Superintendent’s Report
October 29, 2020

Over the course of the past three weeks, I, along with other members of central office leadership, have had the opportunity to observe classes on each level and in a number of programs. We have seen clear displays of rigor, student engagement and support, notable familiarity and dexterity with Schoology, our learning management system, and creativity. Having served as principal at a school where a successful implementation of a one-to-one laptop initiative took place, I can say with a high degree of confidence that it takes approximately two years to launch. Factors including but not limited to identification of a device, selection of a learning management system, comprehensive integration of the learning management system with the student management system, and professional development are not quick ventures. The distance we have traveled on the same track for 25 schools (instead of one) over the span of four months is simply awe inspiring. I credit the position we’re in as a district right now to the hard work, commitment to mission, and patience of the Lynn Public Schools staff in partnership with families. We have not arrived, so to speak. No such thing really exists in education. Nonetheless, what has been accomplished in a short period of time is extraordinary and deserving of praise at a minimum.

The element of newness is prominent in the Lynn Public Schools at present. New systems and structures, new platforms for delivery of instruction, and new working and learning conditions are all part of the experience in this context. That said, many of the shifts driven by circumstance have not replaced our commitment to existing initiatives. One such initiative is our commitment to increase and retain a racially and linguistically diverse staff. During the 2019-20 school year, we proposed to execute a set of actions as part of a five-year plan to increase the staff of color by 1% each year. The quarantine during the spring of 2020 disrupted that effort, but we remain steadfast in our commitment. Toward that end, I am pleased to announce that we have been awarded a grant in the amount of $41,215 by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The funds will be leveraged in large part to support existing staff of color becoming licensed.

The staff diversification is one among several initiatives on which we have continued to work. By this, I mean to communicate that the strategic plan that we spent countless hours developing is still very much alive. Certainly, we have had to take on some initiatives sooner than we planned, while pushing others to the “later” category. The strategic plan is a five-year roadmap designed to help us achieve four specific objectives. We remain committed to achieving those objectives. We will be aligning the steps we have taken to launch the school year with strategic
initiatives already identified in the plan. Further, we will adjust the implementation map. The School Committee can expect a presentation on these changes early in the 2021 calendar year.

There is unanimity in declaring these times as uniquely and supremely challenging. Nonetheless, the way that the community has banded together and support has been offered from many directions has made the situation workable and also gives hope in our path back. One pointed example is a recent donation we received from Cell Signaling Technology (CST). CST is a local, private company, founded by scientists and dedicated to providing the world’s highest quality, innovative research and diagnostic products to accelerate biological understanding and enable personalized medicine. CST believes that education in science has the potential to spark interest and curiosity in young minds. This year, CST has awarded Lynn Public Schools with $30K in funding to help support Science Programs. Our plan is to use this funding to support another initiative we are piloting at Thurgood Marshall Middle School. Jason Learning is a STEM curriculum that places students in challenging, real-world situations through a powerful digital platform that includes videos, simulations, hands-on and other online activities. We plan to equip students with the materials needed to assist them as they navigate this remote learning environment.

Lastly, in a leadership team meeting last summer, the energizer was focused on team members discussing what they have learned about themselves as a result of the quarantine and the many challenges related to the pandemic. Whether existing or new found, I think we can all point to perseverance ability we depend on in this context. Related, I want to extend my congratulations Tyler Generazzo who has continued to persevere academically and in other meaningful ways despite the challenging context. He successfully earned the Christian Herter Scholarship, which awards recipients funds covering nearly all college expenses for four years.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patrick Tutwiler, PhD