

The Public Schools of Brookline
School Committee Meeting of Thursday, March 28, 2019
Superintendent Report
Andrew J. Bott

New Principals at Lawrence and Coolidge Corner Schools

Since our last meeting on March 14, I announced the appointment of a permanent principal at both Lawrence and Coolidge Corner Schools.

On Friday, March 15, I announced that Monica Crowley has been appointed the permanent principal of the Lawrence School. I met with the Lawrence staff on that Friday afternoon and then shared the attached letter with the entire Lawrence community. Mrs. Crowley began working in Brookline in 2008, serving as vice principal of the Lawrence School from 2008 through 2014. She then served as principal of the Upper Devotion School from 2014 through 2018. This year she has been serving as the interim principal at Lawrence. Mrs. Crowley is an outstanding administrator with a track record of collaborative leadership and a proven commitment to the Lawrence School community.

Yesterday I met with the staff at the Coolidge Corner School to share the announcement that I have appointed Mrs. Jennifer Buller as the next principal of CCS. The attached letter was sent to all CCS families and staff on Wednesday afternoon. Mrs. Buller has been working in Brookline since 2006. She spent eight years teaching a range of grades at Heath School before becoming vice principal at Coolidge Corner School in 2014. This past year, Mrs. Buller has been serving as interim co-principal of CCS. Mrs. Buller has a track record of successfully guiding the CCS community through several critical transitions, including the temporary relocation of the elementary grades to the 6-story former nursing home on Webster Street, the design and renovation process for the new building on Harvard Street, followed by the successful move back to the new building. Mrs. Buller has advocated for the CCS community at every juncture, and her dedication to the school is unwavering.

We are extraordinarily lucky to have such experienced educational leaders at the helm of both Lawrence and Coolidge Corner Schools.

Brookline High School's Old Lincoln School (OLS) Campus

We hosted three very well-attended meetings for the families of current 7th and 8th grade students to share information about the planned use of the Old Lincoln School (OLS). As you know, the OLS campus will be used for 9th graders in the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years during the BHS construction project. These informative sessions were held at Pierce, Coolidge Corner and Baker Schools and were very well received by the parents, guardians and students who attended.

I would like to thank Head of School Anthony Meyer and Assistant Head of School Hal Mason and their team, including Deans Lisa Gilbert-Smith, Brian Poon, and Jenee Uttaro, Associate Dean Brendan Kobus, and Special Education Director Wendy Ryder, for preparing such an informative presentation, and reassuringly answering the many questions posed by parents about this plan.

Diversity Recruitment Efforts

As part of our renewed focus on diversity hiring, several members of our leadership team have participated in job fairs in the Greater Boston area. Lesley University, the Teachers' Lounge (host of a series of monthly events for educators of color in Greater Boston), the Massachusetts Partners for Diversity in Education, and the Greater Boston School Human Resource Network have all invited us to participate in their recent job fairs. PSB staff including Human Resources Director Lisa Richardson, Deputy Superintendent Nicole Gittens, and BHS Dean of Faculty Jenee Uttaro attended and report that we had interest from many promising candidates. Ms. Richardson has begun the process of screening candidates and sharing their resumes with hiring managers in the district. We are optimistic that our continued efforts will be successful and result in more educators of color in the Public Schools of Brookline.

School Visits and Events

Since my last report, I had the opportunity to visit many classrooms across the district, including:

- March 18 Brookline High School
- March 20 Lincoln School
- March 22 Pierce School
- March 25 Driscoll School
- March 27 Baker School
- March 28 Heath School

In addition, I was pleased to be able to watch two performances on March 15, including the kindergarten play at Heath School and the middle school play at Baker School. I can attest that we have many talented performers across the district!

On Thursday evening, March 21, I had the honor of joining the Brookline Commission for Women (BCW) to celebrate Brookline's Woman of the Year: BHS teacher Lihua Shorter. Mrs. Shorter has devoted over 20 years to the students at Brookline High School and works tirelessly to foster the Asian American community at BHS. As one parent noted, Mrs. Shorter's influence extends well beyond the walls of her classroom – she is a trusted resource to the entire Brookline community. The BCW also announced the winners of their annual essay contest, "A Woman Who Inspires Me". First, second and third place essay winners from 5th-8th graders were announced and the students shared their moving essays with us. Congratulations to Mrs. Shorter and all of the essay winners!



Andrew J. Bott
Superintendent

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Town Hall
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Brookline, Massachusetts 02445
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March 15, 2019

Dear Lawrence School Families and Staff,

It is with great pleasure that I announce Monica Crowley's appointment as Principal of the Amos A. Lawrence School. Mrs. Crowley started her career in Brookline as vice principal at Lawrence, serving in that role from 2008 through 2014. Mrs. Crowley then served as Principal at the Upper Devotion School from 2014 through 2018. This year, she returned to Lawrence as interim principal. Mrs. Crowley's deep and strong ties with Lawrence students, staff and families, along with her track record of collaborative leadership, will serve the Lawrence School community well.

As the vice principal at Lawrence, Mrs. 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. Mrs. Crowley also designed and created the town-wide middle school advisory program. Prior to coming to Brookline, Mrs. Crowley was a sixth grade Language Arts and Social Studies teacher at the Day Middle and the Horace Mann Elementary schools in Newton.

As interim principal this year, Mrs. Crowley's focus has been on growing and strengthening the relationships between all members of the community. This focus is grounded in her core belief that relationships build strong, collaborative, innovative and inclusive school communities. Mrs. Crowley brings expertise in literacy professional development and project based learning, along with a deep understanding of social/emotional learning, to her work at Lawrence. Her leadership as interim principal this year has clearly demonstrated her unwavering commitment to community and collaboration.

I would like to acknowledge the committed efforts of the Lawrence School Principal Search Committee and all of the staff, parents, guardians and students who participated in the search process. The active involvement of so many members of our community over the course of this search was critical to its success.

Please join me in welcoming Mrs. Crowley as the permanent principal of the Lawrence School.

Sincerely,

Andrew J. Bott
Superintendent



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March 27, 2019

Dear Coolidge Corner School Parents, Guardians and Staff,

It is my pleasure to announce that I have appointed Mrs. Jennifer Buller as the next principal of the Coolidge Corner School.

As you know, Mrs. Buller has been serving as interim co-principal of the Coolidge Corner School (CCS) this year. We have been fortunate to have Mrs. Buller as a part of the Brookline community since 2006. For eight years she taught a range of grades at Heath School. Mrs. Buller's experiences at Heath included serving on the Child Study Team, co-teaching in an elementary inclusive classroom, and curriculum and professional development work in both math and social studies. Mrs. Buller also worked closely with colleagues at Heath to develop and implement innovative cross-curricular, project-based units.

Since joining the Coolidge Corner School community in 2014, Mrs. Buller has been deeply involved in multiple complex projects, from managing the different phases of the school building project to leading the student-led portion of the school's renaming work.

Mrs. Buller has a track record of successfully guiding the Coolidge Corner School through difficult transition. She co-led CCS through the design and renovation of the Harvard Street building, the relocation of the school to that new building, and the successful operation of an elementary school in a 6-story former nursing home. Her experience in managing these challenges further demonstrates her leadership abilities.

The challenges at CCS are unique. While the school is now physically reunited in a brand new, \$120 million building, there remains significant work to be done to rebuild and reconnect a community that was divided into two school sites four years ago. During that physical separation, the CCS community also experienced something of a cultural separation: two different schedules, two different ways of operating, and two distinct professional learning plans.

As the upper and lower schools reunited in the new building this fall, the Coolidge community would have benefited from dedicated time to plan for the rejoining of these distinct communities. All energies, however, had to be turned to ensuring that the construction process was complete and that the school could operate successfully in what was still very much a construction site well into the fall. With the construction project now behind us, I have every confidence that Mrs. Buller will be able to lead the Coolidge Corner School in reconnecting the two distinct communities and renewing the school's longstanding traditions and celebrations.

The challenges that remain before the Coolidge Corner School are significant. There must be a strong and near singular focus on strengthening the fabric of the CCS community. Mrs. Buller has fought for and on behalf of the CCS community throughout every phase of the construction project. And no matter the challenge, her commitment to the school has remained steadfast and resolute. It is her

unwavering commitment to the Coolidge Corner School that gives me the confidence that Mrs. Buller is the right leader for the next phase of work at the school. As Mrs. Buller enters this new role as principal of the CCS, her entry plan will mirror the entry plan of all principals – listening, hearing, and co-creating a shared vision for the school with the input of its varied constituencies. The District will provide additional resources and supports to the school in order to facilitate this important transition work.

I want to thank everyone who has been involved throughout the principal search process. The principal search process at the Coolidge Corner School took more time than either of the other two principal searches conducted by the District this year. I used this extra time to provide additional opportunities for input from the staff, community members, and administrators to ensure that everyone who wished to share their opinions, perspective, and feedback on the process had the opportunity to do so. Based upon my experience with Mrs. Buller and the input from the staff, community members, and administrators, I am confident that Mrs. Buller has the leadership, experience, and vision to lead the Coolidge Corner School. I know that the community will unite around our collective commitment to the students and families of the school.

Please join me in welcoming Mrs. Buller as the next principal of the Coolidge Corner School.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew J. Bott', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Andrew J. Bott
Superintendent