

The Public Schools of Brookline
School Committee Meeting of Thursday, November 14, 2019
Superintendent Report
Ben Lummis
Interim Superintendent of Schools

Bee-lievers in Change honored as Keynote Speakers

For their work in leading the Coolidge Corner School Naming Process, the Bee-lievers in Change student committee was chosen to deliver the keynote address at the annual School Reform Initiative (SRI) meeting on November 7. Hosted at the Royal Sonesta Hotel in Cambridge, over 350 educators from around the country heard our students speak about their experiences engaging the Brookline community in this important process. Thunderous applause and a standing ovation showered the students as they finished their presentation. Coolidge Corner School principal Ms. Buller and Vice Principal Mr. Ola were in awe of the confidence and strength the students exhibited as they presented their impactful work. Congratulations to the students on this well-deserved recognition!

Gene Thompson-Grove, founding board member of SRI and former Director of Professional Development for the PSB, who helped to organize the Bee-lievers participation, was effusive in her praise of both the students and of Principal Buller. Ms. Thompson-Grove wrote, in part, the students “inspired and energized, provoked and challenged us all last Thursday ... there was a palpable buzz about them and what they said for the rest of the day, and people pulled the thread of student voice through the entire three days, as we had hoped! Your incredible leadership was also evident - and was not lost on anyone. Many people spoke in reflective learning groups about what it really takes for adult educators to center students -- to open up space for their voices and to guide and support them as they learn to take collective action on what they believe -- without taking over.”

DESE Audit of Circuit Breaker Claims

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Special Education Circuit Breaker Program recently completed an audit of PSB’s circuit breaker claims. The Circuit Breaker Program is one of the major funding sources for the special education budget. The program reimburses local school districts for a portion of their special education costs above a certain threshold for educating severely high-need special education students.

Lynda Kirby, Office Manager in the Office of Student Services, has been overseeing the Circuit Breaker program for 16 years. Her meticulous work combing through many student IEPs (individualized education plans) has resulted in maximized reimbursements to the district. The total reimbursement we have received over the last 16 years through this program is \$29 million. The monies that are reimbursed to us go back into funding services and programs for students in special education.

The five members of the DESE team who visited Brookline this week to complete the audit shared their results with me, Deputy Superintendent Mary Ellen Normen, Deputy Superintendent Casey Ngo-Miller, and Ms. Kirby. The team commented favorably on the number of students who are educated in-district who qualify for circuit breaker reimbursement, noting that it was one of the highest numbers in the state. They also commended us for the low number of students in out-of-district placements as compared to other districts. The DESE team commended Brookline for our sustained commitment to educating our high needs special education students in our own school district.

I would like to extend a huge thank you to Ms. Kirby for her meticulous and thorough work in ensuring maximized funding from the state so that we can continue to run high quality programs and provide excellent services to our students.

Update on Paraprofessional Hiring and Support

As you know, paraprofessionals play an important role in classrooms across the district. Every year, the Office of Human Resources works hard to recruit and hire talented individuals to fill these positions. At this time, I want to take a moment to provide you with an update on paraprofessional hiring for the 2019-2020 school year:

- We have a total of 337.5 classroom-based paraprofessional positions.
 - As of today, we have 13.5 vacancies in these positions (4%).
- Out of the total number of paraprofessional positions, 102 of them serve in district-wide special education programs.
 - As of today, we have 5 vacancies in these positions (5%).

On a related note, for the second year in a row the Office of Student Services is offering differentiated professional development for our paraprofessionals over the course of eight early release days scheduled for grades k-12. We have partnered with Mass Partnerships for Youth, as well as our own in-district professionals, to provide topics relevant to paraprofessionals' daily work with students. Topics range from "**Para 101: How to be a Fantastic Paraprofessional**", led by special education teachers in the district who were formerly paraprofessionals, to "**The Impact of Sensory Processing on Classroom Learning and Behavior**", led by two occupational therapists from the district. Today, Mass Partnerships for Youth presented on the topics of **Cultural Proficiency**, and **Creating Classroom Interventions for Dysregulated Students**. On each date, paras can choose which sessions are of most interest and relevance to their work.

Many thanks to the Directors of Special Education - Nadene Moll, Melissa Devine, and Emily Frank - for designing and coordinating these efforts.

Official 2019-2020 Enrollment Figures

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has approved our annual October SIMS submission and so I am able to share the attached official enrollment summary with you. As you know, our enrollment is fluid over the course of the school year: our school population is highly mobile, and families move in and out of the district on a regular basis. However, the official October 1 numbers are important, especially for year-to-year comparisons.

Please see attached. A few notes from the chart:

- Our official, October 1 kindergarten registration is 600 students.
- The total number of elementary (K-8) and high school students is 7,525.
 - Last year, the total number of elementary and high school students was 7,604.
- The official high school enrollment is 2,083 students.
 - Last year, the total high school enrollment was 2,101.

Brookline China Exchange Program

As you may, the Brookline China Exchange Program (CHEX) will celebrate its 20th anniversary this year. Festivities to mark the occasion are planned for Friday, January 10 and Saturday, January 11, 2020 at Brookline High School. Head of School Anthony Meyer, Deputy Superintendent Nicole Gittens, School Committee member Barbara Scotto and I met with the CHEX Steering Committee earlier this week to discuss the plans for the anniversary. We will be sure to keep you informed as the details are finalized.

Meeting with the Massachusetts School Building Authority

Earlier this week, our team - including Select Board member Ben Franco, Town Administrator Mel Kleckner, Tony Guigli from the Building Department, School Committee member Helen Charlupski, Erin Cooley and I - met with MSBA staff at their offices in Boston to discuss preliminary enrollment projections for the Pierce School building project.

In two weeks, the MSBA will send us an official letter with the projected enrollment number, based on their methodology. We will need to review, approve and sign that letter. Once that letter is signed we will enter into a Feasibility Study Agreement with the MSBA. The MSBA board meets on February 13, at which time we hope they invite our project into the Feasibility Study Phase.

Once the MSBA Board has invited us into the Feasibility Study Phase, the Owner's Project Manager (OPM) and Designer Selection processes can begin. It is expected that it will take about 6-8 months from the start of the OPM/Designer Selection processes to the start of work on the feasibility study.

We will continue to keep you informed as these important plans proceed.

Pierce School Listening Sessions

As part of the planning work for the Pierce School construction project, Principal Lesley Ryan Miller has scheduled three listening sessions at the school for parents and guardians. These sessions are designed to allow participants to share their ideas and suggestions, and ask questions about the project.

The listening sessions are scheduled for:

Friday, November 15 at 7:45am

Tuesday, November 19 at 1:30pm

Thursday, November 21 at 6:00pm

Meetings with Parents and Guardians

In my continuing effort to meet with parents at every school, I had the pleasure of addressing Coolidge Corner School parents on November 1 at a coffee hosted by the PTO. We spoke about the school renaming process, the Superintendent search process, and the work we are doing this year with our kindergarten teachers. My next parent coffee is Friday, December 6 at Pierce School.

THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BROOKLINE
OCTOBER 1, 2019 ENROLLMENT

Elementary Schools	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	PS	PK	Total Elementary School (does not include PS/PK classrooms)												
												19-20	18-19	17-18	16-17	15-16	14-15							
Baker	20	20	22	20	22	20	22	19	18			750	762	763	759	794	803							
	21	20	21	20	21	21	21	19	20															
	21	19	22	20	22	22	21	19	20															
	21	19	21	21	20	20	20	20	19															
Coolidge Corner	21	23	19	21	20	18	19	19	17		15	888	873	801	792	850	811							
	22	23	19	21	20	18	19	18	14		16													
	20	23	18	20	21	18	22	19	20															
	21	23	18	21	21	19	21	17	16															
Driscoll	19	19	21	22	22	20	23	24	26			600	614	613	583	588	573							
	18	21	21	20	22	20	22	22	26															
	19	22	21	21	22	21	19	20	26															
						21																		
Heath	20	20	21	16	20	23	18	21	17		14	525	522	534	548	551	535							
	20	20	20	16	20	23	18	23	16		13													
	18	20	20	15	21	23	18	18	20															
Lawrence	20	21	20	17	21	17	21	18	19			679	705	722	706	684	667							
	20	21	20	18	21	18	15	17	19															
	20	22	21	18	21	19	13	18	17															
	20	21	20	18	21	18	13	19	17															
Lincoln	21	19	23	20	21	22	22	26	20			576	581	578	576	575	568							
	21	19	24	18	21	21	19	26	20															
	20	19	23	19	21	23	22	26	20															
Pierce	19	20	19	18	21	21	20	20	19			842	865	859	843	841	811							
	19	18	19	19	22	22	21	19	19															
	18	19	20	18	20	21	20	21	18															
	18	18	20	18	21	21	22	19	19															
Runkle	21	21	21	21	20	20	22	26	21		16	582	581	612	597	589	558							
	21	20	21	20	21	22	24	24	21															
	21	20	21	20	21	24	24	23	21															
Total Elementary	600	613	613	574	627	654	582	618	561	0	74	5442	5503	5482	5404	5472	5326							
Early Childhood Sites											PS	PK												
Beacon - PK/RISE			14	14	15	4						11	47											
Beacon - PS*			11											10	50									
Clark - PK			3	9	5											12	50							
Lynch - PK/RISE			15	14	15	6											33	164						
Lynch - PS*			10																					
Putterham - PK/RISE			14	14	17	5																		
Putterham - PS*			12																					
Total Early Childhood Sites											33	164												
High School	19-20	18-19	17-18	16-17	15-16	14-15																		
9	521	554	531	500	502	491																		
10	557	542	510	509	514	479																		
11	512	489	497	493	486	438																		
12	474	499	506	478	447	482																		
SP	19	17	19	15	12																			
Total High School	2083	2101	2063	1995	1961	1890																		
Total Out of District Students													61											

Total Early Childhood Programs	271
Elementary Schools	74
Early Childhood Sites	197

Total Elementary/High School 7525

Total All Students 7857

PK = Pre-Kindergarten
PS = Pre-School

SOURCE:

October 1 SIMS Submission to DESE

*Aspen Active students as of 11.7.2019 for Preschool students only because DESE submission does not include students younger than 3 years old.