



WRENTHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of the Superintendent
120 Taunton Street
Wrentham, MA 02093

Allan W. Cameron, Ph.D.
Superintendent

Superintendent's Bulletin Fall of 2016

Dear WPS Community,

The 2016-2017 school year is off to an amazing start!



Jenn Moon, Allan Cameron, Erin Blake, Christine Walsh, Mike McGuire, and Ian Fownes get ready to run the second annual Wrentham Public Schools Halloween Hustle 5K.

All of our students, in pre-kindergarten through grade 6, are learning new concepts and skills, making friends, and having fun. My colleagues and I are continually impressed by their diligence and progress. We will continue to do our best to make sure your children leave Wrentham Public Schools ready to succeed in school and in life.

There are a lot of exciting things happening at Delaney School and Roderick School! Please check our website, principals' blogs, Facebook page, and Twitter for updates. Below you will find details on some significant events that have happened so far this school year.

Core Values

Respect • Communication • Collaboration • Responsibility • Continuous Growth and Learning

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Please let me know if you have any questions or suggestions for improvement. Thanks for your support of Wrentham Public Schools!

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Allan Cameron".

Allan Cameron
Superintendent of Wrentham Public Schools
camerona@wrenthamschools.org

2014-2019 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR WRENTHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Our strategic objectives are the priorities for district and school improvement. All of our district, school, and individual goals support the strategic objectives. We developed the objectives during the 2014-2015 school year based on feedback from teachers, students, families, and members of the community. Below are the strategic objectives and actions we have completed in support of each.

Strategic Objective #1 – Foster a Culture of Continuous Growth and Learning.

- Reallocated fiscal resources to hire a Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment; Literacy and Math Specialists; and an additional Art Teacher.
- Expanded our prekindergarten programs and increased access to full-day kindergarten.
- Implemented *Writer's Workshop* in kindergarten through grade 6.
- Developed a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan that outlines the support available to every student in the regular education classroom.
- Provided faculty and staff members with relevant and actionable professional development opportunities.

Strategic Objective #2 – Strengthen Family and Community Partnerships.

- Enhanced the Wrentham Public Schools website to provide more information and accessible navigation.
- Initiated an online presence for the district on Facebook and Twitter.
- Commenced a report card review process in prekindergarten through grade 6 to ensure alignment with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and the district core values.
- Developed a system to distribute school and community notices in a structured and predictable manner via email. Notices are typically emailed on Fridays.
- Utilized print media, online news resources, and local access cable TV to share news about the schools and the district.
- Collaborated with the Bi-County Collaborative to provide services for students with severe learning disabilities in Wrentham.
- Hosted a “Meet and Greet” for students and families on the day before school started.
- Worked with the Wrentham Elementary School Trust (WEST) and the Wrentham Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) to host events for the school community and raise funds for programs and curriculum resources.

Strategic Objective #3 – Ensure the Buildings and Grounds are Safe, Clean, Attractive, and Conducive to Learning.

- Restructured the custodial contract and reallocated fiscal resources to hire a Facilities Manager to oversee district buildings, grounds, and operations.

- Worked with the town and the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) to secure support for a new roof at the Delaney School. MSBA has agreed to pay for 46% of the total cost of the new roof at Delaney School.
- Raised funds to make the playground at Delaney School larger, safer, accessible, and fun for the students.
- Installed a secure entrance at Roderick School.
- Completed an asbestos abatement project at the Roderick School and Delaney School.
- Collaborated with the Wrentham Police Department on the development of new emergency procedures.
- Installed air conditioners in the warmest classrooms in the district.
- Improved technology infrastructure and provided resources and training to support learning in the 21st century.

We have made some significant progress with our strategic objectives over the past two years. We will continue to work on them this school year and review and update them in the future. Please let your principal or me know if you have any questions or suggestions.

THE RESULTS OF THE 2015-2016 MCAS TESTS

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education recently released the results of the 2015-2016 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System, commonly known as MCAS. MCAS is a series of tests given annually to all public school students in Massachusetts in grades 3 through 8 and 10. The tests measure how well the students understand the learning standards outlined in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and Science and Technology/Engineering (STE). School districts and students' parents or guardians receive information about the students' performance and growth from the prior school year. The performance and growth information is used to monitor student learning, identify strengths and weaknesses, and develop plans to support student improvement.

Our students continued their strong MCAS performance in 2015-2016. Students' scores were placed into one of four performance categories: Advanced, Proficient, Needs Improvement, or Warning, with Advanced and Proficient being the highest categories. The vast majority of our students (78% in ELA, 78% in Mathematics, and 74% in STE) earned Advanced or Proficient on the 2015-2016 assessments and demonstrated growth from one school year to the next.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education places all schools and districts into one of five Accountability and Assistance Levels based on how students performed on the state tests. I am very pleased to report that Delaney School received the highest rating, Level 1, because all students met their state-determined progress and performance targets. Roderick School received the second highest rating, Level 2, because our students did not meet their state-determined progress and performance targets. Although Roderick School fell short of Level 1, the school performed in the top 20% of elementary schools in Massachusetts.

We are using the scores from the 2015-2016 MCAS to identify and improve our areas of growth. We are continuing our work with *Writer's Workshop* to improve our students' writing, researching ways to improve our students' reading skills, reviewing our math practices to foster students' conceptual understanding, and collaborating with KP Middle School and KP High School on ways to best teach the new Massachusetts Science Standards. To learn more about these initiatives, the professional qualifications of the students' classroom teachers, or any other questions, please contact Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Kristin Dykstra at dykstrak@wrenthamschools.org.

The 2015-2016 MCAS scores reflect Wrentham students' high level of competence with the standards in ELA, Mathematics, and Science and Technology/Engineering and their progress from one school year to the next. Their strong performance is a testament to the diligence, support, and commitment to growth exhibited by our students, their families, the community, and the faculty and staff of Wrentham Public Schools. We will work very hard to maintain the positive momentum and foster continuous growth and learning.

Please [click here](#) to learn more about how Wrentham students performed on 2015-2016 MCAS.

THE DATES FOR THE 2016-2017 MCAS TESTS

Grade 3:

ELA (4/25-4/27)
MATH (5/16-5/17)

Grade 4:

ELA (4/10-4/12)
MATH (5/15-5/16)

Grade 5:

ELA (4/4-4/6)
MATH (5/8-5/9)
SCIENCE (5/18-5/19)

Grade 6:

ELA (4/25-4/26)
MATH (5/10-5/11)

NEW PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT SECTION OF THE REPORT CARD

We are reviewing and updating our report cards. Our goal is to have report cards for all students, prekindergarten through grade 6, that inform parents and future teachers of a student's progress with the most important skills and concepts learned in the grade. The report card review process will take several years and proceed through multiple revisions as we update all of the standards.

This school year, we are implementing the first part of the new report card in prekindergarten through grade 6: the Personal Development section.

The Personal Development section of the report card provides students' families and future teachers with information about the students' behaviors that support academic and social growth. The Personal Development standards are based on our core values of respect, responsibility, collaboration, communication, and continuous growth and learning. The standards vary slightly by grade and are developmentally appropriate for the students. The grading scale reflects how frequently students engage in the specific behaviors.

- 4: The student consistently demonstrates this skill.
- 3: The student demonstrates this skill most of the time.
- 2: The student demonstrates this skill some of the time.
- 1: The student rarely demonstrates this skill.

Your child's teacher looks forward to talking with you about your child's report card on either Wednesday, November 30, or Thursday, December 1, during Parent/Teacher Conferences.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Research suggests that a student's learning improves and inappropriate behaviors decrease when the student's teacher and parents or guardians communicate about the student. Parent/Teacher Conferences are among the most effective forums for these conversations. In Wrentham, the fall and spring report cards are accompanied by parent-teacher conferences. These meetings afford students' families and teachers the opportunity to discuss the students' strengths, areas of growth, and goals for the future.

The Harvard Graduate School of Education published a resource called [Parent/Teacher Conference Tip Sheets](#). The paper outlines ideas for principals, teachers, and parents to have effective conferences. The tips for parents include:

- Review your child's report card and other work before the conference.
- Reflect on your child's strengths and weaknesses.
- Ask the teacher about her or his goals for your child.
- Ask how you can support the goals at home.
- Schedule another time to talk with the teacher if necessary.
- Share the feedback with your child in an age-appropriate manner.

Together, we can make sure the Parent/Teacher Conferences are effective and beneficial for the students. Please contact your child's teacher if you have any questions about conferences.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION EDUCATION

Massachusetts is in the midst of an opioid abuse epidemic. According to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, [11,201 people overdosed on opioids and died in Massachusetts](#)

[between 2000 and 2015, with 1,015 of those people living in Norfolk County.](#) In response, public health, safety, and education organizations are collaborating to educate the public about the dangers of opioid abuse.

We are very fortunate in Wrentham to have two programs in place to teach our students about healthy decision making in developmentally appropriate ways: Health class and the DARE program. Starting in kindergarten, students participate in Health class one time per week. The Health teacher, Kristin Pitman, helps students understand the benefits of good nutrition, exercise, and making positive decisions. This is supplemented by the DARE program in 6th grade, which is taught by Wrentham Police Sergeant Jeff Smith. He teaches 6th graders about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse and the power of positive decision making. The work done by Mrs. Pitman and Sergeant Smith is supported by our nurses, mental health team, teachers, and administrators. We are committed to helping our students live healthy and happy lives. If you have any questions or concerns about opiates or other drugs or alcohol, we can help. Please call your principal or school nurse for a confidential conversation: 508-384-5430.

SECURITY AT DELANEY SCHOOL AND RODERICK SCHOOL

My primary responsibility is to ensure the safety of our students, teachers, and staff members. It is something I take very seriously. I grew up in Shelton, CT, which has experienced and witnessed school tragedies. In 1988, three custodians were shot and killed at my former elementary school. In 2012, the Sandy Hook tragedy took place a few miles up the road from my hometown. My nephew's school hosted some Sandy Hook students until the new building was built. I know it is extremely unlikely that there will be an incident in Wrentham. In fact, a person in America is statistically more likely to go to the hospital in a pogo-stick related mishap (1 in 115,300) than be involved in a school shooting (1 in 141,463). However, we remain vigilant because the stakes are so high.

We worked closely with the Town and Wrentham Police Department to enhance security at the schools. Over the summer, a new security entrance was constructed at the Roderick School. The entrance, which is similar to the entrance to the Delaney School, restricts access to the building. School Resource Officer Steve Hearon helped us review and update our emergency response protocols for building evacuation (for example, fire or gas leak), stay in place (for example, a skunk in the hallway), and active intruder (for example, someone looking to harm others). SRO Hearon and I are facilitating a parent workshop about school safety that will review the emergency protocols, opioid abuse in our area, and other safety issues. The tentative date is Thursday, December 17, 2016, at 7:00 p.m. in the Vogel auditorium. We will send a notice home with more details prior to the date.

We practice evacuating the building at least two times each school year. Typically, the fire alarm is activated and we stand outside until the fire fighters tell us to reenter the buildings. This spring, we are going to try something new. We are going to evacuate the buildings and practice walking to our evacuation rally point at St. Mary's Church. We would have to go to

St. Mary's if we had to stay out of the buildings for an extended period of time. The principals and police department are working on the details of the practice walk to St. Mary's Church. I will notify you when the drill happens.

PTO AND WEST EVENTS

The Wrentham Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) and the Wrentham Elementary Schools Trust, Inc. (WEST) are two parent-led organizations that support Wrentham Public Schools. They have different but complementary missions that enhance the learning of our students. Both groups are dependent on parent volunteers. Volunteering time to the PTO and/or WEST is a great way to have a direct and positive impact on Delaney School and Roderick School – and have fun! Please contact either PTO President Lindsay McDonald at mcdonaldl@wrenthamschools.org or WEST President Pam Leveroni at info@wrenthamwest.org if you would like to get involved.

PTO Update

Fall is always a busy time for the PTO, and this year was no exception! Like you, we are trying to get into a "Back to school" groove with our families, and learn the layout of the year at school. Prior to the first day, we were able to once again supply the Roderick grades 4-6 with their 2016-17 school planners to be used during the year, while they are taught how to plan their time, schedule wisely, and to organize their work. Our Kidstuff Coupon Books were a big success again this year as a PTO fundraiser. Thank you to all who volunteered or participated in the Halloween Hustle this year! The sun was shining and it was a beautiful day for family fun! This year, the money the PTO earns will be used towards signage and safety for our school, as well as assisting teachers with needs for the children. PTO grade-specific events have begun, starting with the Pre-K - 1st grade Halloween Party, in which the kids had a super-fun night dancing and playing Halloween games with their friends. Next week, November 7th, is the Hoedown for 4th and 5th graders! Also, the fall Book fair will be November 10th and 11th at the Barnes & Noble in Walpole.

The PTO goal is to enhance your child's experience during their elementary years. Have an idea on a fundraiser or have an idea for a new event? Interested in volunteering? We would love to have you come to a PTO meeting or be part of the team.

WEST Update

WEST funded over \$30,000 in educational grants in 2015-2016 for important, innovative programs in our elementary schools. Topics ran the gamut-- robots that teach computer programming, visits from historical actors, published books written by the children, engineering and building materials and much, much more. Parents can check out our website to read more about these and other WEST-funded grants. www.wrenthamwest.org

WEST's Battle of the Bands is back again! On January 28th, 2017, Berkshire Valley Boys will defend their title against newcomers Untapped Potential and Ben Blakesley and the Haymakers. Doors will open at Showcase Live at Patriot Place in Foxboro at 7:00 p.m. It will be a great time

and all proceeds will be used to fund educational programs at the school during WEST's next grant cycle. Tickets are on sale now on the WEST website.

WAYS TO SUPPORT THE WRENTHAM FOOD PANTRY

The Wrentham School Committee and the schools work closely with the Wrentham Food Pantry to support local families. School Committee Members Ed Goddard and Eric Greenberg, the School Committee liaisons to the Wrentham Food Pantry, communicates frequently with the Wrentham Food Pantry about their needs. The holiday season is particularly busy at the Wrentham Food Pantry. There are collection bins located by the main entrances to both schools and the Janelli Annex. We appreciate any non-perishable donation, particularly:

- Boxed instant potatoes
- Canned corn, green beans, and fruit
- Coffee, tea, and cocoa
- Boxed hot and cold cereal
- Soups and chowders
- Peanut butter, jelly, and marshmallow fluff
- Macaroni and cheese
- Juice and juice boxes

WEATHER RELATED SCHOOL DELAYS AND CLOSINGS

I hope that the power of positive thinking makes all New England snow fall on ski slopes and trails rather than roads, driveways, and roofs in Wrentham (or Walpole, where I live and shovel). However, I want to review the procedure for cancelling or delaying school just in case we have another rough winter.

I will only delay or close school when conditions threaten the safety of our students. To make that determination, I will:

- Watch multiple weather reports.
- Solicit opinions about road conditions from the Wrentham Police Department, Department of Public Works, and the bus company.
- Consult with the superintendents of KP, Norfolk, and Plainville.
- Review the condition of our schools and grounds with our Facilities Manager.

I will make the decision to close or delay school the evening before when possible and by 5:30 a.m. at the latest. When school is closed or delayed, you will receive a phone call and email from me. I will also alert local television stations.

THANKS FOR READING!

Thank you for reading the *Superintendent's Bulletin*! I can't believe how quickly the first part of the school year flew by. I am excited to continue working with you for the good of our students and community. Please look for the next *Superintendent's Bulletin* in March. I hope you and your family enjoy the holidays!