

The Public Schools of Brookline
School Committee Meeting of Thursday, March 22, 2018
Superintendent Report
Andrew J. Bott
Superintendent of Schools

School Leadership Announcements

I am pleased to share information about the following school leadership changes in our schools:

Driscoll School: After a thorough public search process, and after thoughtful feedback from the parents, guardians and staff at Driscoll School, I am very happy to announce that Dr. Suzie Talukdar has been appointed principal of Driscoll School.

As interim principal since the start of the school year, Dr. Talukdar has already developed a positive and welcoming school culture and earned the trust and confidence of the staff, students and families at Driscoll. She has established a strong reputation as a collaborative colleague, and will draw upon her vast knowledge of the district (having served as Brookline's METCO Director for 11 years) to bring a new perspective to the leadership of the school.

The feedback from staff and from parents, following her public interviews, was overwhelmingly positive. The Driscoll School is grateful for her leadership and is looking forward to her tenure as the school's leader.

Lawrence School: You will recall that Allyson Hart recently announced that she will be resigning as principal at the end of the school year. I am extremely happy to announce that Ms. Monica Crowley has been appointed interim principal of Lawrence for the 2018-2019 school year.

Ms. Crowley was vice principal at Lawrence for six years, from 2008-2014, and during that time was a talented and trusted member of the school's leadership team, responsible for planning grade level literacy and data meetings and facilitating upper school team meetings, among many other things. She has been principal of Upper Devotion since 2014, during which she successfully led the transition of the upper grades to their temporary home at the Old Lincoln School. At Upper Devo, she has been instrumental in introducing project-based learning and is focused on collaborative leadership in all areas of instruction. The decision to appoint her as interim principal at Lawrence, announced to staff and families today, has already been met with resounding praise and support.

During the 2018-2019 school year we will conduct a full search process for a permanent Lawrence School principal.

Devotion School: Today I also announced that Ms. Jennifer Buller and Mr. David O'Hara have been appointed interim co-principals of Devotion School for the 2018-2019 school year. As you know, next year will mark the return of the K-4 and 5th – 8th grades to the renovated building on Harvard Street.

Ms. Buller has served the district since 2005, as an elementary teacher at Heath School, as vice principal at Devotion for one year, and as co-principal of Lower Devotion since 2015. Mr. O'Hara has served the Devotion School community for 30 years, including 13 years as a physical

education teacher, 14 years as vice principal, and as co-principal since 2015. Ms. Buller and Mr. O'Hara organized and led the successful move of grades K-4 to the temporary location on Webster Street while also supporting faculty in successfully moving the school's educational mission and vision forward. They are uniquely positioned to ensure a successful return to the Harvard Street campus.

In addition to the co-principals, Devotion will have two vice principals for the 2018-2019 school year. Mr. Saeed Ola, current vice principal at Upper Devotion, will continue to serve as VP for grades 5-8. This spring, co-principals Buller and O'Hara will conduct a search for a second vice principal for the school.

Next year, the district will conduct a full search process for a single, permanent Devotion School principal. At the completion of that process, the principal will hire a third vice principal, completing the final leadership structure for Devotion School.

For your information, more details about each of these announcements can be found on the attached letters.

Finally, we have completed the full public search process for a new Pierce School principal. I expect to be able to share news with you about a decision for this position by early next week.

Snow Days

You will recall that our original schedule set the 180th day of school on Tuesday, June 19. We have had five snow days, so our current last day of school is Tuesday, June 26. As you know, any additional weather-related school cancellations will push the last day back accordingly. We are mindful of the fact that families and staff are eager to make summer plans. Our practice has been to wait until the first week of April, when the threat of snow storms has hopefully passed, to announce the final last day of school.

School Visits

The recent spate of snow days has put a dent into my school visits over the last two weeks. Since our last meeting I have visited Heath School (on March 12) and Brookline High School (on March 21). I also participated in the Runkle Faculty Meeting on March 20.

Brookline Education Foundation's 5th Grade Spelling Bee

It was my pleasure to serve as an honorary judge at the BEF's Annual 5th Grade Spelling Bee on Sunday, March 11. Fifth graders from each of our schools gamely participated, successfully spelling words that even adults might find challenging. Congratulations to this year's winner: Ivy Bass from Heath School!

Student Honors

Congratulations to Brookline High School students Chloe Janes, Bryan Zhu and Romy Meehan on their third place prize in the C-SPAN annual national video documentary competition. Students were asked to create a short documentary about a provision in the U.S. Constitution and its importance to them. The BHS students' submission, titled *Under Siege: The Assault on the American Press*, highlighted the First Amendment freedom of the press and was created as part of their BHS interdisciplinary course Film as History, History as Film. You can watch the video at this link: <https://www.viddler.com/v/d4a952b8>



The Public Schools of Brookline
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Andrew J. Bott
Superintendent

March 20, 2018

Dear Driscoll Families and Staff,

I am very pleased to announce Dr. Sujan “Suzie” Talukdar as the next Principal of the Michael Driscoll School. I have selected Dr. Talukdar after a thorough search process and after receiving thoughtful and supportive feedback from the Driscoll Principal Search Committee, staff, parents, and guardians.

Through thoughtful listening, excellent communication, regular classroom visits, and collaborative problem solving, Dr. Talukdar has developed a positive and welcoming school culture and has earned the trust and confidence of staff, students, and families. As a result of her tenure as Interim Principal and her 11 years as Brookline’s K-12 Director of the Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO) Program, Dr. Talukdar knows the Driscoll School community and the Brookline school district very well. During the search process she explained clearly how her experience at the district level combined with her familiarity with the Driscoll community will allow her to bring a new perspective to the leadership of the school.

Throughout her years in Brookline, Dr. Talukdar has established a strong reputation for her ability to collaborate closely and effectively with central office staff, principals, curriculum and program coordinators, teachers, paraprofessionals, and families in support of student growth and development.

During her more than 20 years as an educator, Dr. Talukdar has used her passion and expertise in cultural proficiency, anti-racism, and educational equity to address academic and opportunity gaps. Dr. Talukdar began her career in education as a grade 6 social studies teacher in Newton and then became the Director of the Intercultural Center at Brandeis University. In addition to serving as the METCO Director in Brookline, she has been a graduate-level course instructor and consultant for the EDCO Collaborative in Bedford, and is also a consultant and instructor for the Leadership Licensure Program for Teachers21 in Wellesley. Dr. Talukdar earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from Brandeis University. She holds a Master of Arts in Teaching from Boston University, and a Doctor of Education degree in Educational Administration from Boston College.

I would like to acknowledge the committed efforts of the Driscoll Principal Search Committee and the many staff, parents, and guardians who participated in the search process. The involvement of so many dedicated community members made the search process a positive, collaborative and successful one.

Please join me in warmly welcoming Dr. Talukdar as the new principal of the Driscoll School. We are thrilled to have her continue serving the Driscoll School and the Brookline community in this capacity.

Sincerely,

Andrew J. Bott
Superintendent



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Superintendent

March 22, 2018

Dear Lawrence School Families and Staff,

It is with great pleasure that I announce that Monica Crowley will be the interim principal of the Amos A. Lawrence School during the 2018-2019 school year. Ms. Crowley is well known by the Lawrence and Brookline community, having served as the principal of the Upper Devotion School for the last four years and as the vice principal at Lawrence from 2008 to 2014. Ms. Crowley's close ties with Lawrence staff and families and her strong track record of instructional leadership in the district will serve the Lawrence community well.

As the principal at Upper Devotion, Ms. Crowley developed the middle school program in preparation for Upper Devotion's three-year relocation to the old Lincoln School. She has been instrumental in introducing project-based learning to the school. Ms. Crowley has focused on collaborative leadership, using the expertise of the faculty to develop robust professional development in literacy, to address equity and access, and to create a math "Learning Laboratory" where math teachers, specialists, and coaches work together to identify and implement key instructional strategies across the middle grades.

As the vice principal at Lawrence, Ms. Crowley worked closely with staff, students, and families in all areas of school leadership. She co-chaired the School Council and served as a member of Faculty Planning and Child Study Teams. She facilitated upper school team meetings and faculty meetings and was responsible for planning grade level literacy and data meetings. Ms. Crowley also designed and created the town-wide middle school advisory program. Prior to coming to Brookline, Ms. Crowley was a sixth grade Language Arts and Social Studies teacher at the Day Middle and the Horace Mann Elementary schools in Newton.

During the 2018-2019 school year, the district will conduct a full search process for a permanent Lawrence School principal.

In addition to announcing Ms. Crowley's appointment I also want to let you know that, starting next week, Janet Palmer Owens will be supporting the Lawrence School administrative team for the remainder of this school year. She will be at Lawrence three days each week, working with Principal Hart and Vice Principals Horst and Porter to ensure a successful transition to next school year.

Ms. Palmer Owens is the former Chief Academic Officer of the Boston Public Schools. She also served as the Academic Superintendent for Pilot Schools in Boston, as well as Assistant Superintendent for K-12 schools. Ms. Palmer Owens also served as the principal of the Mason Pilot Elementary School. While she was at the Mason, the school served as a demonstration site for the National Alliance of Black School Educators and was named one of the top 50 schools in the Northeast by Boston magazine.

Please join me in welcoming both Ms. Crowley and Ms. Palmer Owens to Lawrence in their new capacities.

Sincerely,

Andrew J. Bott
Superintendent



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March 22, 2018

Dear Devotion School Families and Staff,

As we begin the transition to the new school building, I am pleased to share an update on the 2018-2019 leadership structure for Devotion School.

Next year, Jennifer Buller and Dave O'Hara will serve as interim co-principals of the Devotion School. Since 2005, Ms. Buller has served the Public Schools of Brookline in multiple capacities, including eight years as a second, third, and fourth grade teacher at Heath School, one year as Devotion vice principal, and as co-principal of Lower Devotion since 2015. Mr. O'Hara has served the Devotion School community for 30 years, including 13 years as a physical education teacher, 14 years as vice principal, and as co-principal of Lower Devotion since 2015.

In their roles as co-principals of Lower Devotion, Ms. Buller and Mr. O'Hara have successfully led the school community through a very challenging period. Among many other accomplishments, they organized and led the smooth transition into the temporary site on Webster Street, strengthened community outreach and partnership, collaborated with teachers to further strengthen literacy instruction, and, with Monica Crowley, formed Devotion's equity and access leadership team comprised of teachers and administrators who are examining school practices in order to achieve more equitable outcomes for students. Even while they were managing a complex building project, Mr. O'Hara and Ms. Buller have been able to support the faculty in successfully moving Devotion's educational mission and vision forward. I know that both Ms. Buller and Mr. O'Hara are excited about reconnecting the Upper and Lower Devotion staff and families next year and reintroducing pre-school into the Devotion school community.

In addition to co-principals, Devotion will have two vice principals in the coming year. Saeed Ola will continue as vice principal for grades 5-8. This spring, interim co-principals Buller and O'Hara will conduct a search process to select a second vice principal for the school.

Earlier today I named Monica Crowley to be the interim principal of the Lawrence School.

Ms. Crowley has been a tremendous asset to Devotion for the past four years. She has used her collaborative leadership approach to build a strong learning community at Upper Devotion while always staying in step and closely linked with Lower Devotion. Among many other efforts, she worked closely with staff to introduce project-based learning, develop robust professional development in literacy, address equity and access, and create a math "Learning Laboratory" where math teachers, specialists, and coaches work together to identify and implement key instructional strategies across the middle grades. It is her success as a school leader combined with her six years as vice principal at Lawrence School from 2008-2014 that makes her the right choice to be the school's interim principal. Ms. Crowley will remain as the principal of Upper Devotion until the end of this school year and begin as the Lawrence School interim principal in July. I want to thank Ms. Crowley for her unwavering dedication to the students, staff and families of the Devotion community over the last four years.

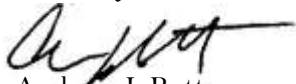
During the 2018-2019 school year, the district will conduct a full search process for a permanent Devotion principal. At the completion of this principal search process, the next Devotion School principal will hire a third vice principal which will complete the transition to the school's permanent leadership structure.

I do understand that Ms. Crowley's new assignment is just one of many changes the Devotion community will face in the year to come. There will be many successes, lots of new beginnings, and some challenges along the way. I am confident that the thoughtful and collaborative leadership of Ms. Buller, Mr. O'Hara, and Mr. Ola will successfully lead Devotion staff, students, and families through this transition and continue the school community's journey in its new home.

On Thursday, April 12, Mr. O'Hara and Ms. Buller will host Coffee & Conversation to update Devotion parents and guardians about the leadership transition. Coffee & Conversation will be at Lower Devotion at 8:00 a.m. For more information about the transition to the new building please visit

<https://www.brookline.k12.ma.us/domain/827>

Sincerely,



Andrew J. Bott
Superintendent