

ARPS Update

January 5, 2018

A Message from Michael Morris, Superintendent of Schools



Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a nice break before we came back to this very snowy week. I want to take a moment to

recognize the incredible members of our facilities department and the local DPWs. Thanks to their hard work and dedication, we were one of the few school districts in the Region that was able to have school today. Members of our facilities team ensured that the buses and vans were run and the buildings were protected during the extreme cold over the break. They then worked tirelessly before, during and after the storm to clear the parking lots and roadways at each of the schools. We are fortunate to have facilities staff members who understand and value the essential role they play in ensuring that instruction goes forward. I also appreciate the members of the Amherst, Pelham Leverett and Shutesbury DPWs who ensure that our roads are plowed and safe to travel. Thank you!



Next week, author Jeff Mack will be visiting the Amherst Elementary Schools. On Monday January 8, he will be at Wildwood School, he will visit Crocker Farm on Tuesday, January 9 and on Wednesday, January 10 he will visit Fort River School. Mr. Mack is the author/illustrator of

numerous picture and chapter books. Students in all grades are enjoying books by Mr. Mack including *Clueless McGee*, *Good News Bad News* and the new Caldecott 2018 contender, *MINE!*. Wildwood librarian Susan Wells utilizes a reading technique known as Book in Hand, a program developed by Megan Lambert at The Eric Carle Museum, to introduce students to the works of Jeff Mack. You can see the technique in action by [watching the video at this link](#).

Finally, I want to thank everyone who responded to our polls regarding the potential district logo and our district website. More than 300 people provided feedback about the website and, incredibly, we

received more than 900 responses regarding the logo! Based on feedback, the logo is being edited and we will ask for another round of feedback in next week's newsletter. Your feedback about the website was also extremely valuable. Some of you may have noticed that the district website is currently undergoing a number of updates designed to make it more user friendly, and we anticipate that it will have a whole new interface in March. Thank you for your patience as we work to improve this vital communication tool.

Have a great weekend,

Michael E. Morris

Superintendent



Update from the Amherst School Committee Chair and Vice-Chair

Happy New Year to all our students, caregivers and staff!

At the December meeting, the first of five subgroups of the Enrollment Working Group brought their findings to the School Committee, presenting [their report exploring issues around socio-economic balance in the elementary schools](#). At the January 23rd meeting, the Special Education and Declining Enrollment subgroups will be presenting, followed by the Spanish/English Dual-Immersion and Preschool subgroups on February 27th. Thank you to all the community members and staff who have volunteered their time to support this important work!

The Fort River Feasibility Study Committee has held two meetings. They are currently developing an RFQ for an Owner's Project Manager, with the goal of hiring an OPM in the early spring. A working group of the Committee is focusing on communication strategies and community engagement. Posted meetings and agendas of the Committee can be found at arps.org. The committee can be contacted at fortriversbc@amherstma.gov.

The Regional School District Planning Committee has been formed with members appointed by the Town Meeting Moderator. Membership of the three-member Committee will include Marylou Theilman of the Finance Committee, Peter Demling of the Amherst School Committee (Chair), and Town Meeting member Joan Temkin, a former Pelham resident who served twelve years on the Pelham and Regional School Committees. This Committee will join with Pelham members to form a board to study the implications of regionalizing the Pelham and Amherst Elementary Schools. Future updates will include information on the progress of this Committee and opportunities for community engagement.

Questions or comments for the Amherst School Committee can be emailed to schoolcommittee@arps.org. For posted meetings, agendas, and meeting minutes, please visit www.arps.org.

Phoebe Hazzard, Chair

Anastasia Ordonez, Vice-Chair

MONTHLY GROCERIES AT THE AMHERST SURVIVAL CENTER FOOD PANTRY

The Amherst Survival Center's Food Pantry is open to residents of Amherst. Did you know that you can get fresh milk, eggs, and produce, in addition to canned goods and personal care items through the Pantry? The Pantry tries to give enough food for 5 days per person per month, In addition there is a special program (Kids Boost) for families of school-age children (ages 5-18 years), where families get extra food in school vacation months to help close the gap caused by the absence of school lunch!

How can you use this program? First register by bringing a proof of residence for every person in your household and to the Amherst Survival Center, 138 Sunderland Road in north Amherst (on bus route#33) and register for this important program. Once registered, you'll be able to go once a month as you need it for groceries. The Pantry's hours are:Monday/Tuesday/Friday 11am to 2:45pm; Thursday 11am-6:45pm;and the 3rd Saturday of the month 9:30am-11:30am.More information here:

www.amherstsurvival.org/food-pantry or call the Center at549-3968 extension 104.

MOBILE FOOD PROGRAM IN SOUTH AMHERST - OPEN TO ALL

On the first Wednesday of the month (January 3,February 7) from1-2pm, you can get free fresh produce for your family from a special mobile food program that is located by the mailboxes in Southpoint Apartments parking lot. You bring the bags to carry the food home, be there between1-2 pm and you'll get 25-35 pounds of fresh vegetables and fruits for your family. It's free and no registration is required. This special program is sponsored by the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts and the Amherst Survival Center, and is open to anyone who comes. The next mobile program is Wednesday, January 3 from 1-2pm.

FREE WALK-IN HEALTH CLINIC AT THE AMHERST SURVIVAL CENTER

Did you know that the Amherst Survival Center has a free walk-in health clinic open to anyone who needs to see a doctor? It's scheduled for Mondays12:30pm-1:30pm (not Christmas Day or New Years Day) and Thursdays 4:30pm-5:30pm.Interested individuals should get there a little earlier to sign in. You will have an opportunity to see a physician and a nurse, at no cost. The Amherst Survival Center is located at 138 Sunderland Road in north Amherst, on the #33 bus route. More information:www.amherstsurvival.org