

LYNN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

James Leo McGuinness Administration Building – 100 Bennett Street, Lynn, MA 01905
Tel. (781) 593-1680 ~ Fax. (781) 477-7487



Patrick A. Tutwiler, PhD
Superintendent of Schools

Superintendent's Report February 13, 2020

I am pleased to announce that the English Learner Education department hosted a very successful parent/guardian information night last Tuesday night at Harrington Elementary. The exclusive focus of the meeting was the dual language program planned for a fall 2020 opening. Parents were acquainted with the benefits of dual language programming, the structure of the program, from kindergarten to fifth grade, and were presented the opportunity to ask questions if they had them. We also set up a satellite parent information center site where parents could indicate their interest in the program and schedule appointments for the upcoming registration season. We see the design and implementation of the dual language program as part and parcel of an equity initiative and thus we are really excited about the opening of this program.

Attached to this document is a detailed description of the protocol being employed to enroll students in the dual language program. Recall that we will open two sections, accommodating up to 50 students, serving virtually equal numbers of native Spanish speakers identified as English Learners and students who are not identified as English Learners and/or non-Spanish speaking English Learners. Enrollment into this program will be determined by a lottery process very much akin to that for Pre-K openings to ensure that all those who "opt in" have an equitable chance of selection. February 5th was the first parent information event on the program and it was a complete success. A second is in the planning for the spring. Stay tuned for additional updates in the coming months.

As was communicated in our September meeting, the district has been actively engaged in scripting plans and activities designed to carry out the requisite work described in strategic initiatives designed to begin this year. To be clear, a small team was trained in how to lead the action planning process under the tutelage of Lori Likis, the architect of the Planning for Success Model. These teams began facilitating collaborative planning sessions that began this summer with a broader group of participants. While this continues to be a work in progress, I wanted to provide a sample of the kinds of outcomes this effort yields. Strategic Initiative 2.2 calls for LPS to "Provide professional development opportunities for all educators focused on trauma sensitive practices, cultural proficiency, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction, and anti-biased curriculum." Engaging a high-level document walk, you can see that what follows are concrete definitions of the terminology in the initiative as well as in the action plan, specific process benchmarks, due by dates, the person or people responsible, and a status. Further down, there's a space to identify evidence of change and then fields designed to identify and resources necessary.

A quick review of the process benchmarks would leave the casual observer to an understanding that there is a lot of work to make each strategic initiative come to life. We are mindful of that and being realistic about what can be accomplished in the time period identified. I say this not to suggest that there are things that won't be addressed, but more to underscore the flexibility feature and the living nature of these documents. The process benchmarks reflect deep thinking on what needs to be done. Simply put, each needs to be completed thoroughly and completely in order for the initiative to push us closer to meeting the objective. We have designed a process to help us stay on top of the work that's being done, but also adjust where necessary. Each month, all of the trained facilitators in the action planning process along with my team meet take the stock of where we are with each action plan and where more emphasis or flexibility is required. We see this as an effective way to progress monitor. At the first school committee meeting for the month April, I am planning to provide a formal update on the progress toward meeting the district improvement goals. At that same point, I'll provide another update on action plans and the progress therein.

The narrative around the Student Opportunity Act continues to unfold. On February 7th, we were provided additional guidance on expectations around funds allocation, and specifics on the three-year plan we must create and submit by April 1st. While there is no requirement, I would like to present this three year plan at our March 26, 2020 meeting for your approval. To the degree that we are all on the same page and moving in the same direction with respect to allocation of the funds, transparency and success will be more probable. By way of brief editorial, the student learning and district improvement goals for school years 18-19 and 19-20 and the strategic objectives outlined in our strategic plan are seamlessly aligned with the expectations around funds allocation in the Student Opportunity Act. I see this as an affirmation of the path we have chosen in the Lynn Public Schools. Further, the alignment will make completion of the three-year less burdensome.

Related, in the January 30th superintendent's report, I offered a detailed insight to how we are collecting feedback from parents, teachers, and the broader community. Student voice is critical to this endeavor. Last year, I proposed the development of a citywide student advisory, a small representative group of students who would serve as a sounding board for things we are thinking about but also in mechanism through which to gather student input. I am in the process of putting the group together, which could not be timelier given the Student Opportunity Act requirement for input. Once created, I will report out on the makeup of the group and you can expect specific information relative to input they provided in the coming weeks. The first meeting is set for March 3, 2020.

By way of reminder, as part of a bill signed in November 2018, there is an effort to heighten civics knowledge and awareness in the 8th grade. Toward that end, Shannon Gardner recently applied for and received a \$45,000 grant which was the maximum allowable grant for Lynn from the state Civics Projects Trust Fund. Those funds pay for training of our eighth grade teachers by Generation Citizen. At present, all eighth grade civics teachers have been trained. It is also our intention to provide Generation Citizen training for some high school teachers this year so that civics education can also be supported in the upper grades.

All trained teachers will be working with their eighth grade classes on action civics projects in the spring. In addition to the training, Generation Citizen provides teachers with a binder of lesson ideas, and they provide in-person support to any teachers who reach out for assistance. They also provide materials for students to complete their projects.

One thing we would truly appreciate is help spreading the word to city departments, Lynn political leaders, and our state delegations, that students will be calling and emailing with inquiries. It would be wonderful if they could understand the positive impact that just a quick reply can have. Teachers and students do know that part of civics education is finding out how things work and why, and that it may not always be possible to bring about change, although it certainly is rewarding when they can! They also know that part of civic education is finding the right people to call who can assist with their questions. Any response to further their education or to kindly redirect them when they are off-track to a solution will contribute to their civic education. We also appreciate leaders who want to make arrangements with teachers to visit the students in regard to their questions. Some did this last year, and students and teachers very much appreciated it. More to come!

Respectfully Submitted,

Patrick Tutwiler, Superintendent