

Report of the Abington School Department

Dear Abington Community Members:

As your Superintendent of Schools, I respectfully submit the following to you as my annual report.

It is with great appreciation to our residents that I present this report to you. The Abington School Committee includes: Christopher Coyle, Chair; Wendy Happel, Vice-Chair; Lisa Augusta, Secretary, Jaclyn Abrams and Danielle Grafton, Members. Cameron Curney serves as the Student Representative. I would like to acknowledge the work and accomplishments of Jannette Leary, a former member of the Committee who resigned this year after serving as a member of the Abington School Committee since 2011.

The Committee also accepted with regret the retirement notices of the following faculty and staff:

Carol Carney – Paraprofessional
Dorene Earner – Elementary Teacher
Joyce Harrington – Music Teacher
Debra Hitchins – Secretary
Nancy Ingemi - Paraprofessional
Paki Spears – Special Education Teacher
Mary Lou Wales – Elementary Teacher

These individuals have served the children of Abington well, and we wish them health and happiness in their retirement years.

Our success and progress as a School District and Community is probably best demonstrated by the increasing number of people who desire to be members. Our school population has grown at an average rate of over four percent each of the last three years. The largest increase has been at Abington High School which has seen over a 30 percent increase in population. This success is in large part due to the number of students who are staying and receiving their education in their public school rather than opting for a private school education or going to South Shore Vocational School. This is healthy for the Town of Abington and the Schools. It provides a sense pride, ownership and connection in the community that cannot be found another way.

Our mission, ***“to provide all students relevant, challenging educational experiences to prepare them to be engaged, responsible citizens and members of the global community.”*** becomes more challenging as the resources are stretched to meet the needs of the increased numbers of students. Regardless, we continue to serve the students and families of which we have been so fortunate to be provided.

We are now in year two of our current grade configuration and working to meet the academic, social and emotional needs of our population in a way that is more strategic than ever before. The Pre-Kindergarten, Middle (grades 5-8) and High Schools (grades 9-12) are in our new co-located building,

the Woodsdale School (grades 3 and 4) and Beaver Brook School (grades kindergarten-2) have all experienced substantial changes. Goals for skills and what student should know and be able to do as they transition from building to building are being developed while simultaneously assessing the needs is taking place. Proven best practice programs to improve social and emotional wellbeing have and will continue to be implemented. Our goal is to cultivate and improve the resiliency of the student body.

The successes and achievements in academics, the arts and athletics have been numerous. I am proud of the way a dedicated faculty, staff, administration, school committee, parent volunteers and community members have put the needs of children first.

Support for Education

The FY 2020 operating budget for the Abington Public Schools is \$23,821,138. Unfortunately, the cost of education due to certain fixed costs has risen faster than the available funding sources for schools. The cost of Special Education and providing average to low average employee wage and health benefits is outpacing the available revenues to Massachusetts cities and towns. Regardless, every effort is made to maximize all of the allocated resources for teaching and learning

Student Achievement and Activities

Massachusetts students have been required to pass the toughest standardized test in the nation in order to graduate from high school. Every member of the graduating class who has been enrolled in Abington High School since grade nine has passed the MCAS test since the graduation requirement was instituted by the Massachusetts Department of Education. Our program and our teachers are well preparing students for the future. The proof of this is in the success our students upon graduation. In fact, the Class of 2019 found approximately 93% of the graduates furthering their education with 69% going on to four year colleges and 24% to two year colleges or technical schools. Seven percent (7%) of the graduates planned to go directly to work.

Additionally, many students received prestigious academic awards and scholarships from national, regional, state and local organizations. Boston Globe Scholastic Art Awards were given to seven high school students. Eighteen students at Abington High School earned the designation of AP Scholar by the College Board in recognition of their exceptional achievement on the college-level Advanced Placement Program Exams. Thirty-three students were awarded the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship, which provides a tuition waiver for four years of undergraduate education at Massachusetts state colleges and universities. The Adams Scholarship is based on outstanding performance on MCAS.

National Honor Society – Thirty-six Abington High School students were inducted into the Abington Chapter of the National Honor Society in November 2019.

Abington Middle School – Madison Carini and Cameron Testa received Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Middle Level Educators' Student Scholar Awards. Hannah Tirrell was the Project 351 Ambassador.

School councils continued to focus on promoting learning environments which are academically challenging, supportive, attractive and safe for both students and staff in their school improvement plans.

Professional Development

The Abington Public Schools is committed to providing high quality professional development programs based in current research and best practices that focus on improving the learning of all students. Professional development is an ongoing process that focuses on federal, state and local educational initiatives and reflects the Mission, Vision and Guiding Beliefs of the system. Throughout the school year, administrators and staff plan, discuss, and organize professional growth opportunities focusing on identified priorities such as: the Massachusetts Curriculum Standards, social emotional learning (SEL), student centered and engaging classroom practices and best practice uses for technology.

Professional development is designed to be ongoing and to ensure knowledge and skill development to impact student learning.

Abington Education Foundation PTOs and Local Charities

The Abington Education Foundation (AEF) had a very active and successful year. The Foundation's provided over \$14,000 in funding for enrichment programming and grant awards to our faculty and staff.

Our schools would look, feel and be very different without the help of our PTOs, Green Wave Boosters, Music Parents, the Coombs Foundation and the Abington Education Foundation. These organizations provide support which we need and greatly appreciate. Together we work with numerous community service organizations, local businesses and other town departments. Our entire community benefits from all of these collaborations and partnerships.

In closing, thank you to the administrative team, the PK-12 faculty and all support personnel for their assistance and dedicated service to children. I wish to express my appreciation to the members of the Abington School Committee for their hard work. I look forward to continuing to work with the Committee as we address the many important issues facing public education and the needs of Abington's students.

Respectfully Submitted,

Peter Schafer

Superintendent of Schools