

*Together, we inspire
and challenge all
learners to realize their
unique potential and
become active
contributors to their
community*

Office of the Superintendent
Kirk Downing, Superintendent
Laura Friend, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning

Superintendent's Report to the NRSD School Committee September 28, 2022

Announcements:

Nashoba Educator, Thea Tully, to Present at National Conference

Thea Tully, 8th grade social studies teacher at the Florence Sawyer School, has been selected to present at the National Conference for Social Studies (NCSS) in Philadelphia this December. Ms. Tully will present her "Race to the Presidency" simulation, a multi-faceted project that engages students with a variety of learning activities as they become part of a candidate or campaign team and run for U.S. President. To ensure the highest quality of sessions presented at the Conference, all submissions underwent a double-blind review as part of the selection process. We are very proud of Ms. Tully's accomplishment and are grateful that our students are able to participate in the Race to the Presidency simulation here at Nashoba each year. The NCSS Annual Conference is the largest annual gathering of K-12 social studies classroom teachers, college and university faculty members, curriculum designers and specialists, district and state social studies supervisors, international educators, and social studies discipline leaders.

Vaping Diversion Program and iDECIDE

In recent years, substance use in schools has increased due to the widespread availability of devices that make it easy to conceal substances from peers, parents, and school staff. Students who use substances at school or school sanctioned events are both violating school substance use policies and are at a heightened risk for negative health effects. Nashoba Regional High School, alongside nearly 100 schools across Massachusetts, has committed to launching an exciting new program called iDECIDE (Drug Education Curriculum: Intervention, Diversion, and Empowerment). This program was collaboratively developed by Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and the Institute for Health and Recovery. iDECIDE aims to provide students experimenting with substances and/or who are discovered using substances at school with opportunities to strengthen their knowledge, skills, and motivation to make healthier decisions. The iDECIDE program will be available sometime in the 2022-2023 academic year upon staff training and roll out from MGH.

In the meantime, Nashoba will continue with its existing vaping/substance diversion program. In previous years, this six-week vaping diversion program focused solely on nicotine use with vape pens or e-cigarettes for students caught with or who have admitted to using vaping products on school property.

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The health service department has enhanced the program to promote education and empowerment as an equitable response to adolescent vape use and substance use. Throughout the program, students will have a chance to meet with a school administrator, school nurse, athletic director, and school resource officer. Each week of the program, students engage in assignments on topics such as health risks, marketing, school/state chemical health regulations and more. In week six, the students present a final project to complete the program. Our goal is to collaborate with parents to help support our students in making positive decisions for themselves and their future.

Updates on Strategic Work

Topic 1: REDI (Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) Foundations District Leader Learning Series

Strategic Objective #3: Ensure equitable opportunities and outcomes for all through increased awareness, representation, practices, and communication around diversity, equity, and inclusion

Strategic Initiative #1: Conduct an audit for equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging, PK-12+

Strategic Initiative #2: Deepen understanding and strengthen practices in culturally responsive teaching

Nashoba leaders have been accepted by the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents to participate in the REDI (Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) Foundations District Leader Learning Series. This work will focus on helping our leaders navigate the challenges of the critically important work of building and sustaining cultures of belonging, equity, diversity, and inclusion. Superintendent Downing, Assistant Superintendent Friend, Courtney Philbin, Math/Science Director, and Laura Pagington, ELA and Social Studies Director, will participate in multiple workshops to lift our practice. Our learning will complement what we learn from our equity audit to develop a long term strategy for diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. We will update the committee on our experience in this leadership series through the year.

Topic 2: Renaissance Learning Launch

Strategic Objective #2: Support and inspire all learners through improving and implementing clearly aligned and articulated curricula, equitable innovative instructional and assessment practices, and shared leadership

Strategic Initiative #6: Create, develop, and implement a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) approach

This year, the Nashoba Regional School District will build upon its assessment capacity and add a new tool to its assessment repertoire, Star Assessment, from Renaissance Learning. Star Assessments is a comprehensive and adaptive online assessment platform within Renaissance Learning that will enable teachers to quickly and accurately assess student progress, prioritize student need, and plan for targeted instruction. Star Assessments meet students at their level of independence, adjusting to students' level of understanding as the student moves through the assessment. Students in grades K-9 will be assessed in mathematics using Star Math, and students in grades K-8 will be assessed in reading using Star Early Literacy/Star Reading. Assessments will be administered as universal screeners three times per year (fall/winter/spring). Our fall Star screening assessment window opens this week. The use of universal screeners for early identification along with targeted instructional planning and progressing monitoring is a proactive and responsive approach to supporting student learning and growth over time. We look forward to updating the committee on the progress of our implementation throughout the course of the year.

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Topic 3: *Bridges in Mathematics* Implementation

Strategic Objective #2: Support and inspire all learners through improving and implementing clearly aligned and articulated curricula, equitable innovative instructional and assessment practices, and shared leadership

Strategic Initiative #3: Develop a district-wide instructional coaching model

Implementation of our district's new K-5 mathematics program, *Bridges in Mathematics*, is underway. *Bridges* was selected using the IMplement MA Guide, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) high-quality instructional materials adoption process. Grounded in equity for students, the IMplement MA Guide outlines an inclusive four-phase process to select and implement the high-quality instructional materials that best meet each district's local needs. After engaging in the IMplement curriculum review process last year, *Bridges* was selected for implementation beginning this fall. Karen Boisvert, math curriculum lead and instructional coach, has led the district's implementation efforts which have been designed to address multiple facets of implementation, including professional development for teachers and administrators, the development of a Bridges Success Team, instructional coaching in the classroom, and the creation of a Teacher Landing Page with quick links, pacing guides, and helpful resources unit by unit. Future plans to support implementation include ongoing communication with teachers and special educators to monitor implementation needs and further training from the Math Learning Center's "Deepening Implementation" pathway to strengthen and refine instructional practices and planning within *Bridges*.

Topic 4: Dr. Anthony (Tony) Bent Leadership Workshop Series, NRHS Leadership Council

Strategic Objective #2: Support and inspire all learners through improving and implementing clearly aligned and articulated curricula, equitable innovative instructional and assessment practices, and shared leadership

Strategic Initiative 2: Develop a Professional Learning Community culture across all schools, departments, and grade levels

Strategic Objective #4: Maximize the potential of students, staff, caretakers and community through effective resource allocation

Strategic Initiative 1: Build and create a distributive leadership plan that fosters shared responsibility for leading and learning

Strategic Initiative 4: Make time and financial commitments to professional development in order to accomplish strategic plan objectives / initiatives

The New England School Development Council (NESDEC), working in collaboration with Dr. Tony Bent, will present a custom-designed seminar series on building collective leadership capacity to leverage positive school transformation and change with the high school leadership council. Nashoba Regional High School Department Chairs, Dean of Students, and the NRHS administrative team, including Dr. Boynton, and Assistant Principals Boulay and Pezzote will participate in this interactive 6 part seminar series, beginning in October and ending in March. Dr. Bent brings a wealth of experience having served as a former Superintendent of Schools and an active coach for area superintendents for the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents. We look forward to sharing the benefits, outcomes, and results of this unique learning opportunity for our high school leadership team with the committee in April.

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