

Superintendent's Update

Wednesday, June 1, 2022

Today was the 166th day of classes for the 2021-22 school year. There are only 13 days of school left this academic year. The last day of the school year is a half-day for students and is currently scheduled for Tuesday, June 21. Remember, there is NO SCHOOL on Monday, June 20 in recognition of the Juneteenth holiday.

As we head into the last couple of weeks of the school year, there are MANY end of year activities and events marking these significant milestones. Members of the top 30 students from Dedham High School's Class of 2022 had a wonderful evening celebrating their accomplishments at the Superintendent's Annual Dinner at the MIT Endicott House on Tuesday last week, and also the annual Class Night Academic Awards on Veterans Field last night. Everyone is looking forward to the Class of 2022 Graduation this Saturday at 11:00 AM. Our fingers are crossed for good weather! At this point all signs point to a wonderful day.

One issue that so clearly illustrates the educational commitment of the Dedham community is the annual awarding of scholarships to our graduating seniors. Coordinating the equitable selection and distribution of scholarships is an involved and difficult task. This effort is headquartered in our DHS Counseling Department through Director of Counseling Services Dr. Ashley Dube. Our College and Career Counselor Ashley Mansfield and Guidance Assistant Amy Norwell coordinate a committee that works with all our counselors and administrators and in conjunction with the Town's Trust Funds Commission to evaluate applications based upon merit, achievement, and need. This year I have learned through the Ashley's that they have been able to award 220 scholarships worth over \$230,000 to 118 seniors in the Class of 2022! Many thanks to all those involved.

As everyone is aware, last week's horrible tragedy in Uvalde, Texas has left us all in shock. All our schools have worked to address concerns of students, parents, and faculty and have done their best to explain the inexplicable. On the evening of this tragedy I sent a [community wide message](#) acknowledging the event and providing resources for all members of the district. I have spoken and met with all of our building principals to help better understand our students' needs and reviewing our protocols for

reminders of best practice. We will continue to help support students in families in the days ahead.

Last Thursday I attended the MA Association of School Superintendents annual meeting in Marlboro. The entire day was devoted to districts' work around Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion across the state. Information and slide presentations from the day's workshops are included in your folders [HERE](#). It was a very enlightening discussion amongst educational leaders from across the state, and I was again very proud of the work we are doing in Dedham. This was particularly meaningful when our work in Dedham was shown to be in close alignment with the [MASS REDI \(Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion\) strategy](#). It is clear that we are doing important and meaningful work in this area, and I am re-energized for additional progress in the days ahead.

This week we are wrapping up the final stages of annual MCAS testing with Science exams and make-ups taking place at most schools. The full MCAS testing schedule can be seen on the DPS website [HERE](#).

Members of the School Committee will recall one year ago when High School educators came before us to ask permission to pilot a work-study program to try and encourage student attendance and incentivize high school completion. I asked Principal Forrest and DHS Alternative Program teacher Kathy Megan to provide a [review of the year's work study program effort and their synopsis can be seen here](#). While the overall impact was modest this past year, I sense that this opportunity was quite meaningful for those that took part, and I hope that the years ahead will see increased participation in this program.

We continue to make very effective progress at filling open administrative positions within the district. We were pleased to FINALLY announce that the district has successfully recruited a **Human Resources Administrator** to replace Kathy O'Leary who left the district back in January. A final announcement on this to this important district position will be made shortly once all paperwork is complete. Our last district wide position is the Riverdale Elementary School Principal role and that 15-member search committee interviewed 4 candidates yesterday and will interview another 4 candidates tomorrow before selecting finalists for site visits next week. I am VERY

proud of the efforts of MANY search committee members for our recent searches, and we have some fantastic educators joining our district for the 2022-23 school year.

Denise Moroney and the SBRC have continued to progress on the selection of the Oakdale Elementary School Owner's Project Manager. I know School Committee SBRC members will provide more information during the Committee updates portion of tonight's meeting.

Student summer enrichment programming for children in grades PreK - 8 remains [open for registration on the DPS website](#). Please spread the word about the availability of these offerings!

I am happy to answer any questions the Committee may have.