

The Public Schools of Brookline
School Committee Meeting of Thursday, April 12, 2018
Superintendent Report
Andrew J. Bott
Superintendent of Schools

Hiring Practices to Increase Diversity

Earlier this week, Lisa Richardson, Director of Human Resources, shared new hiring guidelines with the district's hiring managers. These new guidelines and practices, to be implemented immediately, will help us to increase the diversity of candidates applying for positions in the district. Central to our educational equity work is ensuring that the district's educators reflect the diversity of our student body. The wide ranging diversity of our students and families must be reflected in the educators who are working with them. These improvements to our hiring practices will strengthen our work over the past several years to improve our hiring processes so that we achieve our collective goal of increasing the diversity of the PSB staff. The full memo from Ms. Richardson is attached for your information.

School Leadership Announcement

On Friday, March 23 (the day after our last meeting) it was my pleasure to join the Pierce staff in the school auditorium to announce that Lesley Ryan Miller had been appointed principal. Ms. Ryan Miller has served as Interim Principal since August, and in just a short time she has earned the respect and trust of students, staff and parents alike. Ms. Ryan Miller's collaborative skills, her track record as a proven instructional leader, and her work cultivating a school culture that encourages open communication all contributed to her selection as the school's next leader. I am confident that under her exceptional leadership the Pierce School will continue to thrive. The letter sent to the Pierce community on March 23 is attached for your information.

Brookline Education Foundation's Caverly Award Winners

Earlier today I had the pleasure of joining Brookline Education Foundation Board President Emily Dolbear, Vice President Katie Bacon, Executive Director Liz Ascoli, and Associate Director Myrto Kontaxi, along with Lincoln Principal Brian Denitzio and BHS Headmaster Anthony Meyer, in surprise visits to the classrooms of this year's Caverly Award winners.

- The elementary Caverly Award winner is **Beth Greenwood**, grade 3 teacher at Lincoln School
- The high school Caverly Award winner is **Liz Gorman**, world language teacher at BHS

Both Ms. Greenwood and Ms. Gorman were delighted and surprised when we appeared in their doorways, and expressed their great honor in having been chosen. They will officially receive their Caverly Award at the Foundation's Celebrating Teachers event next month.

Collaboration with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA)

On March 28, we hosted a meeting at the Pierce School with MSBA staff including Jim McDonald, Chief Executive Officer; Jack McCarthy, Deputy CEO and Executive Director; and Matt Donovan, Director of Administration and Operations. Joining me in the meeting were Helen Charlupski, Mary Ellen Dunn, Matt Gillis and Lesley Ryan Miller.

The meeting was an opportunity for us to bring the MSBA staff up-to-date on our current projects and plans, and give them a tour of the Pierce School so they could see first-hand some of the crowded conditions we are experiencing in the district. On Friday, April 6, the district submitted two Statements of Interest to MSBA for proposed projects at Pierce School and Driscoll School.

School Visits

I have had several productive school visits over the last few weeks. I was able to join principals in substantive and thoughtful classroom visits at:

- BEEP @ Lynch and BEEP @ Beacon on April 2
- Lawrence School on April 3
- Brookline High School on April 11
- Runkle School on April 12

In addition, I joined the Heath staff for their Faculty Meeting on April 3.

Runkle School Collaborative Time

I was invited to join educators at Runkle School during their collaborative time on Friday, April 6, as they engaged in a discussion of the book, *The Hate U Give!*, by Angie Thomas. Educators came prepared with a passage or quote from the book that had resonated with them and everyone joined in a thoughtful and powerful discussion. My thanks to Runkle educators Sarah Haahes, Tanya Paris and Lauren Carroll for inviting me to share in this collaborative time work.

METCO Honors

We have two important updates to share from the METCO office. First, several Brookline METCO students joined Governor Baker, Lieutenant Governor Polito, and members of the Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus for a moment of silence on the steps of the State House on April 4 to honor Martin Luther King, Jr. on the 50th anniversary of his death. Our students were wonderful representatives at this most somber event.

Second, the METCO central headquarters secured a scholarship for a student to study at the Island School in the Bahamas as part of a summer program in Maritime Studies. Following a competitive application process, we are thrilled to announce that a Brookline student, Autumn Johnson, won the scholarship! The summer program immerses students in field work in local ecosystems and invites students to grapple with questions of how to protect fragile island ecosystems so that island communities can live sustainably. Congratulations, Autumn, on this exciting opportunity!

Kinetic Sculptures: An 8th Grade Collaboration

On Monday, April 2, 8th grade students from Heath School displayed their kinetic sculptures and it was a sight to behold! The kinetic sculptures project was planned collaboratively among science, art, ECS and Ed Tech teachers, and it was so popular that they plan to run it again next year. The 4-week project had its roots in maker thinking/design thinking. Students started the project by taking a field trip to the MIT museum to see Arthur Ganson's kinetic sculptures. Back at school, they learned a lot about the physics of energy and simple machines, as well as how to draw observational and movement sketches and how to sketch out their designs. Each student chose what they wanted to build and how they wanted to build it. Teachers were available to provide feedback to student ideas and to offer tutorials on the use of various tools. It was truly a collaborative project. Thanks to ECS teacher Tanya Gregoire for inviting me to see these demonstrations and for providing this summary so that I could share this exciting news with you this evening.

Runkle Library to Sponsor Author Visit

On a hot summer night in the late 1980s, in the Boston neighborhood of Roxbury, a twelve-year-old African-American girl was sitting on a mailbox talking with her friends when she became the innocent victim of gang-related gunfire. Amid public outcry, an immediate manhunt was on to catch the murderer, and a young African-American man was quickly apprehended, charged, and — wrongly — convicted of the crime. Dick Lehr, a former reporter for the *Boston Globe's* famous Spotlight Team who investigated this case for the newspaper, now turns the story into *Trell*, a page-turning novel about the daughter of an imprisoned man who persuades a reporter and a lawyer to help her prove her father's innocence. What pieces of evidence might have been overlooked? Can they manage to get to the truth before a dangerous character from the neighborhood gets to them? Author Dick Lehr will be visiting Runkle on May 11 to meet with 7th and 8th graders to discuss his book.

Student Honors

Performing Arts Coordinator Kenny Kozol shared the following wonderful news with us about the Brookline Youth Orchestra (BYO): On Saturday, March 24, the BYO, one of our town-wide ensembles consisting of 4th through 8th graders from across all of our schools, participated for the first time in a competition sponsored by the Massachusetts Instrumental and Choral Conductors Association (MICCA). BYO participants in the adjudicated competition were awarded a gold medal for their performance and were one of 19 ensembles (out of 260) to be selected to perform at Symphony Hall in Boston based on their stellar work. The Brookline Youth Orchestra will perform at Symphony Hall on Saturday, April 21, performing JS Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 and Ravel's Sonatine. The BYO is conducted by John Ferguson and assisted by Emily Stewart, two of our music teachers. The work of the ensemble is impressive, working at an extremely high level and performing challenging original works (not simplified youth arrangements preferred by many student groups). Congratulations to Mr. Ferguson, Ms. Stewart and all of our students in the Brookline Youth Symphony, as well as to all of our music teachers who cultivate creative and musical skills in all of our students!

Brookline Youth Awards

I had the pleasure of attending the 8th Annual Brookline Youth Awards ceremony last night at the Coolidge Corner Theatre. The Brookline Youth Awards, sponsored by Brookline HUB, recognize students who have made special contributions to their school or community. The 2018 Youth Award honorees are:

- Abby Mason
- Anthony Vieti
- Carolyn Parker-Fairbain
- Isaiah Goldsmith
- Jimmy Ricks
- Jocelyn Zhou
- Joshua Gladstone
- Komal Wasif
- Lena Harris
- Paul Miller-Schmidt
- Priya Karumanchi
- Sabrina Zhou
- Sagamore Scholars Team – Ella Kitterman, Lauren Mahoney, Maddie Nagler, Sascha Wolf-Sorokin
- Vicka Ter Ovanessian
- Vishni Samaraweera
- Yama Estime

The *Brookline Youth of the Year*, chosen from those above, is: **Sabrina Zhou**

Women Who Inspire Us Annual Essay Competition

It was my honor to attend the *26th Annual Women Who Inspire Us* award ceremony on Thursday evening, March 29. Hosted by the Brookline Commission for Women and held in Hunneman Hall at the Brookline Public Library, the evening honored the 12 winners of the essay contest (three from each grade, 5th through 8th). The essay contest, held annually in celebration of National Women's History Month, is an important part of chronicling the history of women in Brookline and encourages students to reflect on those who make an impact on their lives. Congratulations to all of the students who submitted an essay and to those whose essays were recognized!

BHS Innovation Fund

The Brookline High School Innovation Fund held their annual wine and cheese event on April 10. This annual outreach event serves to introduce the work of the Fund to incoming high school parents. Joining me were BHS Headmaster Anthony Meyer, members of the BHS Jazz Band, students who have benefited from Innovation Fund courses, and program leaders from the high school who lead Innovation Fund courses and projects. The soon-to-be high school parents were duly impressed with the work that the Innovation Fund does to bring leading edge ideas and programs to our high school.

Popsicles for Suzie!

The Driscoll School PTO invites you to join them tomorrow (Friday, April 13) at 1:40pm on the Driscoll School playground for *Popsicles for Suzie*. Students, parents and staff are using this as an opportunity to congratulate and celebrate Dr. Suzie Talukdar being named Principal of Driscoll School.