

The Public Schools of Brookline
School Committee Meeting of Thursday, February 14, 2019
Superintendent Report
Andrew J. Bott

Principal Search Update

Over the last two weeks, the senior staff and I have devoted many hours to the search for the best principal candidates. As of today, we have completed second round interviews as part of the principal search process at both **Coolidge Corner** and **Lawrence Schools**. Finalists for both positions will be introduced to their respective school communities at public meetings (one for staff, one for parents) to be scheduled after the school vacation. At these public meetings, parents/guardians and staff will be able to ask questions and provide feedback directly to me.

The Principal Interview Committee at **Baker School** finished first round interviews yesterday. We are in the process of scheduling second round interviews for their preferred candidates immediately after the school vacation.

Class of 2023 Transition Events

The annual series of events for 8th graders, and their families, to begin the transition to Brookline High School started this week. On Monday evening, February 11, parents and guardians were invited to meet with special educators in the BHS library to learn about the school's robust continuum of special education programming. Following the special education opportunity, parents and guardians met in the auditorium for Curriculum Night. Curriculum coordinators from each area - English, Math, Science, Social Studies, World Language, Performing Arts, Visual Arts, and Career and Technology Education - highlighted some of their offerings and answered questions.

This morning, all 8th grade students traveled to the high school for the "Arts at BHS" presentation. This event featured presentations about the BHS Performing Arts, Visual Arts, and Career and Technical Education offerings. I was able to join the 8th graders this morning when they assembled at the high school and I can report first-hand that they are eager to matriculate at BHS!

District Leadership Team Work

Our district leadership team (senior staff and all principals) meets weekly on Monday afternoons. Once per month, our meetings are extended and we meet for a full day. This month, our full day session focused on cultural proficiency and was led by Dr. Kalise Wornum. The district's cultural proficiency work is designed to provide educators with the opportunity to explore the multiple facets of their own identity and develop a deeper understanding of the history and experiences of people from backgrounds different than their own.

Through this work, participants connect identity development and belief systems to academic engagement and achievement. These understandings will help participants develop the skills needed to promote culturally proficient classrooms and schools.

Cultural proficiency is an approach for responding to the environment as shaped by its diversity. It is a model for shifting the culture of an organization, and it is a model for individual transformation and organizational change.

Dr. Wornum led a fantastic learning opportunity for the entire leadership team. This was the first in a series of cultural proficiency professional development sessions planned for the district leadership team. Vice principals and special education directors will participate in the same professional development series, beginning shortly after the February break. Dr. Wornum is also planning opportunities for up to 75 educators to participate in the same training this spring and summer.

Also at this month's leadership team meeting, we heard an update about the exSEL Network from Dr. Sheldon Berman, Superintendent of the Andover Public Schools and a leader in the field of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL). As I shared with you in November, the Public Schools of Brookline is participating in the Excellence through Social-Emotional Learning (exSEL) Network. We are one of just 19 districts across the Commonwealth partnering in this work to help students build social and emotional skills.

Dr. Berman discussed the activities of the exSEL Network and highlighted some of the many benefits of SEL, including: better academic performance; higher college retention rates; increased employment; and lower levels of aggression, depression, anxiety and substance abuse. As we position the district to roll-out new and additional ways to create positive learning environments for our students, it was a pleasure to hear directly from Dr. Berman on this important topic.

I am grateful to Dr. Maria Letasz, Director of K-12 Guidance and Clinical Services, for all of her work this year spearheading the district's SEL efforts.

School Visits

Since our last meeting, I had the opportunity to visit classrooms at Lincoln School on February 4 and at Brookline High School on February 6.