

Dedham Public Schools

Superintendent's 30-Day Update

Hi Folks,

Thursday, May 9, 2019

We are now officially in the home stretch as yesterday was the 150th day of the 2018-19 school year. This week is National Teacher Appreciation Week, and I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize all our educators in the Dedham Public Schools for their very hard work and dedication on behalf of the students in Dedham every day of the year. THANK YOU !!!

Remember that our official last day of school this year is **Thursday, June 20, 2019**. Next year's [2019-20 School Calendar](#) is available for your planning purposes on the [DPS website](#).

Ribbon Cutting & Re-Dedication of the Dr. Thomas J. Curran Early Childhood Education Center on Monday, April 29, 2019

Under a chilly but unusually sunny (for this spring, at least) sky, the new Dr. Thomas J. Curran Early Childhood Education Center was officially re-dedicated on Monday, April 29, 2019 by State Treasurer Deb Goldberg and many other state and local officials. This was a very proud day for the entire town of Dedham, and the ceremony was appropriately fitting in its pageantry and symbolism. The [program for the ceremony](#) featured a comprehensive list of dignitaries and speakers, and was highlighted by words from Tom Curran's brother John who provided perspective from the many members of Tom's extended family who were on hand for the occasion.



A great ending was provided by the teachers and students who lined the route to the ribbon cutting out front and participated (with safety scissors, of course...) in the actual ceremonial cutting of the ribbon with Treasurer Goldberg.



There is also a lovely video of the [Ribbon Cutting Ceremony](#) produced by Dedham Cable Television's own Dan Hallisey, and a [slideshow of the entire construction process](#) available for all to see. Many thanks to the literally hundreds of people who came together to make Dr. Curran's vision a reality in this beautiful new facility!

FY20 School Budget To Be Voted At Town Meeting

On April 22, 2019 Dedham's Finance and Warrant Committee (FWC) voted to reduce the Town Manager's recommended and [School Committee Approved FY20 Budget](#) request by \$196,000. The FY20 School Department Operating Budget request called for a 4.7% increase over the FY19 Budget allocation, and included a number of additional staff positions needed to address increases in special education programming and enrollment increases at Dedham Middle School. Due to a combination of factors, the FWC was rightfully concerned about the overall impact of the Town's FY20 Budget projections and the impact our current obligations will have on the tax burden to town residents. As a result of that recent development, I met with our District Leadership Team on Tuesday, April 23 and tasked them with collectively developing a plan to cut our proposal back to meet this new target threshold. The Finance and Warrant Committee's recommendations to Town Meeting are contained in the [Spring 2019 Town Meeting Book](#). The specific reduction to the School

Department's FY20 Budget request can be seen in Article #3, Page 5, under line item #71 "Personal Services". This is the term used to identify salary costs for Dedham Public Schools employees.

Based upon a series of conversations about how to close this budget gap, I anticipate a reduction of 2.0 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) classroom teachers at the high school level, and a 1.0 FTE reduction of classroom teachers from the [School Committee Approved FY20 Budget](#) at the Elementary School level. Due to shifting enrollments, one elementary classroom teacher position was already transferred to Dedham Middle School as a part of our FY20 budget, but these additional FWC reductions will result in an additional classroom teacher reduction at the elementary level.

The School Department's Proposed FY20 Budget will be voted upon by Town Meeting at their annual spring gathering on Monday, May 20 in the auditorium at Dedham High School. The meeting begins at 7:00 PM and is open to the general public. I encourage you to attend, if for nothing else to learn more about how your town government operates. There are a number of documents that may be helpful in understanding the background for our FY20 requests, and I have included active links to these below. Please take a few moments to review these presentations as they provide a valuable window into our ongoing work in the district:

[Spring 2019 Town Meeting Book](#)

[FY20 School Department Operating Budget](#)

[2017-18 District Benchmarking Report](#)

These documents are all on our website and available to the public. I encourage faculty, staff, and parents to attend and remain informed about our ongoing efforts to be transparent and present a budget that is aligned to our [School Committee Goals](#) and [5-Year Strategic Action Plan](#).

Community Traffic/Circulation Study Meeting on Wednesday, May 22 at 7:00 PM at DMS Auditorium

On November 26, 2018 at the Fall Annual town Meeting, Town Meeting Members voted to approve [Article Eight, Appropriation for School Circulation Study](#). After going out to bid, the School Committee selected [Vanasse Hangen and Brustin \(VHB\)](#) a firm with many years of experience analyzing and solving challenging traffic/circulation issues. VHB compiled a comprehensive [Data Collection Work Plan](#) and met multiple times with School Committee representatives to discuss the scope of their work. The first phase of data collection around the high school/middle school/Avery school complex and surrounding neighborhoods began on Wednesday, April 24. The data collection sites and overall scope of their work can be viewed on these [Data Collection Maps](#).

On **Wednesday, May 22 at 7:00 PM at Dedham Middle School**, the School Committee will be holding a community meeting to solicit input and discuss concerns of neighbors, parents, and

community members that are occurring around the Avery/DMS/DHS campus and surrounding areas in Dedham.

The goal of this meeting is to gather as much input from all potential stakeholders as possible so that VHB has the best information to arrive at the best recommendations for a comprehensive solution for the Dedham Public Schools and the Town of Dedham. Please consider attending this community meeting to learn more about this ongoing work and to voice your opinion about how to improve the safety of students around this school campus.

Dedham's Director of Counseling Services Dr. Ashley Dubé **Named 2019 MA School Psychologist of the Year**

I am proud to announce that Dedham Public Schools Director of Counseling Services Dr. Ashley Dubé has recently been named Massachusetts School Psychologist of the Year by the

[Massachusetts School Psychologists Association \(MSPA\)](#). Dr. Dubé will officially receive the award from the MASP Board of Directors on Friday, May 10, 2019 at the annual MSPA spring conference at the Sheraton Framingham Hotel & Conference Center. MSPA's President Jill Snyder was present at the May 1 School Committee meeting to recognize Dr. Dubé's efforts in her new role in Dedham, and I've linked a copy of her presentation about Dedham's comprehensive counseling services for parents and students [HERE](#). I think anyone who views this presentation will agree that our students, parents, and teachers in Dedham are receiving substantial support in mental health and social/emotional learning. Congratulations, Dr. Dubé!



English Learners School Committee Presentation

Many of you may not be aware of the work being done in the Dedham Schools to serve our large and growing population of English Language Learners (EL's). DPS and our EL teachers are currently serving 200 students whose first language is not English. Our students' and families' needs are becoming more diverse and the School Committee recognized this growth and responded by supporting a dedicated portion of time to district leadership in this area. Jen Robins, our District Department Chair for English Language Learners, has worked hard to implement supports for our teachers, students, and families this year, and has also been busy implementing the new requirements of the state's [LOOK Act](#) (Language Opportunities for Our Kids) passed in November 2017.

Jen recently gave a presentation to the School Committee regarding the extremely demanding aspects of her role and how she provides support for all her faculty and staff. I would encourage all of you to take a minute and review her comprehensive [EL Presentation](#) from that meeting. Thank you to Jen and all her faculty for the work they do every day!

Annual State MCAS Testing Continues

As mentioned in my last update, our annual state required MCAS testing continues for all students in grades 3-10. I have been very impressed with the high degree of commitment of our students and teachers to this annual challenge, particularly at Dedham High School, as our high school students complete their testing online using their school-issued Chromebooks for the first time. A full schedule of annual MCAS testing for all grades and subjects is available on the district website [HERE](#).

My final Superintendent's 30-Day Update will be sent on the on the 180th (and last!) school day of the year on Thursday, June 20, 2019. Until then, as always, please feel free to send me your thoughts via email at: mwelch@dedham.k12.ma.us, or follow me on Twitter at [@MJWelchDedham](#). I would love to hear your feedback. Thank you for your ongoing support of the Dedham Public Schools!

All my best,

Michael J. Welch
Superintendent
Dedham Public Schools