lawrence, and Pierce

participate in an intensive ten-week training schedule, culminating with a state-wide 5k with other participating schools in November.

Christina Gordon, Executive Director of the Women's Foundation of Boston, and Olivia Matthews, Executive Director of Girls on the Run Boston, were on hand for the ceremony, and took advantage of the opportunity to cheer on our students.

I would like to acknowledge Pierce teachers Amy Woogmaster and Liz Balzano, and other staff and community members, for coaching and running with our students every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon. Finally, best of luck to our student teams as they train for their 5K!