

GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

195 Federal Street, Suite 100, Greenfield, MA 01301

Ph: 413-772-1312 / Fax: 413-772-1379

The Greenfield Public School District is a place where every child is supported on their path to success.

To: Amy Proietti, Chair

From: Christine DeBarge, Ed.D

Date: September 13, 2023

RE: Superintendent Update

1. Opening of School

I am pleased to share that we have opened school for the 2023-2024 academic year. Students have been engaged in learning and all of our staff has been very busy with supporting those students and each other.

I would like to thank the following folks for the fantastic work this summer in preparation for this school year:

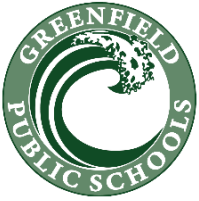
- our Maintenance and Custodial staff
- our Administrative Assistants across the district
- our Technology Department
- our Business Office staff
- our Administrators

I'd also like to thank the Food Service Staff and Summer School staff who supported our students during the Extended School Year Title I and Special Education programs.

As we know, we experienced some rather hot days last week. I worked with principals daily regarding the temperatures and what steps could be taken to mitigate the impacts of the temperature and humidity. They checked with their nurses and we had no incidents reported of heat related illnesses reported to me. I also visited some classes on both Tuesday and Thursday and spoke to the teachers in those rooms.

603 CMR 18.00 (the Massachusetts regulation) states that indoor room temperatures cannot exceed the outdoor temperature when the outdoor temperature is above 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Given the daily, outdoor temperatures, we did not exceed the outdoor temperatures in our classrooms.

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Mitigation strategies included:

- ensuring everyone had access to water all day
- shutting off lights and minimizing use of technology which can generate low levels of heat
- having indoor recess and physical education and having less rigorous activities
- having rooms with air conditioning or cooler rooms available for staff to bring classes, especially in the afternoons

I would also like to again share information I included in a Parent Update - early release days for the temperatures last week could pose severe hardships for some families who may not have employment that would allow them to leave work without penalty. Early release days also assume that all of our students would have had access to cooler locations than what we had in our school buildings. I need to weigh all factors when considering early release days. I will periodically remind families that we respect their right to make decisions for their own children if they ever do not agree with decisions I have made about keeping schools open given weather related issues.

2. Update on Phone System Upgrade

As you may remember, we utilized some ESSER II funds, along with unspent capital funds from prior years' projects to do a phone system upgrade. I received confirmation from our vendor, Valley Communications Systems, that all district schools except Green River will be compliant by Sept 18, 2023 when the last two locations, GMS and Central Office will be cut over to the new system.. This upgrade will bring us into compliance with the Ray Baum Act and E911 requirements. I have provided this update to the Fire Department and Police Department.

3. Update on the Strategic Plan

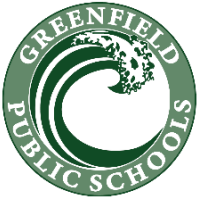
The Technology Committee has been meeting and is scheduled for a few additional meetings this fall.

All department heads worked with Karin to identify professional development needs for the academic year. Identified training is included on the Administrative Calendar.

A Food Service Department survey has been sent through the Superintendent's Parent Update

A Transportation survey was conducted with department staff and is being reviewed.

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Jake is working with the City to refine the maintenance schedule for all GPS transportation vehicles and that schedule is expected to be done by Oct 1.

Elementary family/community engagement events have been preliminarily scheduled on the Administrative Calendar and will be shared with families in the month during which they are scheduled. We are finalizing secondary events and those will be added shortly.

Attendance procedures are being reviewed. We have purchased a “plug in” for our PowerSchool program which allows us to more easily track efforts to support students and families with attendance. Training has begun on that new program. We have begun reviewing all attendance letters and updates will be added to the new program. Attendance meetings have begun in all buildings and are scheduled weekly.

4. COVID Updates

We have been informed through our collaboration between Melissa, our Nurse Leader, and the Health Department, that COVID cases in Greenfield have increased. We will continue to follow the current DESE guidelines which include the need to remain out of school for 5 days following a positive test and the recommendation to continue wearing a mask through Day 10. We are also sending information home to families about these protocols through the school newsletters. Melissa is coordinating several COVID and Flu vaccine clinics and those dates will be shared as we get closer. The first dates will be in October.

5. Re-Envisioning our School Facilities

We are continuing to work on the draft SY2024-2025 scheduled for elementary specials, Greenfield Middle School and Greenfield High School to identify the impacts on staffing with the Option 2B. The goal is to have that information to the subcommittee in October with follow up to the full Committee at the next School Committee meeting. The SC meeting would be pending the timing of the subcommittee meeting.

6. Website Update

The district is unveiling a new website format this Friday. We needed to update because the prior platform is no longer supported so we have spent the last several months working with Travis Johnston from CES to reconfigure and update for the new site. I do expect there will be some bugs or errors despite our careful review so we would ask families, community members or Committee members to please just email me or Lauren if you find something that is incorrect.