

Dear MPSD Families & Faculty;

I hope this finds you healthy and well. As we enter our last full week of instruction for the calendar year, I wanted to take a moment to share a few updates with you.

REMOTE SNOW DAYS

As many of you may already know, the School Committee acted on a recommendation that I brought forth to use our remote schedule on school days that would typically be cancelled due to inclement weather.

This idea has been discussed for a while, and we even had staff looking to enact ‘blizzard bags’ a few years ago. The remote day would allow for fewer interruptions to the learning cycle and would prevent us from having to add additional days at the end of the school year.

Superintendents had hoped to act on this earlier in the year but only recently received the greenlight from DESE to use remote days in this fashion. If the inclement weather was to cause substantial power outages, which would preclude us from having successful remote connections, we would simply call that a “snow day” and we would add that on at the end of the year, as we have done in the past.

For clarification, if we were closed on a Monday, the A cohort students would connect remotely with their teacher and follow the full remote schedule. Those in the B cohort would follow their typical hybrid/asynchronous schedule. If we knew we were going to be out for an extended period of time, then we would bring both cohorts together to follow the remote schedule the way we did at the DWS and FBMS, when we had to quarantine either the entire building or a grade level cluster for an extended period of time.

As it turns out, this coming Wednesday night, into Thursday morning, may bring us some inclement weather. As we get more information and get closer to the projected storm, we will provide you with as much information as we can.

MEF MINI-GRANTS

The Marshfield Education Foundation (MEF) has stepped up once again to provide assistance and support to teachers across the district. For the first time in their existence, they chose to create a “mini-grant” cycle for the months of November and

December, that allowed for MPSD educators to apply for grants that would assist them immediately as they work to support the hybrid model of learning that is taking place during this pandemic.

Below are comments shared by the MEF Grant Committee Chair, Maire Kurmin on the awarding of grants:

“The MEF board approved our first-ever round of Mini-Grants last evening. We are so excited to provide a little extra funding during this challenging time of hybrid learning. We received 21 grants totalling over \$44,000. We will be funding 16 grants at \$30,180.18. The grants affect all seven schools and almost all areas of curriculum. We are thrilled to be able to turn these requests around in 10 days and hope that the educators will be able to order their requests as soon as possible.”

The MEF is also in the middle of their Fall Glving Campaign, where they are reaching out to individuals, organizations and companies in the region to raise funds that will support the annual grant cycle which takes place in the spring. With their biggest fundraising activities curtailed due to Covid-19, the MEF is looking at this Glving Campaign as a way to “raise the necessary funds to be able to continue to fulfill our mission of providing innovative and creative programs that motivate and excite students and achieve excellence in teaching and learning.”

Here’s a [link](#) to the MEF website, where you can learn more about their grants and the Fall Glving Campaign.

TEACHING & LEARNING/FACILITIES TASK FORCES

The Teaching & Learning and the Facilities Task Forces, who were key groups that worked over the summer to help develop the district’s Reopening Plan, have been meeting once again to work on updating the current hybrid model of learning. With the feedback received over the fall from our information sessions and the completed surveys that went out to all stakeholders, a number of changes/modifications have already been made and were discussed at an earlier School Committee meeting. Now, both groups are looking at additional ways to tweak the existing plans and to possibly increase the amount of live instructional interaction between the teachers and their students.

The Teaching & Learning Task Force has been divided into two groups; one focused on PK- gr. 5 and the other addressing the needs of students in grades 6-12. Additional parents and staff have been added to these working groups and there is student participation in the secondary group as well. They will be using the feedback from our stakeholders to identify changes that can be made within our existing models.

The Facilities Task Force also added more parents and staff members and will be looking at ways to increase the amount of in-person instructional time in our schools. Their work, in part, is being driven by the Governor's call to districts to see how feasible it would be to have more in-person instruction and they have as their mission: "to maximize in school learning time for all students, safely". They hope to have recommendations to the School Committee by the beginning of the new year.

STRUCTURED LEARNING TIME

Districts across the state have been advised that the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE) is working on establishing a target amount of "Structured Learning Time" (live instructional time) that would be provided for students over a two-week span, whether they are fully in-person, in a hybrid or a remote learning model. Recently, districts provided DESE with the hours of synchronous and asynchronous instruction (over a two-week period) students took part in when they were in school and when they were working remotely. The Commissioner is presenting a proposal that would establish a set number of hours based on these responses that all districts would need to adhere to in the future.

When districts were putting together their opening plans in the summer, there were no expectations provided by DESE on the number of live instructional hours that would need to be in place for any of the three models. Districts were afforded the opportunity to make their plans as they saw fit and DESE provided a variety of resources that could be used to better identify what model may work well for each district. Much of what we used to bring forth the asynchronous approach we have followed this school year, and that was approved by DESE, came from resources provided to us by DESE, along with an assessment of current research, best practices and examples from other districts across the Commonwealth and across the country.

While we have already been working on revising our learning models and assessing our amount of live instructional time, DESE informed Superintendents that their Board will be voting on these new Structured Learning Time (SLT) expectations this week. If

enacted, districts would have until January 19th to revise their models to meet the new expectations brought forth. They have provided districts with an idea of whether they would meet the projected number of hours if this proposal is voted on and our district, along with 135 other districts (approximately 1/3 of the state), would need to increase the number of hours of live/structured learning time to meet the newly established expectations.

The district leadership team is already working on ways to meet these projected hours and will be sharing ideas with both task forces before they meet next as it will help drive their efforts over the next few weeks. As DESE works to finalize their proposal on structured learning time, we will keep all stakeholders in the loop on possible changes that will be enacted to meet these new expectations once they are voted on.

TIME OF GIVING

The people of Marshfield have, once again, shown their spirit of generosity and care for those in need of assistance over the past few weeks as we gear up for the holiday season. Under the direction of the district's McKinney-Vento Homeless Coordinator, Ms. Robynne Ryan-Lambert, a multitude of individuals, organizations and local companies have come together to provide in excess of \$23,000 in presents, clothing and gift cards for the District's homeless students and other students in need.

While none of these groups or individuals are doing this work to receive accolades, I feel it's important to note and thank those who have done so much, in a short period of time, for some of our most "at-risk" students.

To date, the following folks have stepped forward and either donated or collected items for our homeless:

Marshfield Real Estate Cooperative and friends- led by Sherry Costello

Sean Costello

Members of the Marshfield School Committee

Lara Brait and Marshfield PTO

The Marshfield Police Department

Goodwill Hunters

Shoreline Aviation

Levitate

Brant Rock Market

St Ann's By the Sea
North Community Church
A Simple Gesture Organization
Sowing Seeds
Dr. Grazioso

In addition, we had many families from each school across the district make donations, along with over 100 students who also donated toys and clothing over the past eight weeks.

We cannot thank these individuals and organizations enough for their generosity. The impact they have had on so many Marshfield families is immeasurable.

COVID-19 QUARANTINE UPDATES

As of December 7, the Massachusetts DPH slightly changed the Covid-19 quarantine protocols and have a new version of what to do if you have been exposed to a positive case of someone who has taken a Covid test.

In a nut-shell, there are three "options" that can be followed in the hopes of better compliance so that people will do the right thing, while not imposing hardships for missing a lot of work and school.

Please continue vigilant daily monitoring of your child's health and follow the CDC *Daily Screening Checklist*. If you think your child is not feeling well, please keep them home and notify your PCP.

Here's a link to the new [DPH Quarantine Guidelines](#).

FLU VACCINATION

While you have been receiving word from your school nurses throughout the year, this is just a reminder that the Massachusetts Department of Public Health is now requiring the influenza vaccine (flu shot) for all children 6 months of age or older who attend MA schools and childcare. All MPSD students are expected to have received a flu vaccine (unless there is a documented medical or religious exemption, as is the case with all school required vaccines) by December 31, 2020. This applies to the fully remote students as well. If you haven't already done so, please have your child vaccinated and send in the documentation from the visit to his/her school.

If you have any concerns or questions about this state mandate- check in with your school nurse or building principal.

There is a lot of information to sift through in this update. I hope it helps better explain some of the things going on around the district and provides you with an idea of what we will be working on in the coming weeks.

Thank you and have a good evening.

All the best,

Jeffrey W. Granatino
Superintendent