

ARPS COMMUNITY-BUILDING AWARD

Background

Community is forged when people don't flee from interpersonal differences, but instead approach them in a spirit of respectful curiosity. Schools where this is encouraged are safer and more nurturing for all. Teachers, administrators and other school staff members can help lead the way by modeling what it looks like to welcome someone and by facilitating open-minded engagement.

The ARPS Community-Building Award will recognize two employees per year from the Amherst-Pelham Public School system who have helped to foster a sense of belonging among students and who have helped to build bridges of understanding and acceptance among them. School employees from all positions are eligible for this award, which will include a \$250 cash prize. Food service workers, while not technically employed by the district, are eligible for the award.

Supporting students in their social and emotional learning can take many forms. Accordingly, it is expected that a wide variety of individuals operating in very different contexts will be nominated.

For example, the award could recognize an adult who makes or has made a special effort to help an individual student or students find connection and belonging at school. It could recognize an adult who consistently embraces a wide variety of students and who, through his or her actions, models what it looks like to respect and appreciate diversity in background, personality, and ability level. It could recognize an adult who has helped students to help or to educate each other on important interpersonal matters. There are many other possibilities.

For a nominee to be a serious contender for the award, there must be clear evidence she or he has made a positive difference, socially and emotionally, in the life of at least one student.

Nomination and Selection Process

- The following people are eligible to nominate someone for the award: students and employees of the Amherst, Pelham and Regional Public Schools, food service workers, and parents/guardians of current students.
- A person may nominate more than one individual for the award, so long as separate nomination forms are completed for each nominee.
- Nominations will be accepted on a rolling basis, beginning with the first day of school and ending on June 1, 2014.
- In order to nominate an individual for the ARPS Community-Building Award, the attached form must be filled out and submitted in one of the following ways **by June 1, 2014**:
 - Email completed form to [ARPS Community Building Award](#).
 - Mail completed form to:

The Office of Student Services
Amherst Public Schools
170 Chestnut Street
Amherst, MA 01002
- A selection committee will meet over the summer to review the nominations and to select the awardees. The selection committee will be composed of representatives from all employee groups in the district (i.e., teachers, administrators, clerical staff, medical staff, transportation staff, custodians, etc.). A representative of food service workers will also be included on the committee.
- The award winners will be announced, and the stipend checks presented, at the all-staff Convocation before the start of the new school year.
- An engraved plaque with the names of the award winners every year will be prominently displayed in each school building.