

The Public Schools of Brookline
School Committee Meeting of Thursday, May 18, 2017
Superintendent Report
Andrew J. Bott
Superintendent of Schools

U.S Presidential Scholar Amir Siraj

Brookline High School Senior, Amir Siraj, was named a U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts by the U.S. Department of Education. Amir is an accomplished pianist, and one of just 20 students nationwide to be recognized as a U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts, which is one of the nation's highest honors for high school students. Among numerous other recognitions, he has been featured on NPR, won first prize at the Boston Symphony Orchestra Concerto Competition, and is a Young Scholar of the Lang Lang International Music Foundation.

Each recipient nominates a distinguished teacher. Amir nominated BHS Science Teacher and Department Chair, Ed Wiser, as a teacher who has been particularly supportive and influential. Amir will join other Presidential Scholars from across the country – three others from Massachusetts – at a June ceremony in Washington, D.C., where each recipient will receive a Presidential Scholar Medallion. According to the White House Committee on Presidential Scholars, the selected students demonstrate exceptional accomplishments in academics, the arts, career and technical education and an outstanding commitment to public service. Congratulations to all of the honorees, and especially to Brookline's very own Amir Siraj.

Caverly Award Winners

I had the great pleasure of announcing the winners of the Caverly Awards at the Brookline Education Foundation's annual Celebrating Teachers reception on Wednesday: Dominique Ferdinand and Betty Strong. I can't say anything more about these two master teachers than what we have already had the pleasure of hearing tonight. We are grateful to the BEF for partnering with us to support the professional development of our educators and congratulations once again to Dominique and Betty on this well-deserved recognition.

Brookline Youth Awards

BHS Headmaster Anthony Meyer joined me last night at the 7th Annual Brookline Youth Awards, sponsored by Brookline HUB, Brookline Bank, the Brookline Community Foundation and the

Town of Brookline. The event was held at the Coolidge Corner Theater and featured videos highlighting the 15 Youth Award recipients, who are: Louie Goldsmith, Marjie Rowe, Anita Mayfield-Sheehan, Carolyn Parker-Fairbain, DaHanna Smith Rose, Erik Nakamura, Isaiah Goldsmith, Jacob Feldgoise, Komal Wasif, Makena Binker-Cosen, Marie Zhang, Maya Shaughnessy, Paul Miller-Schmidt, Rachel Gubar and Yama Estime.

The 2017 Brookline Youth of the Year, chosen from among the 15 Youth Award recipients, is BHS Senior Anita Mayfield-Sheehan. We offer our congratulations to Anita and all of the awardees for their impressive and unique contributions to our community.

School Visits

I have had the pleasure of visiting several schools over the last two weeks, including Pierce, Lawrence, BEEP @ Lynch, Heath, Runkle and Lincoln Schools. Each extended visit was filled with opportunities to observe authentic and engaging student learning.

As with all of my school visits this year, the teaching and learning that I observed was outstanding. I would like to note for the committee that this is art show season in many of our schools. Student artwork is displayed throughout Upper Devotion and Lincoln Schools, and tomorrow (May 19) is the opening of the Heath School Art Show.

I will be visiting all schools before the first week of June.

Grade 6-8 Learning Center Visits with BHS Headmaster

Anthony Meyer, BHS Headmaster, joined me on May 11 for visits to Grade 6-8 Learning Centers at Baker, Lincoln and Upper Devotion Schools. Our visits were designed to give the Headmaster a firsthand view of how students with learning disabilities are supported in our elementary schools so that we can continue to successfully support their transition to the high school. In addition to observing the work in the classrooms, we also had productive and thoughtful feedback from educators who shared their ideas and thoughts about ways to ensure a successful transition to BHS for students with learning disabilities.

Steps to Success Gala

On May 10 at Dexter-Southfield School's Clay Observatory I joined the board of directors, staff and supporters of Steps to Success, Inc. at their annual gala: *Step Up for Our Stars*. The featured speaker was author Dale Russakoff. I used the opportunity to speak of the importance of the STS Inc. partnership with the Public Schools of Brookline, and highlighted the many ways that STS Inc. supports students across our schools.

Executive Director Shoma Haque and I continue our work developing a programmatic structure for the 2017-2018 school year and expect to present this to the School Committee before the end of June.

Today's Students, Tomorrow's Teachers (TSTT)

As you know, the TSTT regional office disbanded in 2015. Even though a formal affiliation no longer exists, our two TSTT mentors/facilitators - Malcolm Cawthorne and Jeanette Sergeant Lindor - have continued to mentor the BHS TSTT participants so as to enable them to receive the benefits of the program right up to their graduation.

Our final cohort of six BHS seniors has shared their post-graduation plans with us as follows:

- Wesley Beaumont: UMASS/Boston - interested in becoming History teacher at BHS
- Joy Wu: Lesley University - interested in becoming an Art teacher or therapist
- Tylen Rose: Worcester State - interested in becoming a Nurse, or Math or Science teacher
- Brittany Grimes: Emmanuel College - interested in becoming an Anesthesiologist
- Xavier Hincapie: Northeastern - interested in becoming a teacher or attorney
- Jasmine Santos: The New School - interested in becoming a university professor

It is also reported that a 2015 graduate of the program, Kenny Szeto, who is presently a sophomore at Pace University, remains very interested in returning to Brookline High School as a history teacher. He shadowed BHS history teachers in the spring of 2017.

Pilot Composting Began at BHS This Week

Earlier this week, the School Committee received a letter from the Brookline Solid Waste Advisory Committee urging the School Committee to support efforts to implement organic waste diversion at Brookline High School. Prior to receiving this letter, Director of Operations Matt Gillis had been working with BHS and potential vendors to select a company for a composting pilot at BHS. Mr. Gillis was able to select a company for this pilot, Save That Stuff, and composting containers were tested at BHS on Wednesday, May 17. A full pilot of the use of green organic waste containers will start in the BHS cafeteria and the BHS kitchen prior to the end of the current school year. Mr. Gillis will provide the committee with updates on this program as the work progresses.

Crosswalk at Cypress and Waverly Streets

We have recently been made aware of requests to have a crossing guard stationed on Cypress Street at the intersection of Waverly Street. Approximately 79 Pierce students live on the west side of Cypress Street; while a crossing guard is stationed at Cypress and Washington, some students use the crosswalk at Cypress and Waverly to walk to Pierce School.

Working closely with the Brookline Police Department and the Department of Public Works' Transportation Division, Matt Gillis, Director of Facilities and Operations, has provided the following update that addresses concerns in the short-term and provides some ideas for possible long-term solutions.

- The painting of crosswalks across town - including at this intersection - has been delayed by a few weeks due to recent cold and wet weather (today notwithstanding!). This crosswalk will be painted as soon as possible by the Department of Public Works Highway Division.
- The Brookline Police Department started observing foot and vehicular traffic at this intersection and all the way down Cypress to the intersection of Washington. They plan to observe, in plain clothes or in uniform, for the rest of this week. Next week we will meet with the BPD after that have more than a week's worth of this data to share.
- We have requested that a programmable, flashing solar-powered pedestrian sign be installed at this intersection. Final approvals are pending; we anticipate this will be installed for the start of the 2017-2018 school year.

- The new signs that have been added at this site will remain; the flashing solar-powered signs will be in addition to these signs that were just recently been installed.
- We do not believe that the BPD budget includes funds for any additional crossing guards next year, and we are not aware of plans to move crossing guard stations around town. As BPD reviews their observed data they will also review the placement of other Pierce crossing guards.

The Brookline Police Department, the Department of Public Works and the Public Schools of Brookline take student safety concerns very seriously and will continue to work closely together to address this issue.