

Report of the Superintendent of Schools

Dear Abington Community Members:

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

Major milestones have been reached this last year on behalf of the children, families and community in which we can all be proud. The long term success of our mission, ***“to provide all students relevant, challenging educational experiences to prepare them to be engaged, responsible citizens and members of the global community”*** was well served by the substantial completion of the school construction project.

The grades 5-12 co-located middle high school with a pre-kindergarten building progressed so well that it opened a year earlier than anticipated. Although one playing field and a solar field on the roof are still being constructed, the building is now in operation for over 1100 students. All grades and the district were entirely reconfigured and moved during the summer of 2017 to better provide educational services to our students Pre-kindergarten through grade 12 for decades to come. This significant achievement and benefit to the community was accomplished due to the hard work and diligence of the faculty, staff, administration and countless volunteers. I sincerely appreciate the many efforts and tireless work of everyone involved. This project has been a labor of love for many. Not the least of which are the School Committee and Abington School Building Committee Members (ASBC) members.

The Center and North School buildings were turned back over to the control of the Town of Abington in October of 2017. These two Depression era buildings have long and proudly served the children well. The Charles M. Frolio Middle School has now become the home of the District’s Central Offices and system wide services, a day program for Special Needs students and community use.

Support for Education

The FY 2018 operating budget for the Abington Public Schools is \$21,908,342. 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 2017 found approximately 96% of the graduates furthering their education with 71% going on to four year colleges and 25% to two year colleges or technical schools. Four percent (4%) of the graduates planned to go directly to work. Abington High School was recognized by the Massachusetts Commissioner of Education as having “Commended” status for closing achievement gaps and invited to apply for National Blue Ribbon status. Our student population as a District has increased by approximately 6% or over 110 students in 2017. This healthy for the Schools and Town of Abington.

Additionally, many students received prestigious academic awards and scholarships from national, regional, state and local organizations. Allison Dennehy received both the Rensselaer Medal for Excellence in Science and Mathematics and the Bausch and Lomb Excellence in Science Award. Boston Globe Scholastic Art Awards were given to: Christian Berk, Abigael Brown, Lindsey Collins, Julia Do, Abigail Edwards, Alicia Hammill, Cecilia Lindo, and Lidia Vidal. Ten 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. Twenty seven 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 – Twenty eight Abington High School students were inducted into the Abington Chapter of the National Honor Society in November 2017.

Frolio Middle School – Matthew Lyons and Grace Freidman received Commonwealth of Massachusetts Middle Level Educators’ Student Scholar Awards. Amanda Lopes 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: Common Core Curriculum, Assessment Practices, District Improvement Planning, Educational Leadership, and Best Practice Uses for Classroom Technology.

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

Abington Education Foundation and Local Charities

The Abington Education Foundation (AEF) once again had a very active and successful year. The Foundation's main goal is to encourage, promote and sponsor educational experiences and learning opportunities for students and teachers in the Abington Public Schools. The Foundation, in conjunction with the Jeffrey Coombs Memorial Fund, awarded approximately \$20,500.⁰⁰ in grants for the 2017-2018 school year.

Our schools would look, feel and be very different without the help of our PTOs, Green Wave Boosters, Music Parents, 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