Superintendent’s Report
January 28, 2021

Several agenda items for the January 28, 2021 School Committee Meeting signify momentous steps forward in the district.

- Part and parcel of the district’s equity agenda, we are expanding the dual language program to Connery Elementary School. The early data returns for students in the existing dual language program at Harrington Elementary School indicate noteworthy growth and literacy.
- For the first time in the district’s history, we are launching a universal academic screener. This will provide us critical information on a macro level to help us make decisions around the types of support individual schools need to successfully support student learning and growth. More importantly, on the micro level, it will provide immediate information for individual teachers about students in their class that will support decisions around the best fit interventions.
- For the first time this year, we are planning to provide an in-person experience for groups of students whose needs we struggle to meet the most. Further, additional groups are proposed for in-person services in the coming weeks.

These are three of many steps indicating the depth of commitment, creativity, and hard work among all staff, students, and families from the very beginning of the school year (and before).

While there is cause for celebration and appreciation on several fronts, there is still keen attention to the areas in need of improvement or intervention. Building leaders and directors are consistently mining for challenges in their respective communities and bringing these challenges forward to initiate a solutions process. Further, we continue to leverage our partners to understand the experiences of and challenges for all families, but those who are unlikely to voice them directly to school personnel in particular. We meet regularly with clinicians and medical personnel from Lynn Community Health, representatives from the Lynn Rapid Response Network, and partner agencies, such as the YMCA and Boys and Girls and Club. Through these partnerships, we gain an even deeper insight to issues that would not surface through a survey or may not be communicated directly to school personnel.

Gaining insight is one step – responding is another. Through our partnerships and in response to the feedback, we have focused more attention on addressing connectivity issues, particularly in homes where families are accessing the Comcast Internet Essentials program. We have gained
insight to the kinds of information that particular groups of families need that heretofore was not being communicated. Further, in response to feedback, I personally have altered my communication style to make it more accessible to all audiences. It behooves me to mention that the relationship is mutually beneficial. Our partners also gain insight to where district resources are or specifics around which professionals our partners or families can access for a particular need.

I have often communicated that, in education, sustainable change is a process not an event. I say this to underscore that in order for the substantive shift to stick in our profession, it needs to be part of the thoughtful process over time. Additionally, among the many things we have learned since the onset of the pandemic, the role that consistent feedback and related response plays in a change or improvement effort that we expect to stick is chief among them.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patrick Tutwiler, PhD