

Dedham Public Schools
Interim Superintendent's Update
May 17, 2023
Day 156 of the 2022-2023 School Year

Teaching and Learning



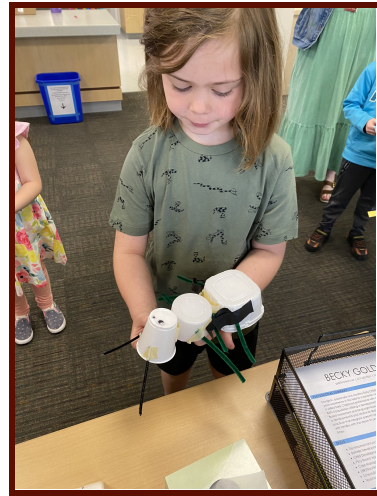
Grade 5 Human Growth & Development Lessons Begin. On Monday, May 15th, educators will launch the [Grade 5 Human Growth & Development](#) lessons. Slides for the lessons were shared with Grade 5 families on May 5th and the live Q & A for families, which occurred on May 1st, was well attended!

DHS Acting 3. The DHS Acting 3 students put on a short play for the DELTA students: *Tortoise vs. Hare 2: This Time It's Personal!*, a short comedy by Sean Abley. The play depicts a rematch of the fabled race between the great-grandchildren of the original slow-and-steady Tortoise and bragging Hare. It features lessons about good sportsmanship, friendship and generosity. DELTA students also enjoyed being on the stage, learning about some stage secrets (the wings, where props are kept, and the giant costume closet) as well as how the lights move! Acting 3 students are (from left to right) Kate Tocci, Susie Plunkett, Olivia Annatone, AJ Castillo and Brendan Greeley.



Mashpee Wampanoag Visits to Grade 3 Classrooms. All of our students in Grade 3 welcomed (or will welcome) visitors from the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe to celebrate the Wampanoag New Year! DPS was able to accomplish this through a DEF grant that we acquired in the fall in order to address the Grade 3 History & Social Sciences Standards. The [schedule](#) can be found here.

ECEC STREAM (Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Arts, and Math/Music). Every month, the ECEC learners are engaged in STREAMing during their specialist classes. STREAMing is a cross-curricular, integrated, and thematic approach to learning where students enjoy activities from science, technology, reading, engineering, arts, and math/music. This month, the theme was BUGS, a connection to the Kindergarten Science unit of Living Things. Students engaged in imaginative play with insect costumes, created their own insects with recyclable materials, and dug in the dirt to find hidden bugs as just a few of the activities.



The **18th Annual DHS Media Film Festival and Scully Awards** are this **Wednesday, May 17th, at 7pm** in the DHS Auditorium. This festival will showcase student work from the current school year, with an Oscar-like awards ceremony in which students are recognized for their work. This event brings students, parents, staff, and members of the community together to see how hard these students work during the school year and to enjoy their creative productions. We hope you will come out to see the amazing projects our students have created! Film Festival Nominees can be found [here](#).

Program Enhancements at DHS. There have been a number of questions and concerns raised recently about adjustments being made to the Alternative (ALT) program at DHS. I wanted to take a moment to address a few misunderstandings about the District's plans on this front. Between July and December Dr. Stetson initiated and completed a comprehensive review of student services programming PK-22. The data Dr. Stetson collected and reviewed indicated, amongst other things, that there is an acute need for (1) continuity of programming in the PK-22 span and (2) highly specialized and evidence based therapeutic curriculum and interventions to meet the needs of all learners. The ALT program at DHS is not being eliminated. The program is being enhanced to (1) align to the elementary and middle school programs that children participate in, (2) increase student inclusion and belonging, and (3) incorporate highly specialized, evidenced based curriculum to address the needs of participating students. This is an amazing opportunity for children and families and will most certainly improve outcomes for the people the program serves and the faculty who operate the program.

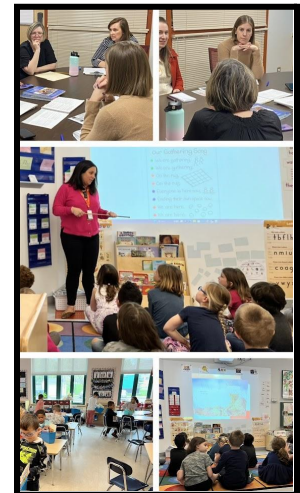
Professional Development

District Leadership Team. On May 16, the District Leadership Team met with attorney Cat Lyons to discuss the “[alternatives to discipline](#)” as part of [c.71 § 37H ¾](#). 37H ¾ is one of a number of statutes that govern processes and procedures associated with suspension and expulsion in public schools across the Commonwealth. These laws are updated periodically and it is incumbent upon local districts to ensure that administrators have a full understanding of their implications for practice.



Community Engagement

Boston Globe Visits Dedham. On Friday, May 5th, the Boston Globe visited classrooms at Avery and ECEC to learn more about how Dedham is meeting the literacy needs of students. During the visits, Globe reporters had the chance to see Reader’s Workshop in Grades K-1 and interviewed teachers and coaches about changes they’ve already made to align their instruction to the science of reading. The story will be published in a multi-part series on the state of literacy curriculum, instruction, and assessment across Massachusetts.



DHS Best Buddies Program Recognized as 2023 Outstanding High School Chapter in Massachusetts. Dedham Public Schools started Best Buddies in the Winter of 2022. In one year the club has tripled in membership. They have developed an inclusive community where all members are seen, have developed 1:1 friendships, instilled the three keys to friendship: positivity, consistency, and vulnerability, and worked to engage not only students but also faculty members. The DHS Best Buddies program has also established connections within the Dedham community and surrounding communities. We are now nominated to win National Chapter of

the Year, and this July, Isabella Annatonne (student) , incoming President, Stephanie Latorella (teacher) and Louise D'Amato will attend the National Conference in Bloomington Indiana where they will be presented with a plaque. As part of their submission, the students created a video which will be available soon and shared with the community.

Best Buddies programs help people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) form meaningful friendships with their peers, secure successful jobs, live independently, and develop self-advocacy and communication skills.

"Your chapter absolutely deserves this as we have been blown away by all the good that is happening here; you all really do epitomize our mission of inclusion. We are so grateful to your team of advisors and student leaders that make this all possible and to all of your incredible students that lead by example and show others what kindness and inclusion truly look like. " - KRISTA THURSTONE , Deputy Director of Programs, Best Buddies International

Management and Operations

Jeanne Johnson - Dedham School Nutrition Director named as the Northeast region Director of the Year. The national, non-profit School Nutrition Association (SNA) recognized Jeanne for her many positive changes to the school nutrition program in Dedham. The award called out Jeanne's efforts to ensure that despite the challenges presented by our Elementary schools with no cafeterias or kitchens, Jeanne's solutions help us provide those elementary school students with the same freshly made, high-quality meals as the middle and high school students. It also recognized her creation of our breakfast program, as well as her work in our classrooms, and with the school nutrition community at a local level.

Johnson was announced as the Northeast region Director of the Year during an online awards ceremony on May 2 in advance of School Lunch Hero Day, celebrated on May 5, 2023, to honor all of America's dedicated school nutrition professionals. [The news release](#) was featured in *The Dedham Times* May 5th issue, on all our school webpages and also shared with the community through Town Hall news. Jeanne has also been featured on School Nutrition's [TrayTalk blog](#). You can link to directly to the blog here:

<https://traytalk.org/2023/05/03/celebrating-school-nutrition-directors-for-their-dedication/>