

LYNN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Superintendent of Schools

Superintendent's Report
November 18, 2021

I have many fond memories of experiences since joining the Lynn Public Schools seven years ago and, more recently in the past three and half years as superintendent. The process of developing the strategic plan in the 2017-18 remains a powerful experience. Elevating student and family voice, digging into data, soliciting feedback, and engaging in discussions with a representative group of stakeholders were among the enlightening and emotionally moving pieces of the experience. We continue to consult the roadmap and the objectives of the strategic plan. The promise to make it a living document continues to be upheld. Personally, the development of the core values remains one of the more seminal experiences. Landing on specific descriptors that say to the world precisely who we are as a community and what we believe feels as important if not more than the objectives that we set out to achieve over five years. The core values reflect not only what we believe, but they should convey promises that guide our behavior and decisions, and a source of accountability. Being true to one's core values is likely the most solid pathway toward credibility.

In this space, I would like to channel two of the five core values: *shared responsibility* and *collaboration*. Shared responsibility means each stakeholder in the education process must play an active role in ensuring the best outcomes for students, including the student him or herself. In recent weeks, a number of families have demonstrated shared responsibility by thoughtfully giving feedback on their concerns related to the freshness and quality of food served particularly on the elementary level. The feedback has come in the form of public comment and e-mail directly to me and other members of the LPS administration. I/We always welcome feedback and view each instance where in feedback is shared as an opportunity for collaboration toward improvement.

On Wednesday, November 3rd, several families and community members came to the open forum designed to create a space for concerns to be heard but also for information be shared around how the district partners with the food purveyor to ensure quality. From that meeting several requests and recommendations were made. We are responding to feedback and requests made during the event (and before) by doing the following:

- Revolution Foods engaged a full review of its quality assurance methods (as they do regularly and ongoing).
- On Tuesday, November 2nd, cafeteria staff were formally trained in the realm of quality assurance. This includes, but is not limited to a refresher on food receipt, temperature control, appropriate storage, and checking for freshness.
- On November 4th, representatives from Chartwell's, the Food Service management partner, and the director of nursing met to ensure clear communication around any food allergy scenarios in schools.
- In response to concerns about a mechanism for families to give feedback on the quality, freshness, or selection of the meals, a formal online form available in multiple languages will launch on Friday November 18th. Any student or caregiver who submits an online form will get a response from a member of the foodservice team.
- In response to concerns about students with food allergies, a separate online form has been created to allow families a seamless opportunity to share any related concerns. To be clear, documented food allergies are noted through the school nurses, but this provides an additional mechanism for families to communicate their concern.

The new mechanisms for feedback or information will be communicated formally to all LPS families directly through our communication platform as well as social media.

In total, we view this situation as a collaboration. In any collaboration, it is important to identify what is common or shared. Unquestionably, we all want the young scholars of the Lynn Public Schools served well and treated with respect in every aspect of their experience. The quality of the meals is a big piece of that experience. The desire to ensure that the meals are fresh, nutritious, and to the liking of our students is common or shared. We remain committed to that goal.

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick Tutwiler, PhD
Superintendent