

“In Laconia Schools...”

Community Update

February 19th, 2020

The 2020-21 School Calendar was approved by the School Board. This calendar was the result of a collaborative effort by teachers, administrators, representatives from AREA Huot sending schools, and our School Board.

Good Day, Laconia School District Community:

One of my favorite parts of my job as the Superintendent of the Laconia School District is to spend time in classrooms with student and teachers. The classroom is at the center of our work in our schools. At the end of the first semester a few weeks ago, our students were engaged in rich learning experiences. I spent time with colleagues in three classes at Laconia High School to give students feedback on their final presentations. I saw a senior give a final presentation for her Extended Learning Opportunity (ELO), an academic experience that she designed and one that will give her course credit. I also saw students in our schools learning site words, reading, taking

final exams, learning about motion, writing, and solving math problems. I was pleased to see the high level of engagement in the world of teaching and learning.

This is the first year with Alma, our new student information system. Alma is a robust system that has greater communication capabilities and is more user-friendly for our teachers to use. The second-round of report cards were mailed out last week from the Alma platform. If you have any questions or comments about our new student information system, feel free to call your child’s school.

We have started the second semester, but I wanted to look back to highlight a few events and developments for you:

Mayor Hosmer’s Inauguration

On January 9th, Andrew Hosmer was inaugurated as the 52nd mayor of the City of Laconia at the Belknap Mill. The standing-room only audience included four former mayors, state legislators, representatives from the police and fire departments, our School Board, educators from our schools, and several of our students. Some of our high school students served as ushers. We had a leadership team of Laconia Middle School students who read a thank you letter that they crafted to Ed Engler, the outgoing mayor. Mayor Hosmer described Laconia as “A city on the move” and talked about the importance of working together as a community. He also lauded the work that our staff is doing with children in our schools and emphasized the importance of education when he said, “As go Laconia Schools, so goes Laconia.”

Portrait of a Graduate

The Portrait of a Graduate Task Force is made up of 17 educators and community members. We continue to meet once a month this year. After reviewing input from staff from the August 27th and September 10th in-service days, examining survey data, reviewing what skills employers are looking for from their employees, and engaging in rich discussions, the task force developed a Portrait with six (6) attributes that are each supported with descriptors. We reviewed this Portrait for our school district on the February 11th in-service day.

February 11th In-Service Day for Staff

February 11th was the New Hampshire Primary day and also an in-service day for our staff. On this day, we engaged in a day of rich professional development. The staff spent time reviewing the draft of our Portrait of a Graduate that was developed by a community task force. Teachers spent time examining the scope and sequence of curriculum in the Pre-K to 12 programs in English, Math, Social Studies, Science Health, Physical Education, Music, Art, and in our Huot programs. Our paraprofessionals and behavior specialists spent the day in a neurosensory behavioral training session. We had other teams of staff members engaged in other trainings related to their work in the district. It was a great day for our staff to come together and to important work to support our students.

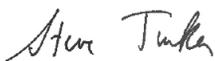
ACE Event in Automotive Technology in the Huot

As a result of a collaborative effort between the New Hampshire Auto Dealers Association (NHADA), Irwin Motors, Manchester Community College, and Ford, the Ford Automotive Career Exploration (ACE), students in Lisa Diggins' Automotive Technology course have certification opportunities that lead to careers. Representatives from all of these organizations were at the Huot last Tuesday to talk to students about automotive career options. Jessica Dade, the NHADA Executive Director, spoke to the students about the "soft" or "essential" skills that employers are looking for from their employees. She talked about communication, collaboration, and grit. Dade also talked about the importance of reading and math. The event ended with students examining some new Ford automobiles in the Huot. This event emphasized the importance of broad, transferable skills like the ones we have identified as a school community in our draft of the Portrait of a Graduate. It also was one of several examples in our programs in the Laconia School District that lead to college and career opportunities for our students.

In Closing

In the opening of our in-service day on February 11th, we talked about the importance of relationships in our work. I cited the findings of an 80-year-old, ongoing study on happiness at Harvard University, which concluded that good relationships are key to happiness. The glue that holds a community together is relationships. This is one of the many reasons I love living and working in the city of Laconia. I hope that your entry to the year 2020 has been filled with happiness and good health. Thank you for the privilege of working with our children. We hope that you and your children are off to a great start to the second semester.

Have a great February Vacation.



Steve Tucker
Superintendent
Laconia School District

Draft: LACONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE

Students in the Laconia School District will be able to effectively:

- *Collaborate*
- *Communicate*
- *Create*
- *Persevere*
- *Problem Solve*
- *Self-Direct*

(Based on the work of the District's Portrait of a Graduate Task Force)

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." (Margaret Mead)