

**HINGHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**STAFF NEWSLETTER**  
**August, 2015**

This annual staff newsletter typically signifies that summer is nearly over. We are excited about the upcoming school year; but (probably like many of you) we too would appreciate having a few more weeks of summer to prepare for the arrival of the students and to ready ourselves for the many other aspects of our busy fall routines. Summer is always busy with hiring, purchasing, maintenance and repair projects, but even more so this year because of vacancies that are related to the initiation of a long awaited full day K program, the typical number of resignations and retirements, some new enrollment-related FTEs, and a number of full year leaves of absence. The hiring process has dominated the time and energy of many of our administrators and support staff this summer, but wait until you see the result!

By the time you read this newsletter, we will have hired more than 30 educators who have signed first time professional staff contracts with the HPS. As well, the hiring of a number of paraeducators, custodians, and other support staff is ongoing. There likely will be more changes as we approach the start of school, but we are excited about all the experiences, expertise, and energy that our new HPS colleagues will bring to their new roles.

We are proud to announce some leadership changes. Andy Hoey was appointed last spring to replace Jim Kirkcaldy as Director of Social Studies K-12. Our new Elementary School Resource Officer John Walden will take over that role from now Detective John Marquardt. Appointed recently to the new role of Facilities and Procurement Manager is Doug Foley. I know you will join me in welcoming and congratulating these new members of the HPS team as they transition to their new roles. Hingham's excellent mentor program will continue with Co-directors Courtney Stevenson and Jen Driscoll at the helm. Under their leadership, and with support from building coordinators Rose Yodzio, Joan Kilban, Kathy LeBlanc, and Eileen Sharkey, the program continues to provide a supportive start and modeling of "best practice" for our newest colleagues. Once again, a number of you have volunteered (or have been recruited) to become part of this significant effort; your nurturing of the newest members of our profession is acknowledged and appreciated.

Summer maintenance and cleaning projects have been under way across the district. In the various buildings, routine painting, plumbing, electrical, ceiling, playground projects and seemingly endless roof patching have been given attention. Work is ongoing on the final repair of the PRS roof structure and to complete the many other smaller repairs that remind us of the extent of Winter 2015 damage. Planning is complete for the enhancement of the playground area and to correct an erosion issue at East. Foster School will be brightened by new carpeting in the library and main office areas. South roof leaks have received attention and the installation of re-purposed Smartboards is ongoing at South and other schools. At HMS, nearly 1100 Chromebooks are boxed and labeled and ready for distribution to students in all three grades; a variety of new tools of technology are available in all buildings. Many thanks to HEF for their ongoing role in that regard. The HMS tennis courts have been restored for their intended use and the entire town awaits the grow-in of the new sports fields there. At HHS, a structural analysis project is the first step in looking at options for creating a needed wellness/fitness facility. District-wide, the depot parking lot has been repaved. Of course this is just a sampling of the completed or in process summer initiatives that reflect the efforts of our quality maintenance and custodial staff.

We have just received word of a state grant that will allow us to take to the next level a school security enhancement that will allow us to take full advantage of the technology that we already own.

Enrollment continues to grow at the secondary level. We anticipate an only slightly smaller elementary enrollment since the exit of a large fifth grade was balanced by a kindergarten enrollment of 300+ students (up more than 50 from last year's K class). We anticipate about a 60-student increase at the middle school and a slight increase for the high school, for an August 14, 2015 projection of 4284 students at K-12, up 50-60 students from last June.

The SC has already begun exploration and identification of program, personnel, student support, and facilities needs that will guide both long and short term planning efforts and the establishment of budget priorities for the coming year. The senior administrators (CO, Principals, and Directors) have begun planning for the development of a successor Strategic Plan for the HPS. All of you and representatives of our constituent groups will have input into that process over the next year.

The seemingly endless list of education mandates continues. The third year of the new educator evaluation process in Hingham will include more work on refining DDMs (district determined measures) and translating that data to impact ratings; we will continue to work with the HEA as we explore planning for the initial use of teacher to administrator and student to teacher feedback processes. All new staff for 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 have been fingerprinted in accordance with a change in the CORI law; the rest of us have until the very firm date of June 1st of 2016 to complete that responsibility. We have updated the state required MERP emergency response plans for each school; and we are hard at work to implement new/revised restraint training requirements and student discipline reporting protocols and to adapt and document our already effective mentoring program to meet the new MA mandates for comprehensiveness and the requirement of annual reporting to DESE.

Hingham has made excellent progress in implementing the MA standards and benchmarks. Efforts will be ongoing to complete our acquisition of updated texts and other learning materials and equipment. Hingham, along with most other MA communities is awaiting the November Massachusetts Board of Education decision to settle the MCAS vs PARCC debate. Very important in that regard will be whether the implementation of whatever is chosen will be for Spring 2016 or Spring 2017; and then we all have read press about a suggested moratorium on all state student assessments. Well, only time will tell what will happen! All of this at times seems overwhelming, but we will continue to work hard at doing the very best we can with the resources we have.

Nevertheless (and even more importantly), a number of local initiatives are moving forward. These include the district-wide piloting of new elementary reading materials and adoption of the 4<sup>th</sup> Edition of EDM for grades 3-5; expansion of the Chromebook distribution to grades 7 and 8; the piloting of an on-line algebra course at grade 9; and of course the implementation of our long awaited full day kindergarten program. Summer professional development has included the always popular Responsive Classroom training and a number of trainings and workshops related to the previously mentioned new initiatives; many of you also have taken courses and attended conferences and workshops, and we all will return to our regular routines with exciting new ideas to try. At Central Office we are in the beginning phases of implementing a paperless purchase order process.

Teachers new to Hingham will begin the 2015-2016 school year on August 31<sup>st</sup>. Their two-day orientation program will begin with a reception at the East School cafeteria at 8:00 a.m. on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Teachers who joined us after the start of the 2014-2015 year are invited as well. Photographs, words of welcome, introductions, the traditional bus tour, building meetings, a luncheon with mentors, and a Hingham Education Association presentation also will be part of the day's activities. New classroom teachers with five years or less of experience will participate in the "I Can Do It" workshop (at East) on September 1<sup>st</sup>. The more experienced new educators will spend the morning of the first in their buildings. A special education workshop for all new teachers (at Central on the afternoon of the 1<sup>st</sup>) will complete the orientation schedule. The annual fall convocation for all staff will take place at Hingham High School on September 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Challenges are ever present, but so are new resources, programs and facilities and always the good feelings and day-to-day rewards that come naturally as part of working with the children and young people we serve and also with our colleagues. I continue to be confident that we all will experience those special moments that remind us about why we entered the profession. May they be frequent and fulfilling! We have accomplished much together in the past, and I look forward to our future growth as a collaborative team as well. In addition to funding from our supportive community, we have benefitted (yet again) from the generous financial support of the Hingham Education Foundation, the Sports Partnership, the building PTOs, various booster groups, and also from the enthusiastic volunteerism of individuals and groups such as the School Committee, the Building Committee, the six School Councils and PTOs, the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC), and other community and committee members who support us in realizing all aspects of our mission. Hingham schools continue to reflect a true team spirit and a community commitment to a common goal of improving and enhancing the educational experience in ways that will allow all Hingham students to realize their potential!

I look forward to seeing new teachers on August 31<sup>st</sup> and all of you on September 2<sup>nd</sup>. Until then, enjoy your remaining time of renewal and relaxation!

Dorothy Galo, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools