

LYNN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Superintendent of Schools

Superintendent's Report January 13, 2022

I happen to believe that an educator's professional calendar is among the best. In the span of 9–10 months, we have two opportunities to reflect on and make commitments to personal and professional goals. With the onset of the 2022 calendar year, we were presented another opportunity to take stock, to reflect and make plans and/or renewed commitments for the remainder of the school year, but also the calendar year ahead. A school year in this context is not going to be without challenge, but as we began the new calendar year, our commitment to providing an excellent education in a safe and healthy environment remains our foremost commitment.

Our venture into the 2022 calendar year has presented predictable challenges related to COVID-19. The holiday surge in positive cases has not spared our community. Nonetheless, schools remain open and in-person services continue. We believe we will be able to sustain this and are following a robust, multi-layered set of protocols - the same that we proposed in the beginning of the school year:

- monitoring for illness and staying home when ill
- mask wearing
- ventilation upgrades
- cleaning and sanitizing
- health and hygiene strategies at school
- COVID vaccine opportunities

What is more, we have resumed weekly testing for all students who have consented in staggered fashion. This additional approach to safety will expand to all schools next week.

To be clear, positive COVID cases are inescapable. Nonetheless, we can limit the spread by fidelity to the multi-layered approach described above. And, where appropriate and necessary, we will close a classroom or other small, defined section to prevent the spread. This will continue to be done in consultation with the city's health director, our liaison at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and as a last resort.

Each school year, we develop a set of district-wide goals designed to meet student needs, first foremost, and to bring us closer to meeting one or more of the four objectives in our [strategic plan](#). Additionally, when we develop a budget proposal for the upcoming school year, we align it with the strategic plan by illustrating how proposals work in service of meeting the strategic objectives. We do this intentionally because we believe in the plan and what it will do for our school community and also to honor community input and voice, both of which were significant pieces of developing the plan.

Much has happened since the plan was completed in 2019. In many ways, circumstances have accelerated elements of the plan while other parts have been paused. Given that we are at the approximate halfway point of the plan, it seems like the perfect time to do exactly what we do at the beginning of a new calendar year – take stock. Where are we in terms of achieving the objectives outlined in the plan? Are there shifts or tweaks that should be made? Are there adjacent strategies that we should consider? Where do the new ideas around acceleration fit? I believe pretty strongly that the plan still has relevance, but these questions are important. Just as the development of the plan was done in full view of and in partnership with the broader community, so should the reflection on the plan. We are working on a plan to host an event to do just that. This will be an opportunity for all who are interested to hear about where we are in the plan and our best thinking in response to the aforementioned questions. Equally important, this will be an opportunity for stakeholder feedback. We are planning for this event to happen in late February.

Just before the beginning of the 2022 calendar year, we received good news from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) on the Pickering Project. We successfully completed all of the requirements of the eligibility period ahead of schedule. The MSBA approved our transition to the feasibility study phase. During this phase we are required to:

- Collaborate with the MSBA to document our educational program,
- Generate an initial space summary,
- Document existing conditions,
- Establish design parameters,
- Develop and evaluate alternatives,
- Recommend the most cost effective and educationally appropriate preferred solution to the MSBA

The first step in this phase involves designating an Owner's Project Manager. This process will begin formally when the school building committee meets on January 20th.

We are excited to be taking steps forward in this process. Channeling the philosophy of the previous mayor, the current mayor, and my own personal philosophy, transparency and access will be key features for the broader community in this process. I will keep the committee updated by presenting an update at least once a month.

Finally, two years ago, the committee voted to authorize the superintendent the authority to evaluate registrations for students over the age of 20. Although this is not a frequent occurrence, it is one that we take seriously. In bestowing the authority to the superintendent, there was also a commitment to update committee twice yearly. Thus far this school year, there have been eight

requests by students over the age of 20. Two were permitted to register. In these cases, the students were close to completion and we have the appropriate supports to facilitate success. Those who were not were referred to local partner organizations who can better support their needs.

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick Tutwiler, PhD
Superintendent