

The Public Schools of Brookline
School Committee Meeting of Thursday, December 1, 2016
Superintendent Report
Andrew J. Bott
Superintendent of Schools

In my report this week you will see, in each update, specific examples of my top three priorities -- reestablishing our commitment to collaboration, providing clarity through prioritizing and focusing our work, and ensuring that our schools support the success of all our students.

For example, our Principal Search processes at Runkle and Heath Schools are an example of our commitment to collaboration as we reach out to include and get input from a wide array of stakeholders. Our commitment to collaboration is also evident as we work to improve our kindergarten registration process and our outreach to the district's newest families. The work that the Office of Student Services is doing to clarify roles, responsibilities, procedures and services is being done in collaboration with our educators and will help us better serve all students. Collaborating, clarity, and supporting all students are not discrete priorities. In the examples below I hope you will see how they build on each other to help us do our best work.

Office of Student Services Update:

Kindergarten Registration Information Sessions

More than 150 parents attended Kindergarten Registration Information Sessions that were led by Jesenia Castro and Meaghan Geaney of the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) on November 15 and November 17. During these sessions, we reviewed the timeline and process, shared our information booklet for registering new kindergartners, explained the necessary forms and documents needed to register a student, and explained the school assignment process. Karen Richardson, our ELL Enrollment and Assessment Specialist, specifically addressed families with students who are potential English Language Learners to help them understand the language screening that is part of the registration process. Due to popular demand, two more information sessions have been scheduled: December 9 at the Putterham BEEP site and December 12 at Town Hall. The high turnout at the Open Houses is due to several factors including collaboration between OSA and the Brookline Early Education Program (BEEP), collaboration between OSA and the Town Clerk's office, and additional outreach that OSA is conducting to connect with as many families as possible. OSA and Dr. Vicki Milstein, BEEP Principal, are working closely together to address the challenge of registering BEEP families in a timely fashion. OSA and the Town Clerk's office worked together to ensure that all families with children approaching 5 years of age received a flyer about kindergarten registration and the information sessions. OSA also provided flyers advertising the sessions to all elementary school secretaries to help with distribution. These flyers have been translated into eight languages. We have also translated the information booklet into Arabic, Portuguese, Korean, Japanese, and Russian; booklets in Chinese, Hebrew and Spanish will be completed very soon. The completed translations are already available on our Kindergarten Registration webpage at <http://www.brookline.k12.ma.us/kindergarten>. The online application for kindergarten registration will be available on January 4 at which time parents and guardians can start scheduling registration appointments with OSA.

Office of Teaching and Learning and Office of Student Services Collaborate on Co-Teaching at Brookline High School

Deputy Superintendents Nicole Gittens and Sam Zimmerman met last week with educators who co-teach classes at Brookline High School and with BEU representatives to discuss the strengths and challenges of this instructional approach and programming. Going forward the Deputy Superintendents will work together with high school leaders to support these teachers across departments on instruction, scheduling and professional development needs.

Office of Student Services Identifies Top 3 Priorities for Special Education for the 2017-2018 School Year

Deputy Superintendent Zimmerman and the Student Services team have identified three priorities that will help create more coherent and consistent practices and procedures for working with and supporting students with disabilities and their families. By providing much greater clarity on expectations, norms, procedures, and practices, this work will help special educators, teachers, families, and district administrators work together to better support our students with disabilities.

- IEP Procedures -- OSS has updated IEP procedures in the areas of family engagement, IEP meeting facilitation, addressing parent concerns, and appropriate process for scheduling IEP meetings.
- Establishing a District-wide Operational and Procedural Reference -- By Spring 2017, OSS will complete a guide for standard operating procedures for identifying students who may need special education services, establishing necessary services, and then providing such services. This district-wide operational reference will serve all grade levels and be used by school leaders, Education Team Facilitators, and district administrators and allow us to be much more consistent across all schools in how we begin and carry out the process of identifying and ultimately providing special education services.
- Catalog of Special Education Services -- By May 1, 2017, OSS will complete a full catalogue of all special education services. This guide will include program narratives, eligibility criteria and staffing guides for all programs and be shared with all community stakeholders allowing for resources to be distributed equitably.

School Visits

In each of my recent school visits, there was engaging, rigorous and deep learning happening. I visited Lower Devotion School on November 14 and observed students in kindergarten and first grade engaged in a variety of literacy work, from learning and applying phonics skills in their reading and writing to students working in small, guided reading groups. Second grade students at Lower Devotion were deep into their social studies work. Of particular note in the second grade is the fact that students were successfully reading informational texts to learn new social studies content – truly reading to learn.

On November 15, I visited Runkle School and was able to observe a third grade class where students were engaged in rigorous math stations in which the learning of all students was pushed and extended. My visit also included a middle school science class where students were learning both the history of the study of the atom as well as the science of the atom. My visit to Runkle concluded with remarkable student presentations in sixth grade ELA during which groups of students wrote, presented and, in some cases, performed their work for the entire class.

I was able to visit Baker School on November 21. My visit included a first grade class Skyping with a group of first graders in the United Kingdom. Our students were interviewing their counterparts, learning about school across the Atlantic. Baker third graders, as they were at Runkle, were deeply involved in a variety of high quality math stations, with work being led by both the classroom teacher and the Baker Enrichment and Challenge Support (ECS) specialist. Lastly, I had the opportunity to join a group of four middle school students as they presented their final projects based on the book Chains. These presentations included analysis of the characters, setting, purpose and author's craft; the presentations also included research on the time period that the book was set in. The students also included a video of a 20 minute interactive circle discussion between the four students, and a student/family member video where both the students and the family member reflected on the project.

At Brookline High School, on November 17 and December 1, I had the opportunity to visit several English classes with Mary Burchenal and Josh Paris. In English, I observed a range of classes and a diversity of learning. I want to make a special note of the EPIC class that I was able to observe, supported through the generosity of the BHS 21st Century Fund. This English class provides a rigorous alternative to Senior English/the Senior Paper.

Today I had the opportunity to observe work in algebra, geometry, calculus and AP calculus classes. Across all of these classes I was able to see a variety of teaching styles and learning. More importantly, I was able to see the entire continuum of math learning at BHS, from 9th grade to senior year. This was incredibly meaningful and important as I work to ensure that our schools and departments have the resources and supports that they need to meet the needs of all of our learners.

Brookline Rotary Pre-Thanksgiving Luncheon

I would like to thank the Brookline Rotary and the Newton Rotary for hosting the annual pre-Thanksgiving Lunch on November 22 in Newton. This wonderful tradition is part of the annual Brookline-Newton Thanksgiving Day football game. This is yet another wonderful example of the many ways that the Rotary supports our schools.

Brookline High School Wellness Summit

I would like to thank everyone involved in organizing the annual Wellness Summit at Brookline High School this morning. In particular, I would like to recognize the incredible leadership of BHS students at the Wellness Summit. This is a wonderful opportunity for students, staff, family members and members of the greater Brookline community to come together in an effort to jointly tackle some of the health and wellness challenges facing our students today.

Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) Meetings

I continue to meet with school PTOs and spent the morning of November 15 with the Runkle School PTO. I look forward to all of my upcoming meetings with school PTOs.

METCO Director's Association Annual Conference

I am looking forward to attending tomorrow's METCO Director's Association Annual Conference. Cornel West is the keynote speaker and the conference is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the METCO program. Brookline will have over thirty educators and administrators in attendance.

Search Process for Permanent Principals at Heath School and Runkle School

This week we launched the search process for permanent principals at Heath and Runkle Schools. We have based the searches on the very successful and inclusive processes that Dr. Connelly led last year. In addition to notifying the faculty, staff and families at both schools of the searches and timelines, we posted the positions on Monday and have already received applications. I will be meeting with staff and with parents at each school in the coming weeks to get their input on the leadership qualities and future goals for both schools. Understanding that not everyone can attend a meeting, we are also using an online survey to gather input from families and staff. More than 115 people from each school participated in the family surveys. The staff surveys opened today. Like last year, the search committees will include teachers, parents, and administrators. I've asked the BEU to identify the teachers representative, the school PTO and SEPAC to identify the parent representatives, and I will name the administrators. I have attached the Search Process Timeline for both schools. Our goal is to have both searches completed by February break.

Six BHS Students Make the Cut for WGBH's Quiz Show

Congratulations to our BHS Quiz Show team! They are one of only 16 teams from across the state to qualify for WGBH's 2017 Quiz Show. The team is made up of seniors Micah Greenberg, Louis Sokolow, Louie Goldsmith and Amir Siraj. Sophomores Margaux Kanamori and Emma Kahn will serve as alternates and are gaining valuable experience that will help them become team leaders of the future. The team prevailed against 95 other public, private and parochial school teams at WGBH's Super Sunday to be named one of the finalists to compete live on WGBH. The core group of seniors has put in countless hours of prep work for more traditional quiz bowl competitions, meeting from 7:30 to 8:15 before school on Mondays and Tuesdays and after school from 3:00 to 4:30 on Wednesdays and Thursdays on a regular basis since freshman year. Being one of the 16 teams to qualify for High School Quiz Show is a fantastic honor for this group that has spent so much time and effort devoted to all things quiz bowl. They and the other 8-10 regular members of BHS Quiz Bowl truly show that passion, dedication, collaboration, and persistence pay off. In addition to High School Quiz Show, the team has also qualified for the PACE National Scholastic Championship, a major tournament taking place in Chicago in the middle of June.

Devotion Football League

The five team Devotion Football League (DFL) has wrapped up its 26th successful season. More than 500 people came to Boylston Street Field on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving to witness a thrilling final between Florida and Alabama. To reach the playoffs the five co-ed teams played eight games each this year. The league is completely student run, and each team is made up of 15 seventh and eighth graders who play 10-on-10 touch football. The DFL Championship was a thrilling game that wasn't decided until the final play when Florida won on a last second pass. I want to specifically recognize Lower Devotion Co-Principal David O'Hara who started the league 26 years ago and has shown tremendous dedication to our students in organizing it every year since. The event was truly a community event complete with concessions sponsored by the PTO, the national anthem performed by music teachers Colin Stack and Rich Stone, and a trophy presentation. Mr. O'Hara did share his disappointment that there was no flyover but said he's angling for one for next year.

2016-2017 **Heath** School Principal Search Process and Timeline

Monday, November 28, 2016

Post and advertise Heath principal vacancy

- MASS
- MESPA
- School Spring
- Diversity Recruitment Partners in Education
- Minority Student Achievement Network

Wednesday, November 30, 2016

Contact Teachers and Parent Leadership to seek their assistance in forming the Principal Search Committee

- 4 Administrators
 - K-8 Principal/Assistant Principal (2)
 - Superintendent or designee
 - K-8 Curriculum Coordinator
- 4 Teachers
 - 1 lower level (K-4) educator
 - 1 upper level (5-8) educator
 - 1 special education educator
 - 1 support staff/specialist
- 4 Parents
 - 3 chosen by PTO
 - 1 SEPAC representative

Thursday, December 8, 2016:

Superintendent meets with parents and guardians at Heath School (8:00am) to identify leadership qualities

Tuesday, December 20, 2016:

Superintendent meets with faculty and staff at Heath School (2:45pm) to identify leadership qualities

Mid-December, 2016 (exact date TBD):

Meeting of the Search Committee to discuss the search process, timeline, meeting dates and role of the committee

Thursday, January 5, 2017:

Deadline for applications; Search Committee receives all candidate materials and leadership profile

Tuesday, January 10, 2017:

Search Committee decides on interview questions and selects candidates to be interviewed

January 13 - 27, 2017:

Search Committee conducts initial interviews; identifies finalists to receive second interviews with Superintendent and Senior Staff

January 30 – February 9, 2017:

Superintendent and Senior Staff conduct final interviews and complete in-depth reference checks; selection of preferred candidate completed by February 9

Note: Once the preferred candidate is identified, the search process will be discontinued. If at any time the pool of candidates is not considered adequate, the search process can be stopped.

2016-2017 **Runkle** School Principal Search Process and Timeline

Monday, November 28, 2016

Post and advertise Runkle principal vacancy

- MASS
- MESPA
- School Spring
- Diversity Recruitment Partners in Education
- Minority Student Achievement Network

Wednesday, November 30, 2016

Contact Teachers and Parent Leadership to seek their assistance in forming the Principal Search Committee

- 4 Administrators
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- 4 Teachers
 - 1 lower level (K-4) educator
 - 1 upper level (5-8) educator
 - 1 special education educator
 - 1 support staff/specialist
- 4 Parents
 - 3 chosen by PTO
 - 1 SEPAC representative

Thursday, December 8, 2016:

Superintendent meets with faculty and staff at Runkle School (2:45pm) to identify leadership qualities

Monday, December 12, 2016:

Superintendent meets with parents and guardians at Runkle School (8:15am in the Library) to identify leadership qualities

Mid-December, 2016 (exact date TBD):

Meet with Search Committee to discuss the search process, timeline, meeting dates and role of the committee

Thursday, January 5, 2017:

Deadline for applications; Search Committee receives all candidate materials and leadership profile

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