

The Public Schools of Brookline
School Committee Meeting of Thursday, November 10, 2016
Superintendent Report
Andrew J. Bott
Superintendent of Schools

PSB Professional Development Day

On Election Day, we had a remarkable day of professional development that brought together the entire PSB community. This day was one where collectively we committed to the shared and critically important goal of breaking the cycle of racism in our schools. My introduction to the day included the following statement which I share tonight with the School Committee:

It is my distinct pleasure to stand here before the 1000+ educators of the Public Schools of Brookline, gathered here at Brookline High School, to welcome you for what I expect to be a remarkable and transformative day for our schools and for our community.

Over the past several years, our national dialogue has laid bare the deep divisions in our increasingly diverse country. The challenges faced by students throughout the country and by our students here in Brookline have not been openly discussed nor fully understood. And unfortunately, the gravitational pull of polarized rhetoric has prevented communities from working together to openly and honestly address and tackle these challenges.

As I stated in my letter to you last week, there are many forces acting within and upon the lives of our students. Today we work together as an entire community and begin to understand more deeply how one of these forces, racism, affects our students throughout their lives.

On this election day, in a year where so few of our political leaders have taken a stand on the right side of right, we the PSB are committing as an entire community to work together to become interrupters of the cycle of racism. The collective force of our individual actions, the actions of our school teams, and the actions taken by our entire district can be the interrupters that break this cycle which has for so long affected the achievement of our students. Together we are taking a stand, with today as only one step in what will be a long standing commitment of our district to provide the time, resources and supports necessary to maintain these efforts and to see this work through. Together we can achieve all that we envision for all of our students. Today, together, we make a powerful statement that we will no longer accept differentiated and inequitable outcomes for our students; that we believe in the abilities of all our students and we commit to ensuring all our students have the opportunities and supports needed to reach their fullest potential; and that we commit to combating the invisible forces that for too long have disproportionately impacted so many students in our schools.

Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum began the day with a keynote address in which she explained the cycle of racism, described the forces that reinforce and strengthen this cycle, and identified the ways in which we can act as interrupters of this cycle. There was incredible power and hope in her message. Following Dr. Tatum's keynote, over 70 PSB educators led breakout sessions to discuss her message, process the ideas presented, and begin discussing the ways we can become interrupters in this cycle.

Following the breakout sessions, educators returned to their schools and engaged in work designed to lead into the next steps in this work. As I said in my introduction, our commitment to continuing this work is ongoing and unwavering and we will make available the necessary time, resources and support to ensure its long term effectiveness and the success of all our students.

I must thank Gabe McCormick for his incredible work and leadership in making this professional development day a success. From coordinating all the logistics, to developing and delivering training to all 70+ breakout facilitators, to supporting principals in their school based session planning, Mr. McCormick was instrumental in ensuring this was a powerful and successful day for our entire community.

BHS Identity Curriculum Update

I would like to update the Committee on the ongoing work at BHS that is connected to the BHS Identity Curriculum work happening this year.

The Identity Curriculum is based on four pillars: student learning and curriculum development; faculty and student collaboration; community engagement; and faculty learning together. Based on these four pillars, the following additional work has been launched under the leadership of Dean of Faculty Jenee Ramos and Associate Dean Brian Poon.

Race and Equity Team Leaders

Linked to the Identity Curriculum elements of race and identity, six educators will function as team leaders of Collaborative Learning Teams. These teams will consist of cross-disciplinary faculty members meeting two times per month, working together under the conviction that the key to improved learning for students is through continuous job-embedded learning for educators. They will plan, discuss and evaluate Identity Curriculum units in each subject area; hold open conversations with students to hear what students are thinking about or wrestling with related to race and culture; and participate in the facilitation of department meetings, faculty meetings and Brookline community events related to race and identity.

Diversity Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention Professional Learning Teams

Three teams of cross-disciplinary faculty members will work together to: develop professional development around issues of inclusion, diversity and equity; engage in action work in conjunction with the district HR team around increasing the diversity of our High School educators; and participate with K-8 schools in similar system-wide work.

Department and Disciplinary Research and Pedagogy

The Dean of Faculty will meet with all department and program coordinators and their teams, working to determine areas of disciplinary and/or pedagogical professional development for individuals within the department or for the entire departmental team.

Response to Intervention (RtI)/Multi-Tiered Support Systems (MTSS) Leadership Work

Two teams will be established to complement the ongoing Dean and Guidance Department work on Early Warning Systems and Student Intervention Teams. One team will focus on learning about and educating faculty on Tier 1 instructional strategies. The second team will focus on planning for a more robust, skills-based and co-taught Tutorial Plus model for roll out in 2017-2018.

Professional Development Study and Planning Team

A team will be established to discuss professional development at BHS and to make recommendations for areas of focus for the 2017-2018 school year.

I cannot thank enough Deans Ramos and Poon for their incredible leadership in this work. Their leadership and the overwhelming support of the BHS team for this work is having a significant positive impact on the entire BHS community.

Grade Level Release Days Grades 1-5

As of today, grades 1, 2 and 3 have participated in school-based grade level release days. Schools have focused on a range of topics that have been selected based on educator professional development needs, School Improvement Plans and student needs.

A range of school topics were covered across grades in each school including:

- Culturally Proficient Classroom Instruction; Conversations About Equity and Reflection; and Reviewing Interventions (Heath and Driscoll)
- Guided Reading; Looking At Student Work; Differentiation; Project Based Learning; and Crafting Meaningful Extension Activities (Lawrence)
- Reviewing BAS data and using the Literacy Continuum to identify reading behaviors to target via strategies such as interactive read alouds and Guided Reading; and Math Stations (Lincoln)
- Using BAS data to identify high leverage reading strategies for implementation, as well as continued implementation of Literacy Collaborative (Devotion)
- Mathematical Thinking, Number Talks and providing effective feedback to students in math (Runkle)
- Positive Behavior Interventions and Support; and Calkins Reading units (Pierce)

Preliminary feedback from educators suggests that some of the early successes of the school-based release days have been:

- Time for classroom teachers, school leaders and specialists to learn alongside one another
- Targeted professional development based on educator needs and student needs as identified by various data sources (i.e. BAS, MCAS, BOYA, anecdotal observations of student learning)
- Ability to implement creative means of collaborating—for example, Heath and Driscoll coming together for joint professional development to learn best practices beyond the walls of individual schools
- Sessions facilitated by school math and literacy specialists who know the context of each school and serve as a resource in the school for continued work beyond the release day

At the conclusion of the SY 16-17 Release Days we will solicit feedback from educators as to what worked, areas for improvement and suggested next steps.

Kindergarten Release Day

This year, Kindergarten Release Days remained district based due to the need for Kindergarten teachers to collaboratively review the use of paraprofessionals in their classrooms and discuss possible alternatives for paraprofessional staffing. This is in response to the discontinued DESE funding of kindergarten paraprofessionals in every classroom.

Kindergarten teachers consistently identified the following as key responsibilities of paraprofessionals across the district:

1. Given that Kindergarten may be a child's first experience in PSBMA, paraprofessionals support all students, including those who may have undiagnosed needs and require additional support
2. Paraprofessionals support differentiation of classroom instruction via small group work
3. Thinking about students developmentally, paraprofessionals support the social emotional development of students by helping to build student independence

In addition to this initial work, the Kindergarten teachers also:

- Identified effective literacy strategies that addressed concepts of print, phonemic awareness, early reading skills, and early writing skills. This discussion was helpful in giving us a sense of the areas where additional support is needed and identifying pockets of successful work that need to be expanded and shared throughout kindergarten classrooms (i.e. need for sequential phonemic instruction, many teachers asking for *Foundations* to do this work)
- Reviewed the Science "Structures" unit that several teachers from across the district collaborated on to create an interdisciplinary unit. Teachers and K-8 curriculum coordinators shared resources linked to this unit, brainstormed additional resources together and discussed next steps for the collaborative development of more interdisciplinary units.

The feedback on the day was incredibly positive. With one teacher explaining, *"It has been a LONG time since our kindergarten voices had been invited to the table. I hope that our concerns and feedback are taken into consideration when making decisions that will impact our students and our teaching. Thank you for a well-structured, well-planned, well-executed learning experience. Thank you for respecting and valuing our expertise and for helping spark a new wave of excitement."* This sentiment was repeated throughout the feedback. The day was facilitated by Regina Watts and Lesley Ryan Miller. Regina, Lesley and Vicki Milstein are meeting to discuss plans and implementation of next steps.

School Visits

Since our last School Committee Meeting, I have been able to spend a great deal of time in our schools. These visits have included:

- Lawrence School on 10/24
- Upper Devotion on 10/26
- BHS LAHB Program on 10/27
- Heath School on 10/31
- BHS on 11/1
- BEEP and K@ Heath and Runkle on 11/7
- Lincoln on 11/10
- BHS History Department on 11/10

In each of these visits, I saw our students engaged in incredible learning. Some examples of this great learning included:

- In a 7th grade history class at Upper Devotion, students were trying to build irrigation systems based on what they had learned about irrigation systems in the ancient world. This was a true project based learning assignment that incorporated, into one lesson, the learning of content skills, problem solving,

engineering/design, application of analytical skills, and practice working successfully with a team. I also observed similarly impressive and high quality project based learning in Upper Devotion English, Math and Science classes.

- In the BHS LAHB program, there was a deep level of support, tailored to the specific needs of the students in the class, ensuring that all students were working on challenging and engaging assignments while receiving the supports needed to be successful in their work. Of particular note in the LAHB class was the depth of knowledge the team of educators had about the individual learning styles of their students. This powerful connection plays a critical role in the success of students in this BHS program.
- At BHS on November 1, I had the opportunity to spend time in a Chinese I class, a physics class, and a dance elective. Across this diverse range of classes, I saw the same level of engagement and high levels of student learning. In all classes students were learning complex and challenging new skills. In Chinese I, it was the conversations held by the students and the stories their teacher told to help them remember how to write new characters. In dance, it was the individual guidance and the whole class support students received. And, in physics it was the design challenge students who worked together to solve the problems, reflect on the successes/lessons learned from testing their solutions to those problems, and the integration of physics across all aspects of the assignment.
- On November 7, I had the opportunity to visit BEEP and Kindergarten classes at Heath and Runkle. Heath students across classes were voting for their favorite pets, ice cream flavors, and sports. In KF, an entire polling station was built and students were explaining, to each adult who came into the room, both the voting process and the way in which votes are tallied at the conclusion of the day. I had the opportunity to observe students reading *Stone Soup*, other students working in a variety of centers, and still other students participating in whole class meetings. Across each of these early childhood classes, the learning was exceptional.
- Earlier today I had the privilege of observing a science experiment at Lincoln School and I was also able to visit social studies classes at BHS. At Lincoln, 6th grade students were creating real clouds in an experiment designed to replicate the water cycle. Not only did students create clouds by recreating the cycle of evaporation and condensation that takes place in our atmosphere, more importantly they were able to explain the entire process in detail and explain ways that changes to any of the variables would impact the outcome of their work. At BHS, 9th grade students were learning about Buddhism, and in each of the 10th grade classes I visited students were learning about and discussing the Industrial Revolution.
- In addition to the above detail, I spent time at both Heath on Monday October 31st and Lawrence on Monday October 24th visiting a variety of classes across the grades in each school. At Lawrence visits ranged from first grade classes engaged in literacy work to middle school science classes where students were working together to present their learning. At Heath my time in classes included first grade math instruction, observing each of the 5th grades, and joining a 7th grade English class. In both schools the commitment and enthusiasm of educators was clear, and students were engaged in their learning across both schools. Even the Halloween holiday, with many teachers in costume, did not distract students in the 1st, 5th and 7th grade classes from the goals of the day.

I include this level of detail, along with the description of the release day work, to capture the strength of the Public Schools of Brookline and the commitment of every member of the PSB team to the success of our students. These visits are also critical in my work and my clear goal of aligning the resources, supports and structures of our district in ways that best support principals and teachers in their work on behalf of our students.

Senior Leadership Priorities

At the October 20, 2016 School Committee workshop, the Committee requested additional and more specific information on evidence of progress and deliverables for district priorities. Included with this report is a revised document that includes this requested information. Senior Leadership will report to you the progress we are making on these priorities twice this year: in March and at the end of the school year.

Included in this revised document are two additional lists. These lists include the ongoing high priority operational and strategic tasks for district leadership and 2016-2017 tasks for School Committee.

SY2016 – 2017 District-wide Priorities for Senior Leadership

The Senior Leadership Team has identified four primary areas of focus for SY2016 – 2017:

- **Collaboration and Teamwork**
- **Instructional Leadership**
- **Focusing on all students (“Every student, every day”)**
- **Assessing and Aligning District Resources, Programming, and Policies**

These priorities are aligned with and support the District’s Mission, Vision, and Goals:

- Goal 1: Every Student Achieving
- Goal 2: Every Student Invested in Learning
- Goal 3: Every Student Prepared for Change and Challenge
- Goal 4: Every Educator Growing Professionally

Listed below are the actions being taken presently and those that are planned for this year in our focus areas. In March and at the end of the year, Senior Leadership will provide the School Committee with a status report on progress toward accomplishing these priorities.



Collaboration and Teamwork

	Evidence of Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rebooting of Leadership Team to include principals, vice-principals, K8 and BHS curriculum coordinators and focusing these meetings on instructional practice, student needs, and supporting effective evaluation practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Agendas that demonstrate that the meetings have focused on instruction, understanding student learning and evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Senior Leadership regularly visiting schools and classrooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regular reports from Superintendent on SL visits to schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PK-8 Coordinators and BHS Coordinators working together on cross-site visits and meeting together monthly on issues of teaching and learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● many visits have happened already and continue to happen. We will meet as a group on December 12 to develop next steps.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Vice-principals having regular monthly meetings for the first time to share practices, informational and collaborate on district priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meetings continue. Agendas are updated to provide just-in-time PD opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improving regular and consistent communications with staff, leaders, families, and community stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Examples of internal and external communications and communications plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● OSS and SEPAC scheduling regular meetings with additional evening sessions allowing for more families to share and participate in requested events (e.g. community integration of students, social emotional learning programs, etc). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Agendas of meetings; participation numbers, and aggregated feedback forms

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● OSS and OTL supporting Heath and Lincoln’s work with the state’s Low Income Education Access Project partnership to address teaching “with poverty in mind”, improving services and placements for homeless and transient students, and placing students with special needs into the least restrictive environments (LRE) possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Baseline data on services provided to homeless and transient students ● Assessment of student placement in LRE and action plan for improvement for Heath and Lincoln
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continuing and refining the collaborative budget development process started last year whereby pre-meetings with all budget managers are conducted prior to their November 1 request to the Superintendent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Budget Meeting Calendar and completion of the budget development process

Instructional Leadership

	Evidence of Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Principals, Senior Leadership and OTL working together on the role of principals as instructional leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Agendas of building focused Professional Development ● Feedback forms from professional development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Proving a support network for vice-principals including addressing the area of instructional leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Agendas of monthly meetings ● Summarized feedback forms from VP meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improving the quality of teacher evaluation and support by working with principals and administrators on the practice of class observations, differentiating feedback based on teacher need, and providing concrete feedback to strengthen instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review of completed evaluations to assess impact of training and support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development of a coherent, long term approach for staff professional development that integrates the work of OTL and OSS and is aligned with our district mission and goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Finalized plan including a defined theory of action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Principals and schools have taken responsibility for district-wide grade level release days so teachers can collaborate on school-specific needs. OTL and Coordinators are supporting the planning and implementation of this school-based professional development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Agendas of building focused Professional Development ● Feedback forms from professional development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● OSS partnering with all school leaders to identify the least restrictive environment (LRE) across multiple grade levels in order to assess the need to expand existing programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Summary of findings ● FY18 budget that reflects any necessary expansion or realignment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● OTL will work with administrators on developing the capacity to support student-focused discussions at the school level that will impact instruction and intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Summary of work completed at school-based Grade Level Release Days run by school

and support School Improvement Plan goals.	leaders, including topics, feedback forms, and steps taken
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sharing student learning data with teachers, school and district administrators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Examples of guidance and tools shared with principals, coordinators, and teachers on data analysis ● Reports shared with schools ● Agendas from staff and team meetings ● Examples of action steps taken as a result of data analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Developing a process to have coaches, specialists, and administrators use classroom and district-wide student data to understand the impact that specific instructional moves are having on student work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The plan that outlines this process and its rollout plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● OTL and Enrichment, Challenge, and Support teachers providing support to teachers on developing engaging lessons and work that challenges all students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Examples of the tools, guidance, support that ECS teachers share ● Representation from OTL is attending all ECS PAC meetings. ● Will begin working with Matt Rosenthal on using ECS to support RTI work. Possible role expansion for Matt to include RTI work in his current position.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● OTL will work with teachers on how to share information with students about progress made and progress that needs to be made 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The data, reports, and protocols used with teachers and teacher teams

Focus on all students (Every student, every day)

	Evidence of Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● November 8th Professional Development Day - Interrupting the Cycle of Racism: What Can I Do? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Execution of the event ● Staff feedback ● Agendas from school-specific work ● Documentation of Follow-up

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implementation of the Identity Curriculum at BHS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Summary of work, and the impact on staff and students, and input about the type of support BHS will need to continue the learning.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Working with Jenee Ramos, Brian Poon and K8 principals on bringing Identity Curriculum work to the elementary schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plan for initial steps on the Identity Curriculum at PK-8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Partnership with Anti-Defamation League to develop Peer Trainers at BHS who will be leaders in our ongoing work to create a respectful and inclusive school community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Training of BHS students ● Presentation to School Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ongoing data analysis to identify and report persistent achievement gaps and provide school leaders and teachers with the information they need to address these gaps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annual schedule of public reports ● Public posting of reports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaboration between OSS and OTL to further deepen support for Child Study Teams (PreK-8th) and School Intervention Teams (BHS) to establish a district wide model of Response to Intervention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Agendas from three meetings with CST leaders ● Documentation of changes suggested and worked on based on the work with the K-8 and BHS teams.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● OSS and OTL's work with BHS special education staff to support students with disabilities age 14 and over with post-secondary planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Numbers of students who participated in their IEP meetings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Central Office supporting the schools with their school-developed Improvement Plans and their goals related to supporting all students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Revised template that promotes coherence in plan structure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FY18 Budget Narratives being revised to include commitment statements of how programs and departments support educational equity for all students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Superintendent's Recommended FY 18 Budget ● School Committee FY 18 Recommended Budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review and potential reconfiguration of Food Service Management with new Meal Charge Policy, and Management Company RFP/Director Replacement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hiring of Food Service Management Company

Assessing and Aligning District Resources, Programming, and Policies

	Evidence of Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Budget process - continue revision and reallocation of resources in the budget document to align with the expenditure of funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft budget delivered to Superintendent 12/1/17

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alignment of district resources to support each School Improvement Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidenced in the narrative of the final approved budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OTL/OSS departments reviewing staffing needs, resource allocations, and cross-functional opportunities to right-size and align resources to support district priorities with a focus on equity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Realignment of resources so that each account is properly sourced and managed. Review staffing templates to understand the work of each position.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OSS supporting schools on their efforts to ensure greater access for students with disabilities (SWD) within general education curricula, instructional programs, facility improvements, and extracurricular opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review school instructional programming to ensure highest access of GE programs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build and develop a Building Infrastructure Inventory document 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align and understand job descriptions and work across each school building.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing revision of district policies 	Align and focus review and updating Hazing, Naxolone, Bullying, Substance Abuse, Meal Plan, and additional policies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updating Emergency Response planning to be in compliance with and to follow best practices. Activities and requirements include but are not limited to: 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Police/School Memorandum of Agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised Red Book, training plan for emergency situations and for crisis teams, define emergency response staffing structure, and implementation of two-way radio use

Ongoing High Priority Operational and Strategic Tasks for District Leadership

	Evidence of Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building Inventory 	Building Inventory completed by 1/27/17. 5 Year CIP developed using this information by 4/1/17

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Diversity Recruitment 	Fall report on Diversity Recruitment and end of year update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 9th School Feasibility Study, design selection, and approval for of schematic design funding 	Completion of Feasibility Study and successful budget vote
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● BHS Feasibility Study, design selection, and approval for of schematic design funding 	Completion of Feasibility Study and successful budget vote
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hiring of permanent principals for BHS, Heath and Runkle 	Searches concluded by February
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annual Enrollment Projection Report 	Delivery of report by 12/15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Five Year Strategic Plan 	Completion of Plan

2016-2017 Tasks for School Committee

	Evidence of Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Building Project Committees and oversight <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 9th Elementary School ○ BHS Expansion ○ Devotion Elementary School 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FY 18 Budget Recommendation to Town Meeting including CIP funding for BHS and 9th school schematic design phase 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contract Negotiations: BEU - Unit A, BEU - Unit B, BEU - Unit C, AFSME - Custodians, AFSCME - Food Service, AFSME - Secretaries (formerly BESA), 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Policy Manual Review 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Planning and Preparation for likely Debt Exclusion Override in late 2017/early 2018 	