

***The Gloucester Public Schools***  
*Our mission is for all students to be successful, lifelong learners*

**Report of the Superintendent of Schools**

**August 8, 2018**

**1. Beeman Elementary School Summer STEAM Camp**

Beeman Memorial Elementary School has hosted a Summer STEAM Camp during July and August this summer to introduce students in Grades 3, 4 and 5 to the principles of engineering and to give them hands-on experiences in creating solutions to real-world problems. The acronym STEAM—science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics—is frequently used to underscore the connections among academic disciplines.

The program began July 8 and was held through August 16. Each week focused on a different aspect of engineering and presented students with specific situations and challenges. During Week 1, for example, students explored aerospace engineering by designing and building their own rockets. Week 2 had students thinking about structural engineering as they designed and created earthquake-proof buildings. A third example consisted of students using recycled materials in a challenge called “Go Green—Engineering Recycled Racers.” Other challenges included “Hop to It: Safe Removal of Invasive Species” (July 30 – August 2); “In Good Hands: Engineering Space Gloves,” which was developed in conjunction with NASA and where Beeman is helping the Museum of Science pilot this program (August 6-9); and “Bubble Bonanza: Engineering Bubble Wands” (August 13-16).

All classes are held Monday – Thursday from 8:30 a.m. – 12 noon each day. Much of the program is devoted to having students work in teams to develop solutions to the challenges as part of the *Engineering is Elementary* curriculum created by the Boston Museum of Science and the National Center for Technological Literacy. Students also spent a portion of each class period working with *Scratch*, a kid-friendly curriculum developed by MIT that helps students learn the basics of writing computer code. Kudos to Grade 5 teacher Anne Marie Wentzell and Grade 4 teacher, Erin Schondelmeier, who are teaching the summer program.

**2. Back-to-School Notifications**

We are in the process of sending out back-to-school notifications. These notifications clarify the dates for the opening school, provide calendar dates for upcoming school-based meetings, including the distribution of chromebooks, bus pass applications, Free and Reduced Lunch applications, and some information about what is “happening” around the district.

In addition, we are required to send out information about FERPA, The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy* which requires school districts, with certain

exceptions, to obtain written consent from parents/guardians prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a child's education records. Regulations also call for district to send students and parents/guardians student-related section of the bullying policy in age-appropriate terms. All documents send out will be translated directly into Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian. In addition, on the website, these documents will be translated into Arabic and Vietnamese.

School starts Tuesday, September 4 for teachers and Wed., September 5 for students. Preschool students begin on September 10.

### **3. Sheltered English Immersion Requirements for Career Vocational Teachers**

DESE has recently established new Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Endorsement requirements applicable to career vocational technical educators. On June 26, 2018, the Board of Education approved amended regulations that now extend SEI Endorsement requirements to career vocational technical teachers who provide instruction to ELs, and to those administrators who supervise or evaluate them (CVTE educators were not included in the original 2012 regulations). Specifically, the amended regulations at 603 CMR 14.08(2) state that, "[t]he cohort of all career vocational technical teachers who instructed English learners during the 2017-2018 school year, and principals, assistant principals, and supervisors/directors who supervised or evaluated such teachers, must earn the appropriate SEI Endorsement by July 1, 2021. Members of the cohort who fail to earn an SEI endorsement by July 1, 2021, shall not be eligible to advance or renew their license until they earn an SEI endorsement; provided however, upon a showing of hardship, the Department may grant a member of the cohort an extension of time beyond July 1, 2021. DESE is in the process of hiring vendors to provide the SEI Endorsement course to career vocational technical educators at no cost in the fall and spring of the 2018-19 school year.

### **4. Administrative August Retreat**

The district will be holding its next administrative retreat on Thurs. – Fri., August 23-24. Among the topics to be discussed with the team we will be considering the following:

- Updating our understandings on the effective implementation of the evaluation process;
- A look at the inter-district work we are involved in referred to as the Center for Collaborative Education<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Gloucester Public School District has entered into a grant-funded, six-district Center for Collaborative Education, which has provided an amount of \$25,000 to fund the effort. The CCE's mission is to transform schools to ensure that all students succeed. They partner with educators and leaders to develop strategies, processes and tools that support a vision of schools that prepares every student to achieve academically and make a positive contribution to a democratic society. CCE seeks to fulfill this mission by creating, supporting and sustaining learning environments that are collaborative, democratic and equitable; by building capacity within districts and schools to adopt effective practices that promote collaborative, democratic and equitable learning for students and educators; and, by catalyzing systemic change at the state, district and school levels through policy, research and advocacy work;

- The continued examination of The Behavior Code, a systematic approach for deciphering causes and patterns of difficult behaviors and how to match them with proven strategies for getting students back on track to learn.
- Emergency Management Plan Updates (including the scheduling of training drills and simulations); and
- Work by level—elementary, middle, and high school.

**5. Advisory on *Janus* Decision:**

Attorney General Maura Healey has released an advisory on public sector workers' rights and employer obligations in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Janus v. AFSCME*. The *Janus* decision refers to the recent 5 to 4 ruling in which the Supreme Court overturned decades-old rulings relating to the right of a union to require the payment of agency fees from public sector employees who decline union membership. Under *Janus*, according to the Attorney General, public employers may not deduct agency fees from a nonmember's wages, nor may a union collect agency fees from a nonmember, without the employee's affirmative consent.

"All other rights and obligations of public sector employees and employers under state law remain. Public employees retain their statutory rights under Massachusetts law to organize, to join unions, and to engage in collective action for mutual aid or protection under Chapter 150E of the Massachusetts General Laws."

The *Janus* decision only impacts the payment of an agency service fee by individuals who decline union membership. Under the ruling, public employers may not deduct agency fees from a nonmember's wages without the employee's affirmative consent. We are consulting with counsel for further guidance.

