

## Report of the Superintendent of Schools

Dear Abington Community Members:

As your Superintendent of Schools, I respectfully submit the following to you as my annual report.

Our students, parents and staff have accomplished many great things over this last year in which the community can be proud. Each day, the Abington Public Schools endeavor to accomplish our mission for the town's children, *"to provide all students relevant, challenging educational experiences to prepare them to be engaged, responsible citizens and members of the global community."*

This year we broke ground on a new grades 5-12 co-located middle high school with a pre-kindergarten building. This \$96.5 million dollar co-funded project between the residents (41.03%) and the Massachusetts School Building Authority (58.97%) is the first school construction project in Abington in over 50 years. The new building will provide state of the art technology and classroom space for our students. It will provide much a much needed auditorium and performance area, gymnasiums and a library media center for our students and the community. The facility will have two multipurpose synthetic playing fields and tennis courts. Security and communications will also be greatly improved making the new spaces much safer than the current school settings. The new school building will take three Depression Era buildings, which still have value for other uses, the Center, North and Frolio Schools, offline for educational use. I sincerely appreciate the many efforts and tireless work of everyone involved. This project has become a labor of love for many. Not the least of which are our Abington School Building Committee (ASBC) members.

I would like to publically thank the following Abington School Building Committee Members:

Richard Testa, Chair  
Kevin Atkinson  
Kathy Bailey  
Ronald Blanchard  
Andy Burbine  
David Drew  
Michael Franey  
Richard LaFond  
Jannette Leary  
Jason Linn  
Michael Lyons

Matthew MacCurtain  
Keri Maguire  
Felicia Moschella  
Shawn Reilly  
Peter Schafer  
Peter Serino  
Jessica Sullivan  
Teresa Sullivan  
Peter Walters  
James West  
George Whiting

### Support for Education

The FY 2016 operating budget for the Abington Public Schools is \$20,801,023. Through a terrible economic time in our nation's history, the budget for the Abington Public Schools has increased a total of 6.1% since FY-2010. The cost of education has risen at a higher rate in this same six year period of time. Every effort is made to maximize all of the allocated resources for teaching and learning.

The following items are of concern:

- Certain "built-in increases" for fixed or mandated costs will automatically cause our budget to increase regardless of the economic times.
- Class sizes at the elementary level are large and should be reduced.
- Previously eliminated high school and middle school class sections and programs should be restored.
- There is an over reliance on fees and community organizations to fund programming for athletics, music, co-curricular activities, pre-kindergarten and full-day kindergarten.

### Student Achievement and Activities

Massachusetts students have been required to pass the toughest standardized test in the nation in order to graduate from high school. Every member of the graduating class who has been enrolled in Abington High School since grade nine has passed the MCAS test since the graduation requirement was instituted by the Massachusetts Department of education. Our program and our teachers are well preparing students for the future. The proof of this is in the success our students upon graduation. In fact, the Class of 2015 found approximately 88% of the graduates furthering their education with 59% going on to four year colleges and 29% to two year colleges or technical schools. Eight percent (8%) of the graduates planned to go directly to work and 4% planned to enter the military.

Additionally, many students received prestigious academic awards and scholarships from national, regional, state and local organizations. Tyler Moulton received a Rensselaer Medal for Excellence in Science and Mathematics and Brooke Ritchie received the Bausch and Lomb Excellence in Science Award. Boston Globe Scholastic Art Awards were given to: George Cellini, Julia Do, Abi Edwards, Matt Halloran, Christina Howe, Taylor Johnson, Sarah MacLeod, Kaitlyn Molloy and Caitlin Shannon. Thirteen students at Abington High School earned the designation of AP Scholar by the College Board in recognition of their exceptional achievement on the college-level Advanced Placement Program Exams. Thirty students were awarded the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship, which provides a tuition waiver for four years of undergraduate education at Massachusetts state colleges and universities. The Adams Scholarship is based on outstanding performance on MCAS.

National Honor Society – Fourteen Abington High School students were inducted into the Abington Chapter of the National Honor Society in November 2015.

Frolio Middle School – Madison Caferro and Connor Roukey received Commonwealth of Massachusetts Middle Level Educators’ Student Scholar Awards. Fraser Toomey was the Project 351 Ambassador.

School councils continued to focus on promoting learning environments which are academically challenging, supportive, attractive and safe for both students and staff in their school improvement plans.

### Professional Development

The Abington Public Schools is committed to providing high quality professional development programs based in current research and best practices that focus on improving the learning of all students. Professional development is an ongoing process that focuses on federal, state and local educational initiatives and reflects the Mission, Vision and Guiding Beliefs of the system. Throughout the school year, administrators and staff plan, discuss, and organize professional growth opportunities focusing on identified priorities such as: Common Core Curriculum, Assessment Practices, District Improvement Planning, Educational Leadership, and Best Practice Uses for Classroom Technology.

Professional development is designed to be ongoing and to ensure knowledge and skill development to impact student learning.

### Abington Education Foundation and Local Charities

The Abington Education Foundation (AEF) once again had a very active and successful year. The Foundation's main goal is to encourage, promote and sponsor educational experiences and learning opportunities for students and teachers in the Abington Public Schools. The Foundation, in conjunction with the Jeffrey Coombs Memorial Fund, awarded approximately \$15,000.<sup>00</sup> in grants for the 2015-2016 school year.

It is with great appreciation that I must also note that an additional donation of \$22,755.<sup>00</sup> from the Green Wave Boosters to pay for all sub-varsity sports. These programs would not have been available without this needed support.

Our schools would look, feel and be very different without the help of our PTOs, Green Wave Boosters, Music Parents, the Abington Education Foundation. These organizations provide support which we need and greatly appreciate. Together we work with numerous community service organizations, local businesses and other town departments. Our entire community benefits from all of these collaborations and partnerships.

In closing, thank you to the administrative team, the PK-12 faculty and all support personnel for their assistance and dedicated service to children. I wish to express my appreciation to the members of the Abington School Committee for their hard work. I look forward to continuing to work with the Committee as we address the many important issues facing public education and the needs of Abington's students.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Schafer  
Superintendent of Schools