The Departm ent of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) comm ended 48 schools statewide last year for their high achievement, high progress, and/or narrowing proficiency gaps. This year, 42 schools—roughly 2 percent of all public schools—were honored. Lynn Woods was recognized for progressing from a Level 3 school in 2012 to a Level 1 school last year, and for continuing to narrow proficiency gaps this year.

When the 2014 MCAS results were announced in September, the percentage of Lynn Woods students scoring proficient or higher in English
A great deal to celebrate in 2014-15

Welcome to the winter edition of The Lynn Educator. There are so many exciting things taking place throughout our city’s schools, and I would like to take a moment to applaud the efforts of all our hard-working educators and students.

From bringing parents and teachers together to encouraging healthier eating and more productive play, there is no shortage of creative initiatives at work in this district.

During my tenure as mayor, I have had the pleasure of reading to students, sitting in on classes and enjoying plays and other performances. I am continuously impressed by the teaching and learning taking place in every classroom. It is no surprise that more and more of our schools were able to attain Level 1 status this year, and I am confident that number will continue to climb. A special congratulations is due to our two Commendation Schools—Lynn Woods and Sewell-Anderson—which were among 2 percent of schools honored statewide for their progress and achievement.

Sometimes known as the “City of Firsts,” Lynn celebrated another first this winter when First Book delivered 43,000 books to students just in time for the holidays. What a remarkable gift. I am so pleased the city, the district and the Lynn Teachers Union could launch a successful partnership with First Book to make an event like that possible.

I wish you continued success in 2015 and I look forward to another year of inspiring stories coming out of our schools.

Judith Flanagan Kennedy is mayor of Lynn.

Proud of our schools, students

As we reach the halfway point in the 2014-15 school year, it is a perfect time to reflect on all of the wonderful things happening in our district.

We are so proud of our Level 1 schools—particularly Lynn Woods and Sewell-Anderson elementary schools, which were recognized by the state as Commendation Schools. As a district, we must also commend Harrington Elementary School, which has jumped from Level 4 to Level 1 in four years. Making such rapid progress is no easy task. It is the direct result of the hard work of the dedicated principals, teachers and families supporting the students in those schools, and throughout the district.

In November, we celebrated a beam-raising ceremony at the new Marshall Middle School and I look forward to the day in 2016 when those doors officially open.

Also in this edition, you will read about the brand new STEM lab at Washington Elementary, which just opened in December. We are quite excited about it and hope to show off the new space during an open house this winter. I am especially grateful to the GE Lynn Volunteers and the Lynn Business Education Foundation for getting this project off and running.

Shifting focus to literacy, we were thrilled to welcome the Book Truck filled with 43,000 new books for our students and their families, right in time for the holidays. It is never too early to encourage a love of reading, and I hope each and every book found a special home.

Finally, I would like to officially welcome and introduce the newest principals to our district. Patricia Hebert assumed leadership of Drewicz Elementary earlier this year, while on Jan. 5, Joanne LaRivec started at Ford Elementary School and Molly Cohen started at Marshall Middle School. We wish them all the best.

As always, thank you for your invested interest in our city’s schools, and I look forward to continuing our work to secure a bright future for our students.

Dr. Catherine C. Latham is superintendent of schools.

Beaming with pride at new Marshall

It was a moment of celebration as the last beam—decorated with the signatures of Lynn officials, ironworkers and construction workers—was placed atop the framing of the new Marshall Middle School in November.

Construction of the 181,847-square-foot school on Brookline Street was authorized by Lynn voters in September 2013 by an 81 to 18 percent margin. The Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) is contributing a maximum total facilities grant of up to $40 million of eligible expenses for the project, which is estimated at $92 million. The project includes land acquisition costs and the abatement and demolition of the existing school and associated site restoration.

Built in 1923, the current Marshall School suffers from deficiencies in major building systems including mechanical, electrical and plumbing. The new building, which will house 1,100 students, is expected to open at the start of the 2016-2017 school year.

State Treasurer Steven Grossman, MSBA Chair, visited the site for a groundbreaking ceremony in June.

“Thanks to the MSBA’s successful partnership with Lynn, students and staff of Thurgood Marshall Middle School will benefit from a state-of-the-art learning and teaching environment for many years to come,” Grossman said.

Of the building’s two wings, one will include a gym and a “cafetorium” that can be converted into an auditorium. Using a model of smaller learning communities, the school will be organized around 10 classroom clusters of about 110 students.
The right stuff
E-Team continues training students for jobs in the manufacturing industry

By Meghann Casey

Massachusetts is home to more than 7,000 manufacturers with 250,000 employees, and state officials hope that by preparing the next generation of vocational students, those numbers will continue to grow.

Congressman Seth Moulton joined Housing and Economic Development Secretary Greg Bialecki and Labor and Workforce Development Secretary Rachel Kaprielian at Lynn Tech to tour the school’s machine and metals shops and learn more about the E-Team Machinist Job Training Program.

“I’m a big believer in education and I talked a lot about vocational education throughout my campaign,” said Moulton. “To attract businesses to a community you have to have a well-trained workforce.”

Now in its 16th year, E-Team has trained more than 350 workers for careers in the manufacturing industry. Founded by the Essex County Community Organization in collaboration with the Boston Tooling and Machining Association and IUE/CWA Local 201, the E-Team program provides free training for adults interested in careers in manufacturing.

“Massachusetts is on the cutting-edge in supporting the growth of 21st century manufacturing, thanks to training programs such as E-Team,” said Bialecki. “Together with our regional partners, we are ensuring the next generation is equipped with the skills and knowledge needed for careers in advanced manufacturing.”

In December 2013, Bialecki visited Lynn Tech to present the E-Team with a $46,000 grant, adding to the $90,000 that was already included in the state’s Fiscal Year 2014 budget.

This year, Bialecki, Moulton and Kaprielian met with Superintendent Catherine Latham, students, educators, alumni and employers on Nov. 21 to discuss the growing needs and challenges of the manufacturing industry in Essex County.

The tour included a firsthand view of the training facility, where students learn basic machinist, welding and metal fabrication hands-on technical training, academics, communications, job readiness and teaming skills. Over the course of the 35-week training program, students complete 690 hours of academic and skills training, preparing them for careers in metalworking and manufacturing.

“There is a critical demand for training programs like these all across the Commonwealth,” said Kaprielian. “Everywhere I go I hear employers in advanced manufacturing saying they have jobs, but can’t find workers with the skills they need. The state’s investment in this industry is helping to fill that gap.”

Lynn Tech’s lead machine shop teacher Mike Pickering also outlined the school’s need for equipment upgrades.

“Our goal is to make these students employable,” said Pickering. “Right now we have the most updated software, but not the most updated machines.”

But that isn’t stopping his current machine shop students from pursuing their goals.

“I like the hands-on work and seeing the final product,” said junior Mario Centofanti, who but that isn’t stopping his current machine shop students from pursuing their goals.

“The third-graders in Donna Whalen’s class last year were national champions of the 2014 All Service Drill Competition in New York.

In addition to the championship, they came home with the following trophies:

Boys: first place in Armed Exhibition; second place in Armed Color Guard and Armed Regulation
Girls: first place in Personnel Inspection, Unarmed Color Guard, New Cadet and Unarmed Exhibition

Presley Delacruz was the champion in Individual Unarmed Drill.

Reginald Castillo and Joel Quinnones placed first in Armed Dual Exhibition. Kateleen Pangilinan and Kaela Pangilinan placed second in Unarmed Dual Exhibition. Karen Mejia and Cynthia Rendon placed first in Unarmed Dual Exhibition.

Strata-certified

Thirteen students at Lynn English High School were awarded the CompTIA Strata Certification last spring. The CompTIA Strata IT Fundamentals certification exam is an industry standard exam that measures a candidate’s knowledge of PC components, functionality, compatibility and related technology topics. Lynn English is the only school in the area offering the certification program.

Musicians among us

Each year the Massachusetts Music Educators Association Inc. sets up auditions for the students of the Northeastern District schools in Massachusetts to compete for a chair in the Northeast District Festival concert. This year 1,116 students competed and 441 were accepted. The following students from Lynn English were accepted:

Edward Serron on Bassoon and Mathieu Brueneau on Snare Drum. Their scores were high enough to make them eligible to audition for the All-State Festival.

Lynn Woods students changing the world

The fifth grade at Lynn Woods, in conjunction with the PTO and Safe Routes, was able to purchase Pod Casts and have a Walking Classroom. It is a program that encourages fitness with academic achievement. The students walk daily while listening to historic narrations on their headsets.

As part of the challenge, elementary, middle and high school students across the country identified environmental issues in their schools and communities and created replicable solutions using digital curriculum designed by Discovery Education.

Whalen’s class noticed that community members were dumping yard waste, containing invasive plants, into the Lynn Woods Reservation. They researched information about invasive plants, collected data and set out to help protect Lynn Woods. Because of their efforts, signage stating “no dumping” was placed at both entrances to Lynn Woods, the webpage they created is linked to the city’s site, an informative brochure is on display in Lynn City Hall and Mayor Kennedy declared a day dedicated to invasive plant awareness.

A team from Discovery Education, led by Canadian animal trainer and entertainer Dave Salmoni, visited Lynn Woods Elementary in June and conducted an assembly focusing on sustainability. During the assembly, a congratulatory banner and $5,000 grant was presented to the school to use for science or other green initiatives. Each student also received an individual prize pack.

Creating a Walking Classroom

The fifth grade at Lynn Woods, in conjunction with the PTO and Safe Routes, was able to purchase Pod Casts and have a Walking Classroom. It is a program that encourages fitness with academic achievement. The students walk daily while listening to historic narratives on their headsets.
Perfect Pair

Two Lynn English students ace MCAS

Ariana Severance had a perfect math score while Jake DeFillipo aced his English MCAS exam.

Taking learning home

Harrington Elementary School teacher Sandra Eichel read each word aloud to the class.

“A shout rang out. “BINGO!”

But the winner wasn’t a student. Eichel was at this year’s second Academic Parent-Teacher Team (APTT) meeting at Harrington, and parents were learning how to help their children practice identifying common words by sight.

“The whole [APTT] effort is to give parents a clear and concrete opportunity to support their kids,” said Lynn Public Schools Program Specialist Jennifer Wu.

“And it doesn’t have to be just the parents—it could be the siblings, uncles or aunts, other family members. The key role the parent is taking on is making sure learning activity is happening in the home.”

Wu was hired as part of the Wraparound Zone Initiative, a project through the federal Race To The Top program, which places social workers in schools to develop district and school programs to address students’ physical, social and emotional health as it affects their academic success.

Programs in the initiative range from an inclusive recess program at several elementary schools, nutrition programs at Connerly Elementary School and Harrington, trainings for teachers and staff, and efforts to incorporate parents into the education process.

“APTT is by far the largest recent investment we have made in parent outreach through the Wraparound Zone Initiative,” Wu said.

The APTT concept developed as a way to address several issues in the schools: increasing parent involvement in education; encouraging positive learning environments at students’ homes; and improving students’ skills.

“What we were finding is that parents wanted to help their children learn, but didn’t know how,” explained Lissa Bloom, an English language arts teacher at Harrington.

So the APTT program essentially teaches parents how to continue the school lessons at home.

The team meetings are held three times a year and—although the activities differ according to each grade level, and the skills taught are determined by teachers—the meetings follow a general format.

Each meeting begins with a fun ice-breaker activity for parents (and, beginning in the middle school, the students who also are invited to attend the meetings). Parents are all given a folder containing materials for the activities planned for the meeting, as well as graphs showing how each student in the classroom scored when tested in that activity. Each student is referred to by a number known only by them and their parent, so the graph is anonymous.

Lynn English juniors Jake DeFillipo and Ariana Severance don’t want to sound cocky—and they certainly aren’t—but they were very confident when they sat for the MCAS tests last spring. As it turns out, they had good reason to feel good about the high-stakes exam.

DeFillipo earned a perfect score in English Language Arts while Severance was perfect on the math MCAS, earning the praise of their principal and guidance counselors.

“These two students are examples of hard work paying off,” English Principal Thomas Strangie said. “It also shows that the teachers at English are doing everything they can to provide the opportunity for every student to be successful.”

DeFillipo said even though he “wasn’t nervous going in,” he took advantage of the extra time allotted to complete the essay on the MCAS, staying until almost everyone else had already left. “I put a lot of time into the test,” he said.

He also credited his English teachers with preparing him well.

A lifelong Lynn resident, DeFillipo attended Sisson elementary and Pickering middle schools. He participates in speech competitions and drama at English, and serves as a mentor to students at Marshall Middle School and students in the Life Skills program.

“Jake is very focused on his education,” said guidance counselor Matthew Wilkins. “He is always looking to improve himself. He’s well respected by his teachers and his peers.”

Severance said there was only one question she thought she might have erred on, so she was confident she did very well.

“I studied a lot of geometry, since that is one of my weaker points. Our algebra teacher gave us practice problems from previous tests, and I did those. He made sure we knew everything that could possibly be known,” she added.

Severance, who attended Sewell-Anderson elementary and Salem Academy Charter schools, is a football and basketball cheerleader and a new member of the math team. “They were hunting me down when they heard about the perfect score,” she said.

Calling math her “favorite subject by far,” Severance said she hopes to take it as a major in college and perhaps pursue a career in accounting.

“Ariana represents the best that Lynn English High School has to offer,” said guidance counselor Kara Baletta. “She is excellent academically and very involved in extracurricular activities, and she manages to balance everything. She and Jake serve as role models for their peers.”

Senior Torri Bene recorded a perfect score on the English MCAS exam in 2013 and 2012 graduate Sean Gately aced the math exam in 2010.

“I’m very proud of our school and our students,” Strangie said. “It’s an honor to be the principal here.”

Hood School second-grade teacher Kathleen Wardwell leads an APTT meeting with parents.

Then the parents practice the activities with the teachers.

At Harrington, for example, parents practiced using flashcards of addition facts. First-grade teacher Beth Pento told parents that she recommended each student be able to correctly answer 45 of those flashcards within two minutes by the end of the school year.

Checking the graphs showing how many facts their child had answered correctly when last given this test, some parents looked elated, others looked dismayed. But all parents then wrote down a goal of how many more facts they wanted their child to answer correctly at the next test. And the responsibility is on the parent to practice those flashcards at home; because that goal would be noted on the graph at the next APTT meeting.

The program has already had some success at Harrington.

“Every student who had a parent who came to the [first meeting] improved,” Bloom said.

Wu said that the students also aren’t the only ones receiving additional support from the workshops.

“At Shoemaker Elementary, the parents were talking, giving advice, and sharing their kids own learning experiences and that’s how these things become richer over time,” Wu said. “It’s so much more powerful to hear how it works from other parents.”

Marshall Middle School seventh-grade math teacher Jeni Wheeler summed up the program perfectly as parents and students left her most recent APTT workshop.

“We’re here to help your students in any way we can,” Wheeler said. “And here to help you in any way we can.”
District teams with Business Ed. Foundation to pursue grant money

In a time when municipal budgets are seemingly getting tighter every year, school districts are being forced to think creatively in order to supplement their funding. Lynn Public Schools aced a test in that regard, with help from a longtime partner.

The district and the Lynn Business Education Foundation forged an agreement enabling Lynn Public Schools to apply for private grants whenever foundations and corporations require applicants to have 501(c)(3) status — typically a minimum criterion for such funding. As public entities, school districts are not eligible for 501(c)(3) status.

Under the agreement, grant applications will be submitted through the Business Ed. Foundation, which will distribute any money received to LPS.

“This is an exciting and significant development for our school district,” said Superintendent Dr. Catherine C. Latham. “It has the potential to open doors that were previously unavailable to us.”

Sarah Jackson, coordinator of private partnerships for LPS, has been pursuing grants in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). She is working with Rick Held, LPS assistant director of curriculum and instruction for science, to identify private funding and industry partnerships to connect students with STEM professionals and equipment.

“The district’s agreement with the Lynn Business Education Foundation places us on a level playing field with other school districts when it comes to fundraising from private sources,” Jackson said.

Charlie Gallo, chair of the Lynn School Committee’s grants subcommittee, said Lynn is now in a small group of school districts with 501(c)(3) eligibility, along with the likes of Boston, Brockton, Brookline and Newton.

“We are joining a handful of trailblazers in this area,” he said.

Founded in 1986, the Lynn Business Education Foundation encourages innovation and experimentation within schools by providing resources that result in increased academic achievement. The foundation provides grants and professional development for teachers and career-readiness training for students.

Executive Director Dr. Frederick M. Cole said making the organization’s 501(c)(3) status available to Lynn Public Schools is a natural extension of the longtime partnership with the schools.

“Now the schools will have access to potential funding that they did not have before,” Cole said.

Back home

Alumnus returns as grants manager

By Meaghan Casey

Lynn Public Schools alumnus Elyse Fannon is feeling right at home as the district’s grants manager.

“It’s so nice to see a lot of the teachers and principals I knew before,” said Fannon, who attended Sewell-Anderson Elementary and Breed Middle schools and graduated from Lynn Classical High School in 2003. Her aunt, Eileen Cole, is the principal of Brickett Elementary School.

“It’s eye-opening to see how much work goes into their filling classrooms with materials,” said Fannon.

Fannon earned her degree in accounting from Salve Regina University and worked in auditing for five years before taking this position. She was hired in December 2012.

“I wanted to feel like I was giving back to something,” she said.

She is responsible for monitoring the spending of the funds, which largely come from Title I federal assistance. Lynn was granted $5.6 million in Title I funding for the fiscal year (FY) 2014, as well as $1.2 million in Title II-Part A funds for teacher and principal training and recruiting. The district also received $4 million in federal special education funds under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Other private sources, such as the Hardscrabble Education Fund—which has granted Lynn Public Schools more than $1 million since 2002—also play an important role in providing classroom support.

“Grant funding supports teachers and classroom projects, gives schools extra resources to help close achievement gaps and backs all of the extracurricular and summer programs, as well as aides for special education and ESL students,” said Fannon.

She is thrilled about the new agreement between the district and the Lynn Business Education Foundation allowing Lynn Public Schools to apply for private grants whenever foundations and corporations require applicants to have 501(c)(3) status.

“It’s huge, because it means we’ll be able to apply for so many more grants now,” said Fannon.

“Companies will be more likely to contribute once they see that status.”
New science lab opens at Washington

The smart boards are installed. Lab benches include sinks and electrical outlets and were designed and built by some of the world's finest engineers. Graduated cylinders, flasks and beakers are ready to go. About 30 computers will be available. But perhaps most uniquely, the seats will accommodate lab workers ranging from roughly 3- to 6-foot tall.

“We had discussions in the beginning about how you make it both work for 5-year olds—some of whom are very, very small—and how it can work for 10- and 11-year olds, some of whom are adult sized,” Washington Science Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Elementary School Principal John Licorish said. “So we decided to use adjustable seats.”

The Washington STEM Elementary School officially opened in 2012 as the latest incarnation of the Washington Elementary School. The school was a typical neighborhood elementary school for much of its history, and then became a community magnet school, then a welcoming school for students with social/emotional special needs. When that program moved to the smaller Fallon School, Washington was reborn as an elementary school with a special focus on incorporating the STEM disciplines of science, technology, engineering and mathematics across the traditional school curriculum.

“These days are gone when subjects are taught in isolation—where science is three times a week for 40 minutes and math is every day,” Licorish said. “That’s not reality; it’s not 21st century. In general, we are really trying to embrace a 21st-century approach to learning, which means that students are learning about technology through reading and writing.

To accomplish that cross-curricular integration of STEM disciplines, the Washington School not only does typical science and engineering experiments with beakers of hot water and LEGOs. Students are assigned reading that discusses scientific concepts and then do lab tests. Fourth and fifth graders write lab reports.

“I’ve often had parents say to me, ‘this is great, my student in second-grade is learning things that I didn’t learn until middle school and high school,’” Licorish said.

The most dramatic example of this new focus, however, is the new STEM lab in the basement of the Washington School. Measuring about 1,500 square feet and combining space that had once been supply closets and small classrooms, the plans for the lab began in Jan. 2013 as a project of the General Electric (GE) Lynn Volunteers Initiative.

Volunteers from GE designed and built the lab benches, designed the space and did the majority of the construction with the help of the city's inspectional services department. GE workers installed floor tiles, walls and half-walls and painted the room in bright, LEGO colors. Two SMART boards have been installed, and there will be eight desktop computers and 20 to 25 laptops for students to use on projects such as LEGO robotics or for lab reports and other assignments.

“It’s really an exciting endeavor—it’s in-loin quite awhile to get going but it’s going to be so great,” Lynn Schools Superintendent Dr. Catherine Latham said.

All grade levels at the school will use the lab, and GE volunteers will come in to assist with different experiments.

“We were able to say exactly what we wanted to have in the science lab, exactly what we wanted to be able to do in the science lab, and we were able to design that with GE and, thinking of our students, we were able to make it align with their needs,” Licorish said.

And while he said that often uses the terms “science lab” and “STEM lab” interchangeably, the lab is designed to allow learning in multiple STEM disciplines: students could create a school newspaper, flyers or videos for morning announcements. Students can use LEGO robotics, incorporating engineering and technology, and they also plan to have the students use the lab for graphic and media design,

“Think of LEGO robotics, incorporating engineering and technology, and we also plan to have the students use the lab for graphic and media design,” Licorish said. “There are just the plans for now, but we do think the sky’s the limit, there is so much we can do with the space in the years to come.”
In their words
Sheltered English Immersion students at Marshall Middle School share their stories

Thomas Khai, Grade 8
I moved to Malaysia. I was in Malaysia for more than three years. I arrived in the United States on January 29, 2013. I’m in the U.S. with my family and we’ve been here for two years.
When I arrived in the United States, it was very difficult for me to understand what people were talking about. I was even scared to go out at that time. So, I went to school to learn English. I went to Thurgood Marshall Middle School in Lynn. There are ten clusters in this school. Among them, Cluster 7 is different: it is for students who are learning English, like me.
As an English learner, I have a lot of weaknesses. As an immigrant, I have hopes and dreams for my life and that’s why I came to the United States.
I would like to tell you about the differences in school life between my country and America, how I feel about my teachers, friends, being a Cluster 7 student and how I have been successful. First of all, I would like to share about my different experiences in school. In my country, there are six subjects in school. The school has no sports teams, and no activities like here in America. But, there are a lot of public parks and fields, so students that like to play sports can play there. The way the teachers teach is very different. When you are learning the story of someone’s life, for example Martin Luther King, the teacher will tell you to memorize all of the story. When there is an exam, on the question paper they will put, “The Story of Martin Luther King,” and then you have to write the information you memorized. So, you have to study a lot and memorize more than two pages of information. At school there were no tools and materials to do an experiment. Therefore, it is hard for the students to understand.
I rather like how I learn and study in the U.S. compared to my country because you don’t need to memorize passages that you read. They have enough tools and materials to do experiments here in classes. Therefore, it is easier for me to understand. Clothing and lunch are also different. In Burma, there is a school uniform and you cannot go to school without it. You also have to bring your own lunch from your home, otherwise you will get hungry. For me, school and pretty much everything is better in America because there is less persecution and more freedom.
It is a pleasure to be in Cluster 7 because there are a lot of students who came from different countries and I am so glad to have friends from different places. My friends speak different languages. Sometimes they teach me how to speak their language and I also teach them how to speak mine. Every student in Cluster 7 is friendly, and so are the teachers. The teachers in Cluster 7 are helpful. They work really hard and they do their best for their students to get better at speaking, reading and writing in English. They always encourage us in our studies and treat their students like their family.
When I first attended school in the United States, my English speaking and writing were weak, as well as my math skills. But now, my English and math skills are much better than in the past and I feel I have succeeded a lot. But how did I succeed? First, I always pay attention to the teachers in class. I take notes, copy formulas and examples that my teachers write. I list what my teachers say, review my notes and assignments before class and give my full attention and concentration. I always study what I have learned in class. I make flashcards and study guides. I write a little, about twice a week, to improve my writing skills. For math, I sometimes make up math problems and solve them. I also do my homework every day because I know that falling behind will make it much harder. These are several things that I do to be successful. I have to study hard and have confidence to have a successful future.

Carmen Reyes, Grade 8
I’m Carmen Reyes. I was born in Venezuela but raised in Guatemala. I have been here in the United States for two years. My experiences here have been hard, but I’ve had a lot of success.
On January 15, 2013, I came to the United States. After three weeks, I started school and came to Thurgood Marshall Middle School. I didn’t know English so I came to Cluster 7, the group that teaches me English. It took me five to six months to learn English.
Teachers and friends support and motivate me in my learning; they always help me. Cluster 7 is like my second family. I have learned a lot in this cluster. On my first day, everyone was very amicable to me and they continue to be.
Cluster 7 has a big part in my success as a student. Teachers always motivate me and everyone is helpful. My family motivates me too. I’m not the kind of person that studies for a test. It’s surprising, right? Well, what I do is pay careful attention in every class. Something that helps me a lot is that my teachers are always really clear in how they explain things. They always try to give me words that make everything easier to understand. Practice also always helps.
How did I learn English? That’s a question that everyone asks me. They always get surprised when I tell them how long it took me to learn English. They get more surprised when they ask my age and how long I’ve been here. When a person comes here to the United States, they are always afraid to speak English. Something that helps me is that I’m not afraid to try something new. I always hear and read English and that helps me. So does listening to music in English.
When I hear people speak English, I repeat what they say (try to!). When a word is interesting to me, I translate it. I continue like that and when I feel like I can say them, I start to make sentences. Sometimes my sentences are crazy, but it’s a way to learn English. Never be afraid to try something new. If you never try, you will never get better. And, if you try and you can’t get it the first time, keep trying! NEVER give up! There is one word that can destroy your learning and that word is CAN’T! Take that word out of your vocabulary because it will never help you. Don’t be afraid to speak English. Teachers, family and friends will help you. Life is about trying.
This is who I am, my learning and how I have had success. I hope some of the things I just told you will help other people that don’t speak English. I just want to say thanks to my family, my teachers and my friends. All of these people are a part of my success.

Diners’ delight
Tiger’s Den offers new hours, choices
By MEAGHAN CASEY
Lynn Tech students are getting a real “taste” of life in the food industry by working in the school’s Tiger’s Den restaurant.
Tucked away in the halls of the Lynn Tech Annex, at 90 Commercial St., Tiger’s Den is open Tuesday-Thursday, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The student-operated restaurant serves delicious meals and bakery items to the public, at a reasonable price. The menu varies from week to week, offering a wide range of entrees. Every item is prepared by Lynn Tech students in the culinary arts program, led by teachers Aaron Blanchard, Anthony Canadas, Steven Lopez and Joseph Sheadas.

Students in grades 10-12 are responsible for planning, preparation and presentation, as well as manning the restaurant during its operating hours. They learn to prepare poultry, meats, fruits, vegetables, marinades, dressings, stocks, sauces, thickening agents and soups, as well as appetizers and desserts. They also learn about basic nutrition, hospitality, catering and dining-room service and are provided with instruction and experience that prepares them for careers as line cooks, pastry chefs, events managers, banquet servers, executive chefs and restaurant owners. Ninth-grade exploratory students do not work in the restaurant, but they acquire a hands-on overview of hot food preparation, baking and restaurant operation throughout the course of the year.

Lynn Tech students Sandra Oui, left, and Samantha Oliva served customers at the grand opening of Tigers Den.
**GIVING THE GIFT OF READING**

43,000 books distributed to students

**BY MEAGHAN CASEY**

Lynn children were given the gift of reading this holiday season, thanks to 43,000 books that were distributed on Dec. 13.

The donation was a result of a partnership the City of Lynn, Lynn Public Schools and the Lynn Teachers Union has launched with First Book, a national nonprofit that works with top publishers to get millions of new books to students in need.

“For too many children in Lynn, books they can take home and keep are a luxury that’s out of reach,” said Lynn Teachers Union President Brant Duncan. “We can change that. As educators, we’re delighted to be partnering with our city, our school district and First Book on a goal that’s so close to our hearts.”

Lynn was challenged to register at least 2,000 participants with First Book, targeting teachers, school staff and administrators in Title I schools, as well as staff or volunteers from organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club, Lynn Housing Authority & Neighborhood Development and local parent-teacher organizations. As a reward for its efforts, First Book sent its Book Truck filled with books for students of all ages to take home. The 43,000 books were distributed at Lynn Tech on a first-come first-serve basis, with a limit of five books per family.

“These are books by top authors—books kids would pick out at a bookstore if they could,” said Duncan.

The First Book partnership was launched in October with a book giveaway at Drewicz Elementary School. Three books were given to each of the school’s 70 fifth-graders: “Island of the Blue Dolphins,” “How to Eat Fried Worms” and “Frindle.”

“We want all of you to keep reading and learning, whether you’re reading a comic book or a book like this,” said Lynn Mayor Judith Flanagan Kennedy.

“We’re thrilled to be putting books in all your homes,” said State Sen. Thomas McGee. “Hopefully you enjoy them and develop a lifelong love of reading.”

Massachusetts Secretary of Education Matthew Malone was also on hand to celebrate the launch event and read to students.

“This is a great partnership between the union and the administration focused on the most important thing we do: promoting literacy,” said Malone. “I want you reading for at least 20 minutes every night to make your brains stronger. It’ll open doors for you as you progress through school and apply to college.

I want you thinking, ‘I’m in fifth-grade and I’m on my way to college.’ Start working at it now.”

Lynn was targeted to register at least 2,000 participants with First Book, targeting teachers, school staff and administrators in Title I schools, as well as staff or volunteers from organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club, Lynn Housing Authority & Neighborhood Development and local parent-teacher organizations. As a reward for its efforts, First Book sent its Book Truck filled with books for students of all ages to take home. The 43,000 books were distributed at Lynn Tech on a first-come first-serve basis, with a limit of five books per family.

**CHEFS 2 SCHOOL INTRODUCES HEALTHY FOOD OPTIONS**

**BY MEAGHAN CASEY**

During a lunch period in November in the Lynn English High School cafeteria—which was looking more like a scene out of Whole Foods—students happily gathered around the table of Chartwells Northeast Regional Executive Chef Barb Kempen to try samples of holiday-themed cranberry and pumpkin smoothies.

“It’s about getting them to try something different,” said Kempken, emphasizing that smoothies not only taste good, but are good for students—providing them with protein, vitamins from fruits and vegetables, calcium and other nutrients. “We want to encourage healthy eating and snacking.”

Kempen is visiting other schools throughout the year to introduce healthy snacks and recipes as part of Chartwells’ Chefs 2 School program. Under the program, guest chefs adopt a local school district and make occasional planned visits to designated schools.

This is the first year of the program in Lynn. Kempen is starting at the high-school level and will visit Lynn’s elementary and middle schools in the future.

The Chefs 2 School program complements the efforts of the Lynn School Food Services Department to add more balanced meals and healthier snacks to school lunch menus, including fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains. They have also removed all fried foods and trans-fat from the daily offerings. The department operates through a partnership with Chartwells and Preferred Meals System to provide the best quality food for each student.

“We want to engage the kids and teach them about nutrition,” said Kevin Richardson, the district’s senior director of dining services. “Instead of reaching for that sports drink or soda, why not try a smoothie.”

“We’re seeing a positive response,” Richardson continued. “The kids have had big smiles and they’re taking the recipes. Hopefully they go home and try it out.”
New principals took reign Jan. 5

Superintendent Dr. Catherine C. Latham announced the appointment of two new principals who assumed leadership this month. Joanne LaRivee is at Ford Elementary School and Molly Cohen is at Marshall Middle School.

Cohen left Breed Middle School as vice principal. An experienced teacher, guidance counselor and school administrator, she began her career in public education in Salem and came to the Lynn Public Schools in 2005 as a sheltered English immersion teacher at Lynn Tech. She later went on to serve as a bilingual guidance counselor at Lynn English High School. Prior to her public school work she taught English as a foreign language in Chile and English as a second language in Boston. Cohen is proficient in Spanish, knowledgeable in curriculum and instruction planning and implementation, skilled in data analysis and experienced working with community agencies. She brings excellent organizational skills to her new position and is well prepared and eager to transition faculty, staff and students to the new Marshall Middle School, which is scheduled to open in September 2016.

LaRivee, a former vice principal at the South Lawrence East Middle School, is an experienced teacher and school administrator with more than 25 years in the Lawrence Public Schools. Her teaching experience includes eight years as a third-grade teacher and five years as a seventh-grade literacy and math and science teacher. She has worked as an elementary curriculum facilitator and a curriculum and literacy coach and has a strong background in data analysis, instructional technology and urban school leadership.

Hebert settles in at Drewicz

In her first year as principal of Drewicz Elementary School, Patricia Hebert could not be happier.

“I absolutely love it,” said Hebert. “The teachers are fabulous, as are the parents. It’s truly a community school.”

Hebert, who has been an educator since 1997, taught at the elementary-school level in Florida, North Carolina and her hometown of Methuen. She has been working in Lynn Public Schools since 2001. She was an elementary and middle school math teacher at the Ford School and Ford School Annex and has also taught English language arts, science and social studies.

She had been serving as program specialist at Ingalls Elementary School when the opportunity to become an administrator at Drewicz presented itself.

As a member of the Ingalls School leadership team, Hebert had extensive training in Universal Design for Learning at Harvard University, a practice-oriented program that provides a blueprint for creating flexible goals, methods, materials and assessments that enable all students to succeed in the classroom. While at Ingalls, Hebert was also the MCAS and ACCESS test coordinator and a member of the Family Engagement Alignment Team and the School Improvement Committee.
The Power of Play

By Meaghan Casey

At Cobbet Elementary School, students and staff are changing playground behavior with the help of a national program called Playworks that helps create structured, safe and inclusive recess time. While it is still a time for students to unwind or unleash some energy, they're also learning the value of fair play, compassion and respect.

The program was founded in 1996 by Jill Vialet, who saw an opportunity to make recess a positive and productive time for all kids. Playworks Massachusetts has full-time programs in Boston, Cambridge and Lawrence and is reaching thousands of others through its training services. This is the third year Cobbet is using the Playworks model. The school’s recess team participated in Playworks Recess 360 training, consisting of 10 three-hour training sessions and five recess consulting visits. Classroom teachers also participated in Power to Play training.

“I observe recess on a daily basis and I see students engaged, smiling, having fun and playing fair,” said Tim Burt, program specialist at Cobbet. “The staff have been taking the lead and are energized and engaged. This has minimized behavior problems at recess and in the classroom.”

“It’s keeping them organized and active,” said Beth Marrie, a physical education teacher at Cobbet. “They’re not having the injuries or arguments. It works beautifully.”

Students can choose from a number of set activities including hula hoop, four square, soccer and jump rope. There is also a new activity introduced at the start of each week, varying from week to week.

Two fourth- and fifth-graders from each classroom are trained as team leaders, helping teachers organize and referee games.

“We have a lot of fun out here,” said fifth-grader Marcos Genao, a team leader. “I love helping people out.”

“Everyone’s involved in the games, so no one gets left out,” said Amy Gutierrez, another fifth-grade team leader.

Shoemaker, Fallon, Sewell-Anderson, Washington STEM, Harrington and Lincoln-Thompson have all also adopted the Playworks model, after seeing the success at Cobbet.

At the top

COMMENDATION: From Page 1

Language Arts (ELA) was 70, compared to 61 statewide. In math, that percentage was 70, compared to 62 statewide. Of particular note, 91 percent of Lynn Woods third-graders scored proficient or higher in math, outpacing the state average by 23 percentage points.

But Principal Ellen Fritz says their success isn’t valued in MCAS scores alone.

“It’s not just the one test,” said Fritz. “That’s our game day—our Super Bowl really—but we know we have to prepare our students academically every single day.”

Math and science teacher Jennifer Hudak, in her third year at the school, said implementation of the Common Core State Standards and coaching from the district’s curriculum team helped to turn momentum in the right direction.

“The standards help level the playing field, and have helped us to better focus our lessons,” said Hudak. “Change can be difficult but we’re constantly changing to do what’s best for the kids.”

The school has also put a major focus on integrating technology in the classroom, from SMART Boards to software programs such as Study Island and First in Math. In grades 3, 4 and 5, teachers are using the Plickers app, which allows them to collect real-time formative assessment data. Parents can also get reports sent to their smartphones.

“The more tools our teachers have in their toolkit, the more students they’ll be able to reach,” said Fritz.

“Right now the recipe is in place for achievement, we just have to forge ahead and reap the benefits of the grants and technology we have available to us,” said Christine Kennedy, who teaches fourth- and fifth-grade reading and social studies.

Kennedy said the school’s departmentalizing and uninterrupted blocks for reading and math also play a role in supporting achievement growth.

“We really honor that instructional time,” she said. In addition to Lynn Woods, Sewell-Anderson Elementary School was also named a Commendation School this year. It was commended for narrowing proficiency gaps. To the tune of Queen’s “We are the Champions,” students sang out, “We are Sewell-Anderson… and we’re going to keep on studying,” as they hoisted their banner in celebration on Dec. 1.

Also this year, Harrington Elementary School attained Level 1 status, just four years after the school was categorized as Level 4. Aborn Elementary School has maintained its Level 1 status for the third year in a row.

Superintendent Dr. Catherine Latham and Sewell-Anderson Principal Patricia Mallett joined students to celebrate the school’s designation as a Commendation School.
programs have presented new opportunities and many of their players are girls playing a sport for the first time, or girls who might not have played any sport had volleyball not been available. In all, 100 girls played in the varsity or sub-varsity programs at the three schools this fall, justifying the decision to add the sport to the fall sports menu. Both the English and Classical programs grew out of intramural programs in place.

The growth of the programs has been slowed by the lack of a middle school program, and a lack of resources that would allow the athletes to participate in private club teams, camps and clinics out of season.

In almost every case, a girl turning out to play volleyball at the three Lynn schools has not played the sport before and is learning both the rules and the proper techniques on the fly.

That has made the giant strides the Classical program has taken since its inception all the more impressive.

The Rams have made the MIAA North Sectional Tournament in each of the past three seasons and have become one of the top teams in the Northeastern Conference. English has had its moments—making the MIAA Tournament in 2013—but the Bulldogs struggled this year, as did Tech. Still, coaches at all three Lynn high schools say the efforts bore fruit.

The Tigers struggled this season, winning only one match by forfeit.

“We had seven wins last year, but we lost several key players and we were young and rebuilding this year,” she said.

Salamat said virtually none of the players who come into the program have had previous volleyball experience, and about half have never played an organized sport before.

She said the attitude of the 24 players in the varsity and JV programs this season stayed positive, and she is looking for several sophomores who showed promise this season leading the way next season.

“I also encouraged our girls to play other sports,” she said. “Cross-training is important.”

At English, Coach Laurie Wentzell-Ryan has led the Bulldogs since the inception of the program. This season, with several key seniors having graduated from last year’s team that made the MIAA Tournament, the Bulldogs won only once.

But Wentzell-Ryan was buoyed by the play of three sophomores—Lindsey Lamont, Lily Vu and Jillian Bowden—and junior Molly Nhiv, all up from the JV program.

She is also encouraged by the 35 girls in the program.

“We still spend a lot of time teaching techniques because almost none of the girls who come in have played before,” she said. “We spend a year or two with each girl trying to catch up.”

Classical, under Coach Frank DeLuca, has made the MIAA tournament in each of the past three seasons and has emerged as a Northeastern Conference power behind champion Peabody.

This year the Rams took a set from Central Catholic in the MIAA Tournament and pushed Peabody hard, losing in three hard-fought sets—25-23, 25-22 and 25-21—that could have gone either way.

DeLuca, who has been at Classical for six years as a Social Studies teacher, has been a coach in some shape or form for 41 years. He has coached the Tufts University JV baseball team and led the South Medford Little League team to the Massachusetts State Championship and third place in the Eastern Regionals in 1980, beating Swampscott in the Mass. semifinals. DeLuca also coaches freshman basketball at Classical, but said it took time to become a volleyball coach. “I picked the brains of other coaches and went to camps and clinics,” he said.

DeLuca coached the JV team for two years before taking over the varsity job from Frank Grealish, and the turnout of 40 girls this fall allowed the school to field freshman, JV and varsity teams, setting up a true feeder program.

“We’re starting to get the athletes from other sports now,” he said. “For a basketball player looking to stay in shape, you couldn’t have a better sport.”

DeLuca He said members of the team also help recruit, encouraging others to come and watch them play, and that the home match against Central Catholic in the MIAA Tournament was a turning point for the program. “The gym was packed, we took a set and it was an exciting match,” he said.

Senior Cassie D’Agostino was an All-Northeastern Conference pick for the second straight year and Senior Ivy Martin and Sophomore Soneta Srey were also named Northeastern Conference All-Stars.

DeLuca said the Rams are finally starting to reap the benefit of girls who have been in the program for four years, learning and refining techniques.

The most rewarding thing about the program’s five years of existence isn’t the wins and losses.

“The 40 girls playing in this program wouldn’t have had that opportunity, and that’s what it’s about,” he said.