It has been some time since the last memo of this sort. Plans have changed, meetings have been rescheduled, events have shifted to accommodate needs or due to circumstances. In many ways, that rhythm, change due to circumstances, encapsulates the 2020-21 school year. Among many other things, there is familiarity with unpredictability and change. As a result, we are all a little bit better at going with the flow – while still attending to all business matters effectively.

Since the last superintendent’s report, we have received news of several grant awards that will support our efforts to meet student need next year. We received two Massachusetts 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant awards. We received $200,000 to support the LEAP program expansion at Marshall Middle School. The second, in the amount of $197,500 was awarded to our partner, Campfire, to open an after-school program similar to the existing one on which we currently partner at Washington STEM. Last week, we got notice of a $208,000 grant to support culturally responsive literacy in the district under the DESE Growing Literacy Across Massachusetts (GLEAM). GLEAM grants will support districts in implementing deep and lasting improvements in programming in ELA/literacy through a multi-tiered system of support. Finally, Lynn Tech is on the receiving end of a Career and Technical Education Partnership Implementation Grant in the amount of $167,192. These funds will be used to restart our After Dark initiative that was paused due to challenges related to the pandemic.

In addition to competitive grants that we have successfully attained, there is a noncompetitive Federal grant, the third installment of the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER III). The amount the district is expected to receive ($42,076,889) was released months ago, but only recently were we provided information on how the funds can be spent as well as the expectations for developing a plan. In short, ESSER III funds can be used to meet student needs in the realms of academics and mental health. Funds can also be allocated for operations. In total, 20% of the total grant amount must be allocated to activities or strategy to address learning loss. Plans must be submitted by October 2021 and funds must be spent by September of 2024. There is a robust expectation for stakeholder input in the development of the plan, a requirement that we both appreciate and respect. The stakeholder input process will be developed during the summer months in partnership with the Mayor’s office. Much more to come on this important opportunity.

Following up on my March 25th report, the process to adopt a new high school English Language Arts curriculum. By way of brief update, a representative team from each school and the English Learner Education department has been assembled. The team has taken part in
professional development provided by consultants from Bridgewater State University, Dr. Melissa Winchell, and Dr. Kevin McGowan. The focus of their work with the consultants is to create an equity framework to support our evaluation of potential resources. The team plans to critically evaluate the resources using the newly established framework. Vendors were chosen through a careful analysis that included the Curate from DESE as well as Ed Reports. The following vendors have been identified.

- American Reading Company
- McGraw Hill
- SAAVAS/ Pearson
- Holt MacDougall
- Achieve 3000

The plan is to prepare a presentation to the curriculum sub-committee at its first meeting in the fall or during the late summer if the opportunity presents itself.

Although we remain quite busy at this point and will be through the summer months, it is important to pause and acknowledge today as the last day of the 2020-21 school year. There is familiarity with challenges felt by many in our community. Here, I want to acknowledge the bravery and resilience I saw in every pocket of this community over the past year. From this last day looking forward, I think it is important to embrace those characteristics as a strong foundation and all of the new skills, abilities, and tools as the framework. The future is bright.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patrick Tutwiler, PhD