“When shifts and transitions in life shake you to the core, see that as a sign of the greatness that’s about to occur.”

Transition is hard and at times can be messy. Our district has been adjusting to many transitions this summer and into this coming school year - transitions in leadership both at the district level and school level, transition with our student information system moving from eSchool to PowerSchool, transition to new curriculum resources in ELA (English Language Arts) and Math, and transition of new staff and the critical shortage of educators and staff that all educational institutions are dealing with right now. Transitions can also be a sign of new beginnings and an opportunity to strengthen our systems and get feedback on what works and what does not work.

The theme of this 2022-23 school year will be Juntos Logramos- Together we achieve! Our school year began yesterday with excitement and ease, showing the incredible amount of preparation and work that our school leaders, teachers, and staff put into preparing for our opening of the new school year.

Much of our launch will focus on helping students acclimate to returning to school and classroom routines while building strong relationships with their teachers and their peers. We will also continue to set a rhythm of outreach and partnership with families, building on the success of those elements from past years. We have only just begun but have started on the right pathway for a successful school year.

LPS (Lynn Public Schools) Families received a welcome letter from me outlining the theme for our work with them this year and beyond. The theme, Juntos Logramos, Together We Achieve, is not a new path or direction. It is a message of teamwork in building strong relationships and a solid foundation of work together while continuing a thoughtful and strategic set of initiatives and activities aligned to our district strategic plan that are designed to meet students’ needs.

With every new school year there are successes and challenges. One of our challenges has been around the staffing of our open positions across our schools and departments. We continue to have openings that need to be filled and our Human Resources Department along with our school and district leaders have been working all summer searching, interviewing, and hiring staff for their schools and departments. Our team continues to work diligently to find avenues to recruit staff to fill these positions. To date we have 4 clerical positions, 3 nursing positions, 43 classroom positions, and 67 specialist positions (1 CIT, 7 reading, 3 Elementary Technology, 10 Speech and Language, 31 ELD (English Language Development),
Resource Inclusion) to staff. We are thinking creatively in our recruitment efforts tapping into local colleges and universities, some of our retired educators, as well as incentivizing placement of our current non-classroom staff to ensure that our classroom positions are safely covered. Another challenge has been our transition from eSchool to PowerSchool as our new student information system. Thank you to the Data Center who has been working countless hours with the PowerSchool consultants all summer for this transition. Unfortunately, this process delayed the typical communication strategies that schools use to share information to families as well as delayed the schools in getting their students schedules finalized and our online platforms ready for use for the opening of school. A special thank you to the many staff who stepped up and continue to step up working overtime to get the correct information into the system to have schedules and online systems ready for our students to access.

As we move "ONWARD", this year will be about strengthening our foundation. We will take what we have been working on together to create the bedrock that can be built upon into the future. We learn from each other, and our best work is created when we work together. Together, we continue to challenge ourselves without judgement. To meet our students’ needs we need to push our thinking around our equity work and push ourselves to identify what systems are preventing our district from offering equitable experiences for all. We commit to our English learners by utilizing our Strategies for English Learners PD (Professional Development); we continue to come into awareness about how equity lives in our work and our lives through our Hope and Healing PD; and more and more of us explore the Blended Learning model, while some even move on to become distinguished mentors. We will continue our reflection and professional work by completing the last 2 quarters of Hope and Healing PD; we will continue offering Blended Learning modules for those who are interested, and we will continue working together this year on lesson planning that is grounded and focused on how we support our most underserved students, our students with disabilities and our multilingual learners.

One success to note during this year’s opening is the excitement of the opening of the first Early College High School at NSCC. Lynn Public Schools and North Shore Community College are thrilled to be able to offer such a wonderful opportunity for our students and look forward to planning together the expansion of this program. Lynn Public Schools was also awarded the 21st Century Grant for three programs in our schools. Camp Fire of North Shore will add a third school to the work they do and offer students from the Hood School after-school programming. Also, LEAP for Education will continue their work with their DREAM MORE program at TMMS as well as expanding the program to LEHS for a teen center after school supported in part with 21st Century Grant funds. We will continue to investigate other opportunities to support our students and families around additional after-school programs.

We, as a collective team, will learn together and fortify the solid foundation that our students need and deserve. This year will primarily be about creating the systems and supports that we have been missing. Uniform systems will move us all toward the same goal while including and elevating teachers, staff, students, and families in the process. We need to provide our teachers and staff the space and autonomy to do what they do best … utilize their strengths daily to celebrate and elevate student learning.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra J. Ruggiero
Superintendent

Commented [CM1]: Do you want to add that the LEAP program is continuing to grow DREAM MORE at TMMS and expanding its afterschool programming into LEHS?