

# Superintendent's Update

Wednesday, February 2, 2022

Yesterday was the 95th day of classes for the 2021-22 school year. Today was a full day of professional development for all DPS employees. A review of today's professional development offerings from around the district can be seen [HERE](#).

As everyone is aware, this past weekend's major snowstorm presented a series of enormous challenges for the district and the community. Luckily, this blizzard occurred on Saturday! I am very thankful for the tremendous efforts of our facilities/maintenance staff and our custodians for their many hours of work over the weekend to clear the schools in order to prepare for opening on Monday. These men and women came into work at 6:00 AM on Saturday and worked all day and into the evening on Saturday during the height of the blizzard. They then returned on Sunday to continue their cleanup work all day to make sure everything was ready for Monday. It was a HUGE effort, and we all appreciate their work, and the work of the town's DPW crews to support our schools!

On Monday, January 24 I convened the winter meeting of PTO officers across all Dedham schools. This seasonal gathering has become a valuable tradition to share ideas, communicate district happenings, and provide support and appreciation to the parent leaders for each school. This winter meeting had 24 officers in attendance representing all 7 district schools. The agenda and supporting materials for this and past Townwide PTO meetings may be seen [HERE](#).

Last week Fine Arts Director Eytan Wurman informed me that after discussions with DHS Principal Jim Forrest, it was decided that it would be best to cancel the planned music/drama trip to New York City later this spring. This decision was based upon the urgency with which a commitment decision had to be made, and the current challenges and ambiguity of the COVID-19 pandemic. All families will receive full refunds and it is hoped that the trip can be rescheduled for next year.

On Monday this week I had a phone call with MSBA Project Director Jennifer Flynn. We discussed the upcoming release of the MSBA's enrollment certification for the upcoming Oakdale rebuilding project. Shortly thereafter, I received the MSBA's enrollment estimates, and these important documents will need to be reviewed and

signed off on by the Town Manager, School Committee and me in order to ensure the district's application is on track to be reviewed by the MSBA at their next board meeting scheduled for March 28, 2022. At that meeting I expect Dedham's project will be voted into the feasibility stage of the process.

On Wednesday, January 26 I presented the annual "[State of the Schools](#)" message to the community. I am very grateful for this opportunity and appreciate the Committee's willingness to support this concept over the past eight years. This gives the community a sense of the district's efforts of the past year, and a vision for where the next 12 months of work will take us.

Over the weekend our District HR Administrator Kathy O'Leary announced that she would be leaving the Dedham Public Schools to accept a position as Director of Human Resources for the City of Framingham. This is a great opportunity for Kathy and we are all very happy for her, but it is a huge loss for our district. Kathy's patience, kindness, knowledge and vision for serving our DPS family will be sorely missed. We all wish her the best in this next career challenge! Her last day in the district will be Friday, February 11, 2022.

Over the past two weeks DMS Principal Karen Hillman, DEIJ Officer Dr. Oneida Fox Roye, and HR Administrator Kathy O'Leary have continued our ongoing participation in meetings with the [MA Department of Education's Teacher Diversity Professional Learning Community](#). Our district team has been meeting monthly with this group over the course of the year as a part of this DESE cohort that shares ideas and investments in how to diversify the teacher workforce in Massachusetts and in Dedham. This effort is in addition to the work Dr. Fox Roye and I have been engaged in with [DESE's Influence 100 Program](#). This work has similar goals to the Teacher Diversity PLC, and Dedham is one of only 12 districts in Massachusetts selected to join this group. This fits in nicely with our district's efforts around diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Today I received from the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents an overview of the preliminary estimates for the FY23 State Budget and its impacts on educational funding for cities and towns in Massachusetts. The email I received from MASS can be seen [HERE](#), and the preliminary estimates of allocations for Dedham can be seen [HERE](#). My initial impression is that Dedham will fare relatively well in this

assessment, but it is important for the Committee to remember that Chapter 70 monies from the state are sent to the TOWN of Dedham, not the schools. So we (the school department) do not have the ability to directly access Chapter 70 funds.

Just as a reminder the annual [TEC Legislative Breakfast](#) is this Friday, February 4 beginning (virtually) at 9:00 AM. All TEC member districts' School Committee members are invited to attend this annual event, and if you would still like to attend you should [Please RSVP using this link](#). You will be sent a zoom link and password to access the meeting. The current list of TEC School Committee attendees from all districts can be seen [HERE](#). The meeting agenda and topics to be covered can be seen [HERE](#). A list of the Legislators attending can be seen [HERE](#).

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