

LYNN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Superintendent of Schools

Superintendent's Report October 28, 2021

In previous superintendent's reports issued this school year, much of the commentary has focused on efforts to *stabilize* through welcoming students back in the warmest most collaborative way, establishing and expanding safety protocols, and solidifying instructional strategy. By themselves, each one of these efforts has come to fruition through a colossal effort. The work continues. At the same time, we are making significant strides on the Pickering project. As you know, the Eligibility Period, the descriptor the MSBA calls the first phase of the project, began May 3, 2021 and there are eight deliverables that must happen before the end of this phase in late January. We have completed each of the deliverables ahead of schedule. We intend to perform the two remaining actions in advance of the MSBA Board meeting on December 15th with hopes of moving on to the next step at that point. Over the past three years, there have been several efforts involving significant stakeholder input. In all of them, families and the broader community point to the need for new schools. Moving carefully yet expeditiously through the process is the purest form of respect for that input.

With the inclement weather this week and the early weather predictions on the upcoming winter season, snow days are on the minds of many. By way of reminder, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) does not allow school districts to count remote learning hours toward the annual requirement for instructional hours for elementary (900 hours) and secondary (990 hours) schools. Therefore, at present, should a district or school pivot to remote learning for whatever reason, those instructional hours would not count toward the requirement.¹ DESE has not communicated an official stance on allowing for school days convened virtually during inclement weather days. Nonetheless, we will be prepared. The two major actionables related to preparedness involve ensuring that all students have a device and WIFI access at home.

Safeguarding continuity of instruction, even on inclement weather days is important. Mental health is also important. In addition to DESE direction, continuity of instruction and mental health should be factors in determining whether classes are held virtually on inclement weather days.

¹ DESE does allow for students who are absent due to school-directed quarantine and who are able to participate in live instruction through virtual format for at least half of the school day to be marked present.

Finally, DESE has released all of the assessment data from the 2020–21 school year. Families should have already received MCAS and ACCESS results. Should we meet on November 18, 2021, I will report on our analysis of that data. In advance of that meeting, I want to forewarn that the data presentation will look different in many ways. It is no secret that, statewide, the outcomes for all students were notably different than in previous years. Further, DESE has discouraged comparison, community to community. Toward that end, they have not released urban district composite data as they typically do. This is so because the lived experience was incredibly disparate between communities. Comparing outcomes therefore would be inappropriate. It should also be noted that there is no accountability impact from last year and it remains to be seen if there will be one for the current year. In total, the assessment outcomes serves as data points for us to use in determining areas of emphasis in content and skills and which strategies will best serve students.

Respectfully submitted,

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