This week, an incident involving a student in possession of an authentic looking weapon that was later determined to be a toy has shaken not just the school at which the incident happened, but perhaps the entire community. When events such as these happen, the response should include reflection, outreach, and opportunities to process. Over the past 48 hours, there have been opportunities where each has happened in substantive ways. The reflection, which includes clear opportunities for feedback, has yielded concrete steps for improvement in safety response and communication. Outreach has taken the form of meetings and a virtual community forum, and processing will happen in ongoing fashion through clinical support, classroom activities, and meetings.

This event ended without physical harm to any staff member or student. Nonetheless, we are intimately aware that harm can take on many forms. There might not have been physical harm, but there was definitely trauma. The focus of our efforts in the school and beyond will include sensitivity in response to that reality. There are already supports in place at the school and general vigilance across the district. The school will be creating specific and thoughtful experiences to address the needs of those closest to the incident.

In total, while this event has definitely had an impact, I remain confident that the community will emerge stronger as a result. This, after all, is the mark of a strong community.

Indeed, another mark of a strong community is the depth and quality of its leadership. In this way, I want to extend my deepest appreciation to the members of the Lynn School Committee who will be moving on with the next chapters of their life.

Mayor McGee
Mr. Mayor, your steady hand of leadership has delivered the city to a place better than when you found it. The result of your attention to detail, willingness to confront deeply challenging issues has resulted in the needle moving, so to speak, in every department in your purview. I have found your patience remarkable. To be clear, patience is not the enemy of urgency. You have clearly dealt with many issues with a sense of urgency. The way that you look at, analyze, and understand challenging issues from various perspectives requires incredible patience and resolve. This quality has proven most effective. Wherever the next chapter for you might be, it is my sincere hope that we remain partnered in some way as being your colleague has helped me become a better leader.
John Ford
Mr. Ford, gone with you is decades of experience, knowledge, and know how. These qualities lead to an informed perspective, which you have always demonstrated. Among the many things I appreciate about your leadership on this committee is the fact that you wear your values on your sleeve. Very rarely was there a time when I had to guess what you were thinking or what you might say in relation to a particular issue. It was always students and staff first. Period. Simple, yet profound and powerful. I think I know you well enough to say that I am certain that I will be seeing you fairly regularly in the coming months and years. You can’t stay away. This is who you are and this community is so lucky for the fact.

Michael Satterwhite
Attorney Satterwhite, for four years now I have respected how you have performed your role, but in particular, the aspect involving your connectedness to the community. I am not sure how you know everybody, and I do mean everybody, but you do - and you have leveraged your knowledge of everybody in this community to inform decisions that you make in this space. I have incredible respect for that. I also have incredible respect for how you have used your knowledge of the law and all related matters to help people, to help some of our most vulnerable children. You are a real ally to all members of the community and our neediest in particular. You leave a lasting legacy that reflects cunning skill, getting to the root of a problem and speaking up for those who need you to do it the most.

Jared Nicholson
Mr. Mayor-Elect, I suppose this is not really a farewell message to you. I will just say with the utmost sincerity I look forward to partnering with you and the other members of the committee to continue the push to provide a world-class education for our Lynn Public Schools scholars. We have work to do.

Respectfully Submitted,
Patrick Tutwiler, PhD