

The Public Schools of Brookline
School Committee Meeting of Thursday, March 22, 2018
Superintendent Report
Andrew J. Bott
Superintendent of Schools

School Leadership Announcements

I am pleased to share information about the following school leadership changes in our schools:

Driscoll School: After a thorough public search process, and after thoughtful feedback from the parents, guardians and staff at Driscoll School, I am very happy to announce that Dr. Suzie Talukdar has been appointed principal of Driscoll School.

As interim principal since the start of the school year, Dr. Talukdar has already developed a positive and welcoming school culture and earned the trust and confidence of the staff, students and families at Driscoll. She has established a strong reputation as a collaborative colleague, and will draw upon her vast knowledge of the district (having served as Brookline's METCO Director for 11 years) to bring a new perspective to the leadership of the school.

The feedback from staff and from parents, following her public interviews, was overwhelmingly positive. The Driscoll School is grateful for her leadership and is looking forward to her tenure as the school's leader.

Lawrence School: You will recall that Allyson Hart recently announced that she will be resigning as principal at the end of the school year. I am extremely happy to announce that Ms. Monica Crowley has been appointed interim principal of Lawrence for the 2018-2019 school year.

Ms. Crowley was vice principal at Lawrence for six years, from 2008-2014, and during that time was a talented and trusted member of the school's leadership team, responsible for planning grade level literacy and data meetings and facilitating upper school team meetings, among many other things. She has been principal of Upper Devotion since 2014, during which she successfully led the transition of the upper grades to their temporary home at the Old Lincoln School. At Upper Devo, she has been instrumental in introducing project-based learning and is focused on collaborative leadership in all areas of instruction. The decision to appoint her as interim principal at Lawrence, announced to staff and families today, has already been met with resounding praise and support.

During the 2018-2019 school year we will conduct a full search process for a permanent Lawrence School principal.

Devotion School: Today I also announced that Ms. Jennifer Buller and Mr. David O'Hara have been appointed interim co-principals of Devotion School for the 2018-2019 school year. As you know, next year will mark the return of the K-4 and 5th – 8th grades to the renovated building on Harvard Street.

Ms. Buller has served the district since 2005, as an elementary teacher at Heath School, as vice principal at Devotion for one year, and as co-principal of Lower Devotion since 2015. Mr. O'Hara has served the Devotion School community for 30 years, including 13 years as a physical

education teacher, 14 years as vice principal, and as co-principal since 2015. Ms. Buller and Mr. O'Hara organized and led the successful move of grades K-4 to the temporary location on Webster Street while also supporting faculty in successfully moving the school's educational mission and vision forward. They are uniquely positioned to ensure a successful return to the Harvard Street campus.

In addition to the co-principals, Devotion will have two vice principals for the 2018-2019 school year. Mr. Saeed Ola, current vice principal at Upper Devotion, will continue to serve as VP for grades 5-8. This spring, co-principals Buller and O'Hara will conduct a search for a second vice principal for the school.

Next year, the district will conduct a full search process for a single, permanent Devotion School principal. At the completion of that process, the principal will hire a third vice principal, completing the final leadership structure for Devotion School.

For your information, more details about each of these announcements can be found on the attached letters.

Finally, we have completed the full public search process for a new Pierce School principal. I expect to be able to share news with you about a decision for this position by early next week.

Snow Days

You will recall that our original schedule set the 180th day of school on Tuesday, June 19. We have had five snow days, so our current last day of school is Tuesday, June 26. As you know, any additional weather-related school cancellations will push the last day back accordingly. We are mindful of the fact that families and staff are eager to make summer plans. Our practice has been to wait until the first week of April, when the threat of snow storms has hopefully passed, to announce the final last day of school.

School Visits

The recent spate of snow days has put a dent into my school visits over the last two weeks. Since our last meeting I have visited Heath School (on March 12) and Brookline High School (on March 21). I also participated in the Runkle Faculty Meeting on March 20.

Brookline Education Foundation's 5th Grade Spelling Bee

It was my pleasure to serve as an honorary judge at the BEF's Annual 5th Grade Spelling Bee on Sunday, March 11. Fifth graders from each of our schools gamely participated, successfully spelling words that even adults might find challenging. Congratulations to this year's winner: Ivy Bass from Heath School!

Student Honors

Congratulations to Brookline High School students Chloe Janes, Bryan Zhu and Romy Meehan on their third place prize in the C-SPAN annual national video documentary competition. Students were asked to create a short documentary about a provision in the U.S. Constitution and its importance to them. The BHS students' submission, titled *Under Siege: The Assault on the American Press*, highlighted the First Amendment freedom of the press and was created as part of their BHS interdisciplinary course Film as History, History as Film. You can watch the video at this link: <https://www.viddler.com/v/d4a952b8>