

LYNN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Superintendent of Schools*

Superintendent's Report August 27, 2020

On Friday, August 13, 2020, the Lynn Public Schools reopening report was released. Along with it, we posted an accessible set of frequently asked questions and responses. While we were required to post and submit a final report on or before August 13th, all should be reminded that this is a living document and the plans therein could change. The substance of the report was an attempt to meet the stated requirements by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, but more importantly share with families and the community as a whole framework for how we intend to provide an excellent education and supports for students in the safest manner possible this school year. This involves engaging at times and in ways that are less than ideal. Nonetheless, we are intensely focused on this year being a good one despite the challenges. We owe it to our students and their families.

In a context where there is uncertainty and concern, both of which are well-placed, we consistently focus on moving forward in positive fashion. Undoubtedly, there are challenges and changes that are less than ideal, yet there are also shifts that will positively impact student, family, and staff experiences going forward. We continue to celebrate the shift we are making to provide a robust learning experience for students, first and foremost, and fulfilling experience from the standpoint of the tools available for staff. Further, our learning management system, Schoology, will provide a simple yet rich opportunity for learning and communication with families. Providing an online registration platform for families new to the district is almost complete. This will make the registration process more seamless and convenient for families. And finally, we have purchased a virtual environment that makes the onboarding process for newly-hired professionals much easier. The context is challenging, make no mistake about it. Nonetheless, we are moving forward and evolving accordingly.

We are also evolving in response to events related to race and inclusion. Clear in our strategic plan and in 2019-20 district improvement goals, there was an existing effort to be better, more evolved, more responsive in the realm of cultural competence, race, and inclusion. Events in the late spring involving the untimely and unnecessary death of George Floyd and the nation's response, has spurred a sense of urgency around this work. In keeping with the resolution adopted by the school committee on June 11, 2020, we have developed a plan around professional learning, research and action.

In partnership with Matthew Rodriguez, the Chicago-based facilitator who brilliantly led the race and equity professional development for the district's leadership last year, two projects have been developed and will be implemented this year. The first is focused professional development for all staff designed to help our team understand where and how racism manifests in the processes of teaching and learning and in our schools. It is also designed to support staff in developing strategies to directly confront these issues. Given the immense amount of professional learning required to launch the year, this will begin in January.

At the secondary level, we are taking the strategy of youth participatory action research to support the development of the inclusivity panels. In this approach, students will be coached on taking the lead in understanding the issue(s) as it exists at their schools and play a significant role in addressing it/them. This will not only be a learning exercise as they are taught how to effectively research the problem, it will also be a change vehicle as they partner with educators in the building to address the identified issues. Frameworks for both projects are described in more detail below

The intent in this missive is not at all intended to dismiss the challenge, disappointment, or concern related to the upcoming school year. This school year will indeed be unlike no other. Nonetheless, there is opportunity in every difficulty. We are taking significant steps forward to be better, more evolved, and more responsive. The term continuous improvement has become a cliché, but it does have an enduring applicability. We are certainly embracing that concept as we prepare to welcome our young scholars back to the 2020-21 school year.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patrick Tutwiler, PhD

PROJECT 1: Professional Development for All Educators	
Anti-Racism through Racial Equity	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual modules will be divided over the four quarters of the school year. • There will be three modules per quarter focused on the three components of the theory of action: Illuminate, Indicate, & Navigate • Each quarter will be coupled with an accountability check-in either virtually or in person, depending on status of school reopening 	
Activity	Date
Quarter 1 Modules <i>Confronting the racist history of our schools, and society, learning how that history lives within ourselves and requires a commitment toward racial equity and a development of equity-based interactions.</i>	January (2021)*
Quarter 1 Accountability Check-in <i>Either virtual or in-person visit to assess implementation of learning.</i>	February-March (2021)*
Quarter 2 Modules <i>Confronting the history of deficit thinking, and developing a structural lens to situate the root of racially delineated achievement outcomes and create strategies to enhance the quality of relationships.</i>	April (2021)*
Quarter 2 Accountability Check-in <i>Either virtual or in-person visit to assess implementation of learning.</i>	May-June (2021)*
Quarter 3 Modules <i>Confronting the ways that racism manifests and is perpetuated in the regular day-to-day routines in schools in order to learn where best to interrupt this reality.</i>	August (2021)*
Quarter 3 Accountability Check-in <i>Either virtual or in-person visit to assess implementation of learning.</i>	September-October (2021)*
Quarter 4 Modules <i>Confronting the obstacles and roadblocks to leading equity work and the ways to best press forward on behalf of students and families.</i>	October (2021)*
Quarter 4 Accountability Check-in <i>Either virtual or in-person visit to assess implementation of learning.</i>	November-December (2021)*

PROJECT 2: Inclusivity Panels for Secondary Schools**Coordinating Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) through Developmental Relationships (DR)**

Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) is an approach to scientific inquiry and social change grounded in principles of equity that engages young people in identifying problems relevant to their own lives, conducting research to understand the problems, and advocating for changes based on research evidence.

Based on the youth development groundbreaking research of the Search Institute, developmental relationships are close connections through which young people discover who they are, cultivate abilities to shape their own lives, and learn how to engage with and contribute to the world around them.

Inclusivity panel goals for each quarter outlined below will vary according to each high school.

Activity	Date
<p>Quarterly Engagement: YPAR (year one) methodology will be distributed over the four quarters of the school year. There will be four steps in each quarter:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Districtwide Virtual Learning Session with Inclusivity Staff to learn guiding principles of YPAR and Developmental Relationships. 2. Districtwide Virtual Check-in with Inclusivity Team (staff and students) 3. Individual virtual check-in with each secondary school Inclusivity Staff to develop individualized support and accountability for each school context. 4. Virtual/In-Person Inclusivity Panel at each high school. 	<p>Quarterly Step 1: August* October* January* April*</p>
<p>Quarter 1 Inclusivity Panel Goal Youth leaders present on the YPAR process and illuminate the “real life issue” they have chosen to focus their research on. Begin to strategically gather support from other school stakeholders to conduct research.</p>	<p>September-October*</p>
<p>Quarter 2 Inclusivity Panel Goal Youth leaders present results of their research and data analysis, and indicate their short and long-term strategies for change within the school and/or the community. Gather support from other school stakeholders to implement changes.</p>	<p>November-December*</p>
<p>Quarter 3 Inclusivity Panel Goal Youth leaders host a panel for school and community stakeholders to present on the navigation of school and community changes. The lessons learned and possible revisions to their future research methodology.</p>	<p>February-March*</p>
<p>Quarter 4 Inclusivity Panel Goal Youth leaders host school and community forum on YPAR process. Depending on each school context, forum can be inclusive of youth services, support programs and summer 2021 opportunities.</p>	<p>May-June*</p>