

## 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.

Progress and substantial acknowledgement occurred this last year in terms of meeting our mission, ***“to provide all students relevant, challenging educational experiences to prepare them to be engaged, responsible citizens and members of the global community.”*** We successfully adjusted to a new grade configuration PreK-12 with the substantial completion of the new building project, implemented a grades 7-12 1:1 computer initiative, added free full day kindergarten and Abington High School was awarded the coveted National Blue Ribbon award by the United States Department of Education.

Final construction phases continued this year as we occupied the new Prekindergarten, Middle and High School building. A photovoltaic solar field was added to the roof to harvest light energy and defray the cost of electrical use along with the completion of two multiple purpose grass playing fields. These new fields will be filling the much-needed demand for play space for Abington’s school children. Adjustments in start times were made to accommodate the needs of families across the district with children at multiple schools. All students in grades 7-12 were provided a laptop to be used as an educational tool at home and in classrooms. Today’s classrooms and school work are more technology based and interactive than ever before. A no cost full day Kindergarten program has been added for residents. This was funded in large part by an increase in Chapter 70 funding for education as a result of our increased enrollment. The School Department’s successes have resulted in historically low numbers of students leaving the system to receive vocational or private educational experiences. The successes and achievements in academics, the arts and athletics have been numerous. Not the least of which was this year’s recognition from the United States Department of Education when Abington High School was awarded Blue Ribbon Status for closing achievement gaps. A small delegation traveled to Washington D.C. to receive this auspicious award from the U. S. Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos.

### Support for Education

The FY 2019 operating budget for the Abington Public Schools is \$23,015,592. 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 2018 found approximately 83% of the graduates furthering their education with 66% going on to four-year colleges and 17% to two year colleges or technical schools. Nine percent (9%) 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: Erielle Amboy, Laurel Blanchard, Emily Christian, Sara Christian, Haley Cooper, Julia Do, Abigail Edwards, and Jacklyn Goduti. 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. Thirty-one 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-five Abington High School students were inducted into the Abington Chapter of the National Honor Society in November 2018.

Abington Middle School – Faith Ryan and Ryan Tobin received Commonwealth of Massachusetts Middle Level Educators' Student Scholar Awards. Julia Wedge 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, 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) once again had a very active and successful year. The Foundation's main goal this year was to raise money for future enrichment programming and grant awards.

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