

The Public Schools of Brookline
School Committee Meeting of Thursday, October 4, 2018
Superintendent Report
Andrew J. Bott
Superintendent of Schools

Indigenous Peoples Day

In an effort to celebrate a more historically accurate and inclusive perspective of history, to recognize the many contributions and accomplishments of indigenous peoples, and in accordance with the vote by Brookline Town Meeting on November 14, 2017, the Public Schools of Brookline will commemorate Monday, October 8 as Indigenous Peoples Day. I have attached the letter that Deputy Superintendent Dr. Gittens and I shared with parents last month outlining the work the district has been engaged in over many months to prepare for this important change. I would like to acknowledge the dedicated work of K-8 Social Studies Coordinator Dr. Geoff Tegnell, and his grade level teacher teams, for creating new curriculum units to support this important new holiday observance.

Official Opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at the Coolidge Corner School

As you know, we had a successful opening of the Coolidge Corner School in September. Now that our students and faculty have settled in, we are happy to invite you to the official ribbon cutting ceremony on Saturday, October 13 @ 9:30am on the front steps of the school. Please join with other town and elected officials, as well as representatives from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, as we cap the close of an amazing construction project and celebrate the opening of our beautiful new school. Following the ribbon cutting, you are invited to the CCS *Fallcoming* celebration from 10-2. Sponsored by the Coolidge Corner School Parent Teacher Organization, with generous support from the Coolidge Corner Merchants Association, *Fallcoming* will feature fun for the kids, food trucks, presentations, and opportunities to explore the school. It promises to be a great day!

Minority Student Achievement Network (MSAN) Student Conference

As you know, this year Brookline is honored to be hosting the annual MSAN Student Conference, October 24-27, 2018. For your information, I have attached the current draft of the agenda for this 3-day conference. The conference is a powerful event during which students from across the country work together on issues of equity in their own schools and, through this work, come to understand, identify, and change school practices and structures that keep opportunity and outcome gaps in place. Brookline students who attended the conference each of the past two years have presented their findings to the School Committee and worked closely with educators at Brookline High School, Head of School Anthony Meyer, our K-8 Math Curriculum Coordinator Kathleen Hubbard, K-8 Principals, Dr. Nicole Gittens and me to ask important questions and change our practices. I invite you to join me in welcoming the MSAN students to Brookline at the Opening Dinner on Wednesday, October 24 at 5:00pm. The theme of this year's conference is "Deeper the Roots, Stronger the Tree".

I would like to acknowledge and thank: Gabe McCormick, Director of Professional Development; Clifton Jones and Erin Blette from the BHS planning team; Jenee Uttaro, Dean of Faculty and planning team support; Mayra Hernandez and Amanda Lehman, MSAN student advisors; the PSB student teams from 2017-2018 and 2018-2019; and the many other volunteers who have been working so hard to make this a meaningful conference for all of the students.

Brookline High School Innovation Fund

The BHS Innovation Fund sponsored a thought-provoking evening for over 400 parents, teachers and students on September 20 to kick-off their 20th Anniversary Celebration. Moderated by WBUR host Meghna Chakrabarti, the evening featured speaker Ted Dintersmith, Innovation Expert and author of “What School Could Be”, discussing how to improve the current educational system to meet the evolving demands of an increasingly innovative and rapidly changing world. In case you missed it, I’ve attached the Boston Globe article dated September 21 that covered the event.

English Learner Education: 2013-2018

At our last meeting, you requested a summary of the total number of English Learner students (ELs) for the last several years. Here is that information:

2013-2014	656
2014-2015	679
2015-2016	709
2016-2017	785
2017-2018	818
2018-2019	922

Since 2013-2014, we have experienced a 41% increase in the number of registered students eligible for English Learner Education (ELE) services.

Faculty Recognition

Congratulations to Marianne Dewing, Driscoll School Nurse, on becoming a Nationally Certified School Nurse (NCSN). This credential is granted to registered nurses who meet educational and employment criteria, and who successfully pass the national examination. The rigorous standards of the National Board of Certified School Nurses credentialing process ensure that candidates meet or exceed industry standards and passing the NCSN examination ensures that they possess the knowledge expected of a proficient school nurse.

This provides me with the perfect opportunity to take a moment to thank the nurses in *all* of our schools. Whether supporting our students on a day-to-day basis, responding to emergency situations, meeting with parents, or keeping abreast of the latest in school health protocols, our school nurses go above and beyond the call of duty each and every day. We have an incredibly talented student health staff, and as we start another successful school year I want to offer my thanks to them for their tireless efforts.

School Visits

Since the last School Committee meeting, I have enjoyed extended visits at the following schools:

Lincoln School	September 26
Coolidge Corner School	September 27
Pierce School	September 27
Driscoll School	October 1
High School	October 3 and 4

I also participated in the faculty meetings at Baker School (on September 25) and at Brookline High School (on October 2).



Andrew J. Bott
Superintendent

The Public Schools of Brookline
Town Hall
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Brookline, Massachusetts 02445
617.730.2401

September 24, 2018

Dear Brookline Families,

On November 14, 2017, Brookline Town Meeting voted in favor of Warrant Article 20 to establish that the second Monday of October would be commemorated as Indigenous Peoples Day in the Town of Brookline.

The Public Schools of Brookline (PSB) supported Warrant Article 20 because it is consistent with the district's long established efforts to ensure that our curriculum and learning expectations are more inclusive of the multiple perspectives and experiences that have typically been underrepresented in American education.

In 2009, the PSB's Social Studies department began rewriting the district's learning expectations for Social Studies. At that time, curriculum teams began developing new units about Native Americans for 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 8th grades that are now in use. Subsequently, in the spring of 2016, curriculum coordinators assessed curriculum materials for hidden bias or dubious inferences. At that time, our PK-8 Social Studies Coordinator Geoff Tegnell worked with teachers at each grade level to review our grade-level texts, atlases, and teacher resources in order to assess these materials for: 1) accuracy of information; 2) inclusion of multiple perspectives; and 3) stereotypes, bias, and questionable inferences.

This review found that some of our curriculum resources understated the consequences of exploration, settlement, and westward expansion on Native Americans. In addition, some of our materials provided inadequate information about modern Native Americans and about Native Americans of distinction. In response to these concerns, teacher teams revised curricula and identified instructional materials that are more equitable and inclusive. For example, PSB purchased texts for our 4th grade Exploration and Colonization unit that better convey the negative impact of European conquest of the Americas on indigenous peoples. With the support of Dr. Tegnell, Heath School teacher Karen Shashoua received a National Endowment for the Humanities grant to study the origins of Hopi culture at Mesa Verde, access artifacts, and develop curricular materials about modern Hopi life for 2nd grade teachers. The Social Studies department also added texts about Native American leaders for our 5th grade curriculum, such as [The Life of Joseph Brant](#) by Ryan Nagelhout.

In September of 2017 Dr. Tegnell shared resources with all Social Studies teachers on how to better include the perspectives of indigenous peoples regarding Christopher Columbus' exploration and exploitation. These resources included June Sark Heinrich's pedagogical guidelines, [Native Americans: What Not to Teach](#); suggestions for books that represent the Native American perspective on Columbus; and Native American-oriented online lessons about Columbus' actions in the Caribbean. This outreach to Social Studies teachers also reminded them to approach teaching about Columbus and the Native Americans he encountered with developmentally appropriate pedagogy, an appreciation for the complexity of historical events, and by including the Native American experience of Columbus' "discovery" of the Americas and the consequences it had for them.

Over the past several months, Dr. Tegnell and educators in grades K-8 have developed specific lessons that are historically accurate, inclusive of multiple perspectives, and recognize the many contributions and accomplishments of indigenous peoples. As a part of the curriculum, and in accordance with the resolutions contained in Warrant Article 20, in particular over the next several weeks, your child will experience these new and powerful lessons.

As always, if you have any questions about these lessons please do not hesitate to speak with your child's teacher. You can always reach out to Dr. Tegnell directly at geoff_tegnell@psbma.org.

Sincerely,



Andrew J. Bott
Superintendent



Nicole Gittens, Ed.D.
Deputy Superintendent for Teaching and Learning

2018 MSAN STUDENT CONFERENCE

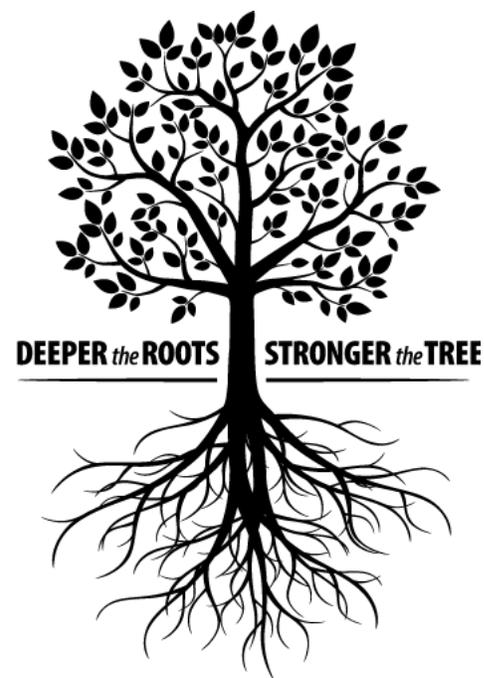
DRAFT AGENDA

Conference Theme:

Deeper the Roots, Stronger the Tree

10/24-10/27, 2018

[Crowne Plaza Boston Newton Hotel](#)



WEDNESDAY, October 24, 2018

3:30 pm	Registration and check in
5:00 pm	Welcome
5:30 pm	Dinner
6:30 pm	Keynote 1
8:00 pm	Icebreakers/Performance
9:30 pm	Roll Call
10:30 pm	Snacks
11:00 pm	Lights out

THURSDAY, October 25, 2018

7:00 am	Breakfast
8:00 am	Travel to College 1,2,3,4
8:30 am	College 1,2,3,4 tour
12:00 pm	Lunch at a college
1:00 pm	Travel to College 5, tour
5:30 pm	Travel & Break
6:30 pm	Dinner and table talk (action plan check in)
8:00 pm	Keynote
9:15 pm	Talent show/Open mic
10:30 pm	Snacks
11:00 pm	Lights out

FRIDAY, October 26, 2018

7:00 am	Breakfast
8:00 am	Action Planning Intro
8:30 am	Action planning 1
12:00 pm	Professionals of Color panel
1:00 pm	Lunch with panel and other adults
2:30 pm	Action planning 2
5:00 pm	Share action plans
6:00 pm	Dinner
7:00 pm	Break
8:00 pm	Dance and study time
10:30 pm	Snacks
11:00 pm	Lights out

SATURDAY, October 27, 2018

8:00 am	Breakfast, Closing, Video & Reflections
10:00 am	Departure

At Brookline High, author praises innovation



JACKSON COTE/FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Meghna Chakrabarti of WBUR spoke with Ted Dintersmith at Brookline High Thursday night.

By Jackson Cote

GLOBE CORRESPONDENT SEPTEMBER 21, 2018

Speaking to a crowd of more than 300 people at Brookline High School, author and innovator Ted Dintersmith praised Brookline Public Schools for empowering students and encouraging teachers' creativity.

“These guys are doing really impressive things,” Dintersmith said in a public talk Thursday night hosted by the Brookline High School Innovation Fund and moderated by WBUR’s Meghna Chakrabarti

He lauded the fund, which uses private grant money to create course programs on topics ranging from engineering, to global leadership, to racial awareness. Such programs give Brookline students a “real sense of purpose and a set of skills that are relevant,” he said.

It is the only educational model he has seen, “where kids actually design, make, invent,” with “really great directionality” from instructors.

Brookline High senior Peter Rachlin, said he took a course last year on social justice leadership, and got “a lot of real world experience” from it.

As part of the class, he interned at Boston Mobilization, a nonprofit that organizes lectures on issues of social and racial justice. The class gave him the opportunity to delve deeply into issues he’d “never gone into before.”

“[I] had a lot of my ideas challenged,” said Rachlin, who was seated at a table with other students discussing his class with people who attended the talk.

Dintersmith was invited to Brookline High to discuss his recently published book “What School Could Be.” In a single school year, he visited schools in all 50 states, to identify challenges and innovations in American education.

Brookline schools are not featured in the book, but Dintersmith noted “This district is admired,” across the state.

In his talk, Dintersmith identified two general problems for educators: new technologies that are rapidly changing what kids need to learn, and the need for schools to constantly adjust their curriculums to keep up with innovation.

“How does an existing school make progress?” he asked.

Dintersmith, who is based in Virginia, is a former [partner at the Charles River Ventures](#) in Cambridge. In 2015, he produced the documentary “Most Likely To Succeed,” which

examined the impact of standardized testing in education. The film was [featured](#) in GlobeDocs Film Festival, sponsored by the Boston Globe during HUBweek.

During the conversation, Dintersmith criticized state standardized testing as a way to rank students. “I’m very skeptical that they’re helpful for higher grades,” he said.

He said that the state’s MCAS test questions are not good indicators for students’ skills and progress.

Dintersmith also took questions from the audience.

Patrick Tai, of Cambridge, who tutors middle and high schoolers at the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, asked for advice on how to let kids learn what they want, but also teach the basic curriculum.

Dintersmith answered that teachers must play a “really informed role,” but questioned the need for students to be drilled on basic knowledge of subjects “year after year.”

“They’re covering a lot of material, but are they actually learning it?” he said.

Dintersmith emphasized that school administrators and parents must trust teachers. He cited Brookline’s innovation fund for “trusting teachers to lead the way.”

His views resonated with Brookline teachers.

Tanya Paris, a kindergarten teacher for 14 years, said she found his talk “very powerful, as a teacher, as a parent.”

“The message of trust was particularly powerful,” added Lisa Lamont Harris, a Brookline teacher for 22 years and has three children in the school district.

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