

The Public Schools of Brookline
School Committee Meeting of Thursday, October 25, 2018
Superintendent Report
Andrew J. Bott
Superintendent of Schools

Brookline High School: 9th Graders at Old Lincoln School

As we prepare for the start of construction for the High School expansion and renovation project next summer, BHS Head of School Anthony Meyer and I sent a letter to the parents and guardians of 7th and 8th graders in Brookline to make them aware of our plans to utilize the Old Lincoln School campus for 9th graders during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years.

As we noted to parents and guardians, we are working on a powerful 9th grade program for this temporary time on the OLS campus, and are carefully considering opportunities for students to create connections and experiences with the main campus.

This letter is intended to introduce families to the construction project and the need for the temporary move; it is attached for your information. More details will be shared with families over the coming months, and we will make a special effort – during the annual 8th grade to 9th grade transition events that start in February – to ensure that students and families have the chance to visit the OLS space.

Minority Student Achievement Network (MSAN) Student Conference

It was my distinct honor last night to welcome nearly 300 MSAN Scholars from across the country to the annual MSAN Student Conference, hosted this year by the Public Schools of Brookline. Last night's events included my opening welcome message, followed by the event's keynote speech by Dr. Crystal Marie Fleming. Dr. Fleming is an Associate Professor of Sociology and Africana Studies and an Associate Faculty member in the Department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies at SUNY Stony Brook. Dr. Fleming also recently published her second book, *How to Be Less Stupid About Race: On Racism, White Supremacy and the Racial Divide*. Following the keynote, BeHeard World, a Boston based dance troupe that includes BHS's extraordinary dance teacher Mayra Hernandez as a company member, performed their piece *Invisible: Imprints of Racism*.

This annual student conference is an important reminder of the ways our students lead change in our schools and in our community. Over the past two years our students have returned from the MSAN student conference having identified changes they would like to see in our schools, and they have worked closely with administrators and educators across the district to achieve meaningful change in these areas.

Following college campus visits and a very well-timed tour of Fenway Park, this year's MSAN scholars will begin their action planning tomorrow to identify a change they would like to see in our schools. They will present their findings to the School Committee at an upcoming meeting, and will work with educators in and across our schools over the remainder of the year. I look forward to working with this year's student group to continue this important work.

Support for Transgender Students and Staff in Brookline

In 2014, the U.S. Department of Education issued guidance that interpreted Title IX prohibitions on sex discrimination to also prohibit discrimination based on gender identity. In February 2017, the U.S. Department of Education rescinded this guidance. In response, on March 3, 2017, the School Committee and I cosigned a statement in support of transgender rights, which read:

Dear Brookline Families and Staff,

Despite the recent rollback of protections for transgender students at the federal level, the commitment of the Public Schools of Brookline to transgender students and their families has not wavered. We want to make clear that our schools welcome, support and value all students including all lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning/queer students.

Massachusetts state law and the accompanying guidance from the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education make it clear that Massachusetts schools are prohibited from discriminating against transgender students. The changes at the federal level have no impact or effect on our commitment to transgender students and their families.

Our district is actively upholding our promise that Brookline is a community of unconditional acceptance. Steps already underway in support of transgender and questioning students include a leadership group that is developing protocols and training for staff to support students and families, and is identifying resources for staff, students and families. We are also working to confirm that each individual school has easily accessible, properly signed, gender-neutral restroom facilities. While these actions are in motion, we recognize the opportunity for additional work to be done.

The Public Schools of Brookline believe that all students, faculty, staff and families – including LGBTQ students – have the right to learn, work and live in a safe and accepting environment. We will continue to support all of our students with the simple decency every individual deserves while we help them navigate a complex and always changing world. We maintain our commitment to providing safe, open, and accepting school communities that respect and embrace all individuals.

Since March 2017, the District's commitment to supporting transgender students and staff has been unwavering. Currently, however, there are attempts at both the state and federal levels to eliminate protections for the transgender community. Voters in the Commonwealth will soon consider a ballot question designed to eliminate the civil rights enshrined in the landmark transgender rights law signed by Governor Baker in 2016. At the federal level, proposals are under consideration which would eliminate federal recognition of transgender individuals, effectively eliminating any federal civil rights protections.

While we cannot directly impact state or federal policy, we have the power to stand up for transgender students, educators, and residents of Brookline by passing a school policy that affirms the protections, the rights, and the dignity of transgender individuals in our schools. Through a process coordinated by Dr. Mary Brown, Senior Director of Teaching and Learning, and Dr. Asa Sevelius, Principal of Heath School, I will bring to the School Committee's Policy Subcommittee a draft policy which does just that. This policy will be presented to the subcommittee before the end of the calendar year, to be considered by the full Committee shortly thereafter.

Brookline's Annual Cross Country Meet for Grade 5-8 Students

Following several weeks of practice, over 600 grade 5-8 students from across all of our schools excitedly arrived at Larz Anderson Park today for the annual cross country meet. After a walk-through of the race route, students then participated in timed races organized by grade level.

The cross country meet is a highlight of the fall calendar for many of our students. I would like to especially thank Jen Mathis and Carlyn Uyenoyama, who were this year's meet organizers, for making today's event such a success. I would also like to thank the school-based coaches who supervised practices with our students over the last several weeks to get them ready for today. It was my pleasure to stop by the meet during the awards presentation to recognize all of our young student athletes.

Government Alliance on Race and Equity

On Monday, October 22, Mary Ellen Dunn, Deputy Superintendent for Administration and Finance, and Lisa Richardson, Human Resources Director, joined me in a full-day training session with all town department heads as part of Brookline's participation in the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE).

GARE is a national network of government agencies and jurisdictions working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all. Through GARE we are:

- Making a commitment to achieving racial equity
- Focusing on the power and influence of our own institutions, and
- Working in partnership with others

The GARE training on Monday was very helpful, outlining several best practices and foundational principles that we can utilize in our work.

School Visits

Since last week I have been able to enjoy extended visits at Brookline High School on Tuesday, October 23 and at Runkle School on Wednesday, October 24. I look forward to visiting Baker School tomorrow morning, Friday, October 26.



Andrew J. Bott
Superintendent

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October 24, 2018

Dear Parents and Guardians of 7th and 8th Grade Students,

We hope you and your students are enjoying their 7th and 8th grade experiences across our schools. As you know, with the overwhelming support of voters last spring, the Town of Brookline is embarking upon an ambitious [expansion of Brookline High School](#). In September of 2021, we will open a new science wing on the main campus that replaces the current wing at the corner of Tappan and Greenough Streets. We will also open a completely new building at 111 Cypress Street and renovate the Tappan Gymnasium Building. These are exciting times for Brookline High School and for the entire Town.

Construction will begin in June of 2019. During construction, we will lose full access to some parts of the high school campus. This includes the existing wing at the corner of Tappan and Greenough, which will be demolished over the summer to make way for our new science wing. This demolition will reduce the number of classrooms at the main campus for the duration of the construction period.

In order to continue serving over 2,000 students enrolled at Brookline High, we will use the Old Lincoln School at 194 Boylston for the 9th grade class during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years. The Old Lincoln School was renovated in 2015, and more recently served as the Upper Devotion School in the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years. Additionally, it has been used successfully as temporary space during previous renovations for the high school, Runkle, and Baker Schools.

We understand that you and your students have many questions about this transition and how it may affect their Brookline High School experience. Please know that our BHS team is working hard on creating a powerful 9th grade program for the Classes of 2023 and 2024. In particular, the high school faculty, staff, and administration are considering ways to create connections with and experiences at the main campus that will help students transition to the high school and enrich their educational experience. Additionally, the BHS team will use these two years to take important steps in realizing the [BHS Educational Plan](#) that is driving our renovation and expansion efforts.

Each year, the Brookline High School team offers a series of transition events for incoming 9th graders and their families. These events include evening sessions about curriculum, courses, athletic opportunities, and the overall student experience. Starting in February, 8th graders will also come to BHS during the school day with their school to learn more about the high school and see it in action. We will hold some of these sessions for families and students at the Old Lincoln School building so that you can see the space and envision the learning and growing our 9th graders will engage in next year and the year after.

The high school leadership team will reach out in the coming months with many more details about the 8th to 9th grade transition process and events, as well as with specifics on how we will utilize Old Lincoln. For now, we will continue to work together with all of you and our amazing high school faculty, staff, and administration to create a meaningful experience for all of our students.

For more information about the high school expansion and renovation project, please follow these links:

- [Overview of the project including photos of the architectural models and the most recent floor plans](#)
- [BHS Expansion and Renovation website for ongoing updates and the latest news](#)

Sincerely,



Andrew Bott
Superintendent
Public Schools of Brookline



Anthony Meyer
Head of School
Brookline High School