

*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 **April 12, 2023**

Announcements:

Principal Search for Center School

The search for the Center School principal position is underway! The position is posted and many candidates have submitted applications. We are eager to expedite the search, and we will do so without compromising the thoroughness of our vetting process. It is in that spirit that I offer this schedule of activities to keep you apprised of our efforts and show ways that you will be able to provide feedback on our candidates.

The selection process is underway with outreach to applicants, and preliminary interviews scheduled for April vacation week. Those who are found suitable for continuation in the process will be interviewed on April 25 by a ten-person panel consisting of three Center School teachers, an instructional assistant, two parents put forward by the Center School Council, a current elementary level principal, Center School's administrative assistant, and two central office administrators. The task of this group will be to provide feedback to the Superintendent for his selection of three finalists from the pool of candidates to introduce to the community.

During the week of May 1, 2023, each of the three finalists will spend a day in the district, culminating in an evening virtual public forum on Thursday, May 4, 2023. **Please mark your calendars for 6-8 PM on May 4, 2023.** That night will be your opportunity to participate in a virtual forum where each of the finalists will have an opportunity to answer the questions presented by the community. A form will be sent to families to suggest questions. Superintendent Downing and the Center School Council will consolidate and craft the questions submitted by the community and present those questions to the candidates. Following this forum, you will have an opportunity to provide feedback through an electronic form provided during the forum.

Superintendent Downing will also meet with the MRE faculty on **May 5, 2023** to collect their feedback following the finalists' full-day visits. After a thorough review of references and feedback provided

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throughout the process, Superintendent Downing will select the next principal for Center School. It is his goal to make an announcement to the community on or before **May 12, 2023**.

School Safety

On March 27, 2023 our country once again felt the pain of another school shooting at The Covenant School, a private Presbyterian Church in America parochial school in the Green Hills neighborhood of Nashville, Tennessee. Our hearts break for those who lost loved ones and for all of those who are impacted by the horror of school shootings. When the shooting in Uvalde, Texas occurred we sent a link of resources from the [National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#) to the community. I am sending that same resource with you in the event you are looking for supportive information.

Over the last week several families have reached out about the safety protocols and practices of our school district. I completely understand why families want to know if we are prepared for such an event. It is hard not knowing the details. However, we do not reveal our safety protocols because we do not want to educate a nefarious actor of our plans. By keeping our practices close to the chest, we are actually making our schools safer. What I can share is that our facilities director has assessed the performance of the security system and keyless entry system to ensure they are working properly. Also, he has directed his staff to conduct perimeter walks throughout the day to ensure all personnel and students are following our security protocols. We conduct these practices on a regular basis and will continue to do so. In the coming days, district officials will meet with local law enforcement to discuss our current practices. Their guidance and expertise will guide any adjustments we make to our current protocols.

The Nashoba Regional School District is committed to the balance of physical and emotional safety for all. We believe the optimal campus physical safety is achieved through the attention of communication with key stakeholders and first responders, training and thoughtful planning for faculty and students, and application of resources such as security assessments, locked doors, cyber-security tools, SRO, and more.

Safety committees meet monthly in each school building consisting of principals, administrators, local police and fire, nurses, counselors, custodians and teachers. The safety committees are committed teams of stakeholders who apply best practices to individual campus needs. The Emergency Response Team is led by the district nurse leader to address district wide safety concerns. At least one member from each safety committee attends. Other Support teams consist of crisis teams in each building who come together in times of individual student, parent or staff crisis.

I know this update may not resolve all the questions one might feel regarding school safety. It is my hope that our families can rest assured that we are committed to the health and well being of all our students, families, and employees.

FY24 Budget Book

The FY24 Budget book has been shared with the Town Administrators and has been [posted to the district website](#). The goal for this year's budget book was to communicate expanded fiscal information effectively to the public and how the budget connects to the Strategic Plan. A special thank you goes out to the entire team behind the building of the FY24 Budget and budget book.

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March 17 – Pave Your Path, Full Day PD Update & Feedback

On Friday, March 17, the district held its annual professional development day for faculty and staff, Pave Your Path, Nashoba! We opened the day with the voices of our Nashoba Graduates through story and video. Through story, we heard from two Nashoba graduates, Abbie McCaffrey, '14, and Paul Theriault, '18, who shared their Nashoba story and how they have paved their path after Nashoba. Through video, we heard from a wide range of Nashoba graduates who not only volunteered to offer their reflections on the skills and competencies learned at Nashoba but who also provided us with insight into the skills and competencies necessary for happiness and success in life after Nashoba.

The Department of Teaching and Learning is pleased to share our Voices of Nashoba booklet and video. This booklet features the responses of numerous Nashoba alumni who participated in our outreach initiative, "Where are you now, Nashoba?" The stories and perspectives shared by our graduates are truly motivating and offer valuable insights that will guide our efforts toward achieving our goal of fully realizing the Portrait of a Nashoba Graduate as a district.

Voices of Nashoba Booklet and Video

The Department of Teaching and Learning extends gratitude to our School Committee and to our communities for their support of this full day of professional learning. Throughout the day, our educators engaged in a variety of professional learning sessions in connection with our Strategic Plan. From *Teaching and Learning with Emerging Technologies* to *Taking a Deep Dive into Engineering is Elementary (EiE) units from the Museum of Science* to *Examining Unconscious Bias* and *Redesigning Curriculum with Design Thinking and UDL*, our faculty and staff shared that they found the full array of sessions to be relevant, inspiring, and content-rich.

Below is a snapshot of the open-field feedback from the March 17th Reflection and Feedback Survey of which there were 356 respondents:

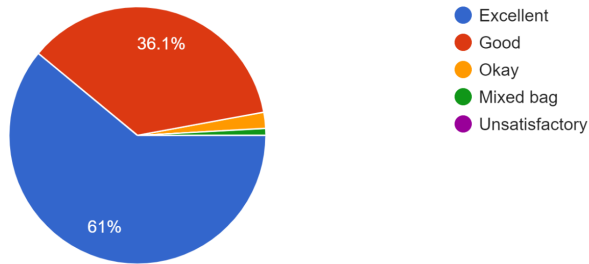
- *In the last 16 years, we have never touched base with our graduates in this way. It was wonderful to hear from so many graduates and to see how they are all doing. Thank you for putting all of that together. It was appreciated and valuable.*
- *I am so impressed with how well thought out this was and how enriching. I'm also incredibly humbled by what my fellow colleagues bring to the table.*
- *UDL can be implemented in many different ways, some simple and some more complex. Revising our units to encompass these strategies will help us engage more students and help students take on more active roles in their own learning.*
- *I think this model of PD that we had today is excellent. The presenters and topics were of high quality. I encourage the district to continue providing this type of excellent PD in the future.*
- *I don't usually like PD days because most of the time they do not pertain to my position. Everything I learned today, I can use.*
- *Do this all over again! Probably the best PD I've had in 20+ years of teaching.*

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Overall, how was your professional development journey today?

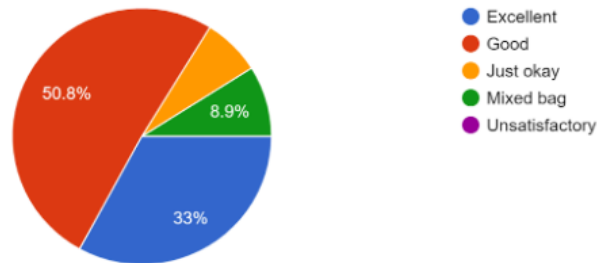
346 responses



2023 Full-Day Professional Development Overall Evaluation

Overall, how was your professional development experience today?

358 responses



2022 Full-Day Professional Development Overall Evaluation

Updates on Strategic Work

Hiring process update (Professional Practice Goal)

Strategic Objective #4: Maximize the potential of students, staff, caretakers and community through effective resource allocation through; -recruiting, hiring, supporting and retaining a highly effective, diverse workforce.

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Strategic Initiative #3: Recruit, hire and retain a highly qualified, diverse staff that mirrors the educational vision

Recently the Human Resources department participated in a four day training to learn the workflow of a new applicant and employee management system, Unified Talent. This new platform will help us optimize the workflow of our entire hiring process through digital means. We will continue to use School Spring as an advertising platform for the school system, but candidates will be directed to our system to submit materials and complete applications. One feature of our new applicant tracking system is the ability to accept resumes from applicants for whom there is currently no position available, in order to create a bank of candidates to whom we can reach out to invite them to apply for any newly open position that meets their qualifications and experience. This will help us target fields of candidates to potential future postings.

To further our goal of recruiting and hiring a diverse workforce, our hiring process now includes Implicit Bias training for everyone on any selection or interview committee. The purpose is to raise their awareness of the implicit bias issue and how they can limit its impact on the selection or interview committee.

We are posting next year's vacancies at the end of this week to start the hiring process for our anticipated vacancies, mostly those created by upcoming retirements.

Over the next several weeks, we are recruiting at several job fairs and college "meet-and-greet" events. In addition to attracting strong candidates for Nashoba's currently open positions, we are also using these events to generate interest for future open positions.

School Choice Presentation (See posted memorandum)

Strategic Objective #3: Maximize the potential of students, staff, caretakers and community through effective resource allocation

Strategic Initiative #2: Articulate district priorities through the budget

Renaissance Learning Update (Presentation)

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

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

Assistant Superintendent Laura Friend will provide a Renaissance Star Data Update. This presentation will include an overview of Star reading and math student growth data from fall to winter and a sampling of reports accessible through Renaissance Learning that help teachers inform and target their instruction based on student need.

Special Education Team Meeting Survey (Presentation)

Strategic Objective #1: Improve communication systems and protocols to strengthen culturally responsive home/school relationships that foster understanding and community engagement

Strategic Initiative #1: Develop consistent communication structures and protocols across the district

Last Spring the Office of Pupil Personnel piloted an IEP exit survey. This was an opportunity for families to provide us with feedback about the IEP process. This year we officially sent out surveys to all families for every initial, annual or reevaluation meeting beginning in September. As a learning organization, we strive to accept feedback and refine our process to ensure we continue to grow as a department. We have communicated with families at meetings about our survey and this year in The Common we sent out reminders frequently encouraging families to participate in our survey. Despite these consistent efforts, our response rate was low. However, we still believe that continuing to send out the survey will provide us with professional learning opportunities for IEP TEAM members.

In addition, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) recently provided us with data from our 2022 graduates. This data is certainly important as the pandemic has influenced whether our former students with IEPs go to school and/or work after high school. The survey asks graduates with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and within one year of exiting high school were:

1. Enrolled in higher education
2. Enrolled in higher education or competitively employed
3. Enrolled in higher education or in some other postsecondary education or training program; or competitively employed or in some other employment”