

Jesse Hefter

School Committee

Issue #6: January 15, 2025

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Hello friends,

With the arrival of 2025, I'd like to provide an update on my School Committee activities during my first half-year. Please feel free to reach out to me about any school-related issues. My PSB email address is in the header of this Newsletter and my mobile number is 781.771.2618.

Thanks for your support and interest,

Jesse



School Committee Meetings

New Business Items - The Select Board approved a resolution to bring back School Resource Officers to the District. The decision now rests with the School Committee. I raised the SRO topic at a Fall School Committee meeting to be scheduled for discussion at a meeting before the end of this School year.

Calendar (2025-2026) - A major topic of discussion during the Fall was the possible addition of Eid Al-Fitr (a Muslim holiday signifying the end of Ramadan) as a Category I holiday (i.e., school closed day). Adding this day would mean lengthening the school year by a day. My argument was to delay this change and provide the Committee with more time to study the issue from all angles (in particular, whether or not the attendance by staff and students on Eid Al-Fitr would contribute to an ineffective teaching day). In early January, the decision came to a vote and the holiday was passed by a vote of 6 Yes, 2 No, and 1 abstention (I was the abstention vote).

DoRRS - BHS had planned the annual Day of Racial Reform and Solidarity for December but concerns by parents about a potential issue with a student presentation led to heated Public Comment. The High School staff delayed DoRRS until January 28. I have asked about the extent to which the School administration and faculty have effective controls to eliminate the potential for student participants to incite or harm the student listeners.

PSB Kosher Meal Program - I was asked by a group of parents to investigate what is required to get a kosher meal program initiated in the District. We have been working with Food Services and the Administration to get a District-wide survey distributed so we know the student population that wishes to be involved. I met with the current kosher food service company that is already working with many local private schools and the Sharon Public Schools. At this point, we are awaiting the

Subcommittee Meetings

Curriculum: We discussed Spring 2024 MCAS results, the Middle School Science (SciEd) curriculum, and reviewed the three finalists for the K-5 literacy program (FishTank was ultimately chosen by the faculty through a vote).

Policy: Provided input for the Mobile Electronic Device draft; reviewed policy for Attendance, School Code of Conduct, and Building Access; took responsibility for working on a proposal for policies related to Political Signage policy and Extended Day Building Use.

DEIJ: We met to discuss topics including equity education cycles (the in-school training currently underway) and participated in a group equity exercise (to give us a sense of the complexity of equity-oriented discussions). I requested that we review the OEE (Office of Educational Equity) database of inbound discrimination and bullying data incidents at a future subcommittee meeting - the date for that review has not yet been set.

School Committee Activities

Represented the School Committee at our table at Brookline Day in the Fall.

Attended the monthly SEPAC (Special Education Parent Advisory Council) meetings providing members with relevant School Committee updates and listening to the group's specific needs. I have offered SEPAC leadership the opportunity to present their needs/concerns/successes at a regularly scheduled School Committee meeting.

Had the opportunity to visit three elementary schools on building tours with their principals: Pierce (Old Lincoln School), Baker, and Lincoln (it was wonderful to spend a few minutes in the ALC (Adaptive Learning Center). Each school has its special energy and character.

How to reach me:

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