

Message from the Superintendent    Feb. 3, 2010

Welcome to our new website. I hope you are enjoying our new look and content. Our webmaster Ms. Denise Brownell deserves tremendous credit for the redesign. Our old site was not a regular destination for parents because we weren't able to change content fast enough to make it worthwhile for folks to come back and check it out. Our content will now change weekly and we hope that parents and anyone interested in Rockland Public Schools will come to this site on a regular basis.

It is a busy time in Rockland Public Schools. The building project is moving ahead. Every week the architects are bringing in consultants to speak to staff and administration as design features are finalized. This week we met to design the features of the renovated auditorium. By the time the project is finished it is going to be a remarkable theater space and a great asset to the community.

The search for two new Principals has begun. In July we will have a new administration at the Jefferson School and the Rogers Middle School. Applications closed on January 29<sup>th</sup> and screening committees consisting of administration, teachers and parents have already met to look at the resumes and reduce the list of applicants to 6 or 7 semi-finalists. There were 27 applicants for the Jefferson position and 18 applications for the Rogers position. The semifinalist interviews will take place during the last week of February and the first week of March. I hope to appoint the new principals by the first week of April.

This time of year tends to be dominated by two issues, MCAS and budget. All of our schools are preparing for the MCAS testing which begins in March. New this year are several assessment tools which allow the teachers to track the progress of students as the year progresses. The G.R.A.D.E. assessment is in place in the elementary schools. It tests reading and listening comprehension among other things. The test sheets are scanned here in the district and teachers can have the results in days, which enables them to adapt their teaching to the strengths and weaknesses of the students. Galileo is a web based assessment in Mathematics. It tracks the progress of students in each of the Massachusetts Mathematics standards. It is used at the elementary schools and the middle school. The results are available immediately to the teachers and they can adapt their teaching. We have moved very quickly into the area of data-driven instruction and feel strongly that it will impact student achievement.

On the budgetary front, we must wait for the state to determine the level of local aid. These are still tough times, but thanks to the override and the employee wage freeze, the district is not in dire shape and it is still my goal to emerge from this recession with district and staff intact and begin to build and add to the educational offerings as the economy recovers in years to come.

