



Union #28 Updates from the Superintendent

Union #28 Mission Statement:

Union #28 strives to ensure equitable access to deep and meaningful educational experiences for every student.

Each new year, many of us take the time to reflect on the previous year and plan for the new year. In Union #28, there have been surveys shared with staff relative to student support services and professional development. Continuous improvement is based in part on a feedback loop and as a Leadership Team, we will be analyzing and discussing the feedback we receive as we continue to plan for the future.

We are working as a Leadership Team to review and analyze the data we received from our professional development survey. From this discussion, we will continue planning our professional development for staff. This information is key as we plan for this year and into the future. We are grateful for the thoughtful feedback shared by staff.

As part of our Union #28 reflection process, the Director of Student Support and I have crafted a ["Roadmap for Continuous Improvement for Student Support Services in Union #28."](#) An effective continuous improvement system in a school system emphasizes the learner's experience, stakeholder engagement, and data collection and analysis to guide and inform both planning and executing a school's improvement journey. In looking at our student support services program through the lens of continuous improvement, we are focusing on Priority #4 from our District Strategic Plan: *Establishing equitable learning environments and coordinating practices across four key settings - classrooms, schools, families, and communities - that support students' social, emotional, and academic development.*

We have shared student support services surveys with families, school leaders, staff and student support services liaisons. The Director and I look forward to analyzing that data to plan professional development for staff that supports accessible and equitable learning environments for *all* students and ways we can support staff and students. We are also planning to have "Coffee and Conversation" meetings with stakeholders very soon. Please look for notices to be out in the future!

January also brings budget season in Union #28 and our four districts. The annual budget is the financial expression of the goals of the School Committee in meeting the needs of all students. A budget is a spending plan, which is developed well in advance of the fiscal year. Circumstances may occur which necessitate changing spending priorities and redirecting funds within the budget

accordingly. Revisions to the budget may be made from time to time by the Committee, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent.

Annual budgets reflect the priorities established in the district strategic and school improvement plans. A sound budget development process is established to ensure that the annual operating budget accurately reflects the district's and schools' goals. The budget is a financial planning tool that grounds itself in careful analysis of student achievement, enrollment, mandated services, and community values to allocate resources towards the goals set by the Committee. The first priority in the development of an annual budget will be the educational welfare of the children in our schools. The Committee also holds in balance the valid interest of the taxpayers. A very big thank you to all of our school committee members who spend countless hours working with administration in preparing our budgets! We are most appreciative of your efforts and support.

Our Director of Finance and Operations has been tasked with creating a district-wide wellness committee. The *Union #28 Wellness Advisory Council* met for the first time in November. This Council is composed of Principals, PE teachers, Nurses, Psychologists, Food Service Directors, and School Committee members across all four schools. The meeting gave us a chance to assess our practices and policies regarding physical and health education, nutrition, social and emotional health, and family involvement. Next steps will involve building goals and planning guidance for our school communities. The Council uses the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child frameworks.

Finally, a special shout out to Shutesbury Elementary School! Our very own SES was featured in the **Commissioner's Weekly Update**, news from Commissioner Jeff Riley and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Way to go!!



After reading [Buckets, Dippers and Lids: Secrets to Your Happiness](#) by Carol McCloud, as part of their "Choose Love" social and emotional learning curriculum, students at Shutesbury Elementary School collected more than 150 bucket filling examples and were rewarded at an all-school assembly. Congratulations to the students and staff !(photo courtesy of Shutesbury Elementary School)

I look forward to sharing more with you over the next half of the year.

Jennifer Culkeen, Superintendent of Schools