

North Reading Public Schools'

District Highlights

An informational newsletter showcasing news and events of the North Reading Public Schools

Volume 5, Issue 1

**Fall
2018**

Superintendent's Message

It is my pleasure to present to you this edition of the North Reading Public Schools' Superintendent's newsletter, "District Highlights."

The start to the 2018-2019 school year has gone extremely well. The first marking period at our secondary schools ended on November 2nd and the end of the first trimester at our elementary schools is November 21st. I find it hard to believe that the Thanksgiving holiday is upon us.

Many will recall, through my ongoing efforts at communicating such, that our school district is guided by a five-year Strategic Plan, "NRPS 2021: A Strategy for the Future." The 2018-2019 school year marks the third year of this five-year strategic plan that serves as the framework for guiding decision-making and budget development for our school district with the goal of maximizing student performance through three overarching strategies: **Teaching and Learning, Technology Integration, and Student Support Services.** Each constituency—faculty and staff, the School Committee, and the public—plays a critical role in successfully meeting the goals of a strategic plan and such is the case with our school district's strategic plan. "NRPS 2021" is posted on the website for the North Reading Public Schools (www.north-reading.k12.ma.us). If you have not already done so, I encourage you

to find a few moments to review the school district's strategic plan. Additional information about "NRPS 2021" is also included in this newsletter on page two.

I am pleased to announce the introduction of the new mobile APP for the North Reading Public Schools. The new APP is an additional means of learning information about each of our five schools and the school district. Please see the related article on page seven of this newsletter with more details about the new North Reading Public Schools mobile APP.

I remain very thankful to have been provided the opportunity to serve as your Superintendent of Schools. I truly feel blessed to work in a community that cares so deeply about public education and the young people- -and all of the citizens- -of North Reading. Please know that I remain committed to leading our school district in a fashion that places the students first in our decision-making, that demonstrates collaboration with others to secure the resources needed to provide a first-rate educational program for all of our students; that supports our educators to do their very best work; and that ensures that we strike the healthy balance between assisting our students in meeting very rigorous standards and expectations while valuing each child's happiness and the importance that this plays in helping each youngster to be the very best citizen and student.

I look forward to another successful year in the North Reading Public Schools and remain very grateful to the many good people that are responsible for the wonderful things taking place in our schools each and every day.

I extend my best wishes to all for a joyous holiday season!

Very truly yours,

Jon C. Bernard, *Superintendent*

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“NRPS 2021: A Strategy for the Future”

NRPS 2021: A Strategy for the Future, represents a continuation of the most recent, five-year strategic plan of the North Reading Public Schools. During the 2010-2011 school year, the North Reading Public Schools embarked on a continuous improvement planning process resulting in the development of NRPS 2016: A Plan for Strategic Continuous Improvement. The purpose of the plan was to identify those few priority strategies upon which the district would focus and that would provide the greatest leverage for improved student performance. NRPS 2021: A Strategy for the Future, extends the work of NRPS 2016. The work on this most recent strategic plan began in July of 2015, well in advance of the final year of NRPS 2016, when the administrators of the school district convened to further examine the needs of the school district. Upon the preliminary identification of these needs, the work began to frame the “Strategic Initiatives” to be undertaken to address the identified needs.

The conceptual understandings associated with the book, *Strategy in Action*, by Rachel Curtis and Elizabeth City, which has served as the major resource for framing both NRPS 2016 and NRPS 2021, were used to strategically identify priority focus areas for continuous systemic improvement. The central focus of this work is on the instructional core: the interaction of teachers (instructional practices) and students in the presence of content (curriculum).

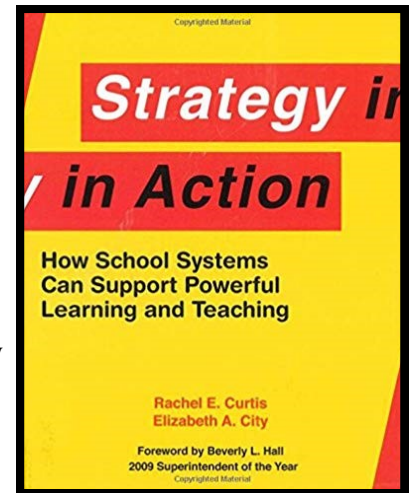
The Administrative Leadership Team began the process by identifying seven categories that would eventually lead to the development of strategic objectives. The leadership team assessed each category using a rubric to determine if there is a clear strategy for continuous improvement guiding these initiatives. The need for focus, coherence, and synergy between initiatives became evident. The next step in the process was a review of the District’s mission and vision. The vision describes what the District is working toward while the mission describes how the District is going to get there. As part of the work of NRPS 2016, the Leadership Team crafted a draft vision, revisited and revised the existing mission, and shared the drafts with faculty for review and feedback. Changes were made, resulting in an updated mission and new vision approved by the North Reading School Committee. NRPS 2021 supports the adopted vision and mission for the school district.

For NRPS 2021, the Leadership Team revisited the district initiatives categories and began to prioritize and make connections between them. This grouping and regrouping of initiatives, reflective of the vision and the mission, culminated in the identification of the three major strategy areas to drive continuous improvement: Teaching and Learning, Technology Integration, and Student Support Services. The key is for the strategy area to be focused on the instructional core, focused on a few objectives that are coherent and synergistic, and balanced in its solving of issues and pursuit of the system’s vision. A theory of action and a small number of strategic objectives and initiatives that frame the actions upon which the district will concentrate were then developed for each strategy area.

Putting each strategy into action required the development of a theory of action that connected the strategy to the vision. Once the theory of action was established, members of the Leadership Team were assigned to a strategy subcommittee to develop an action plan that includes goals, strategic initiatives, persons responsible, resources, and outcomes over a one to five year period. The action plans were completed and provide the roadmap for the journey toward continuous improvement.

Another important step in the execution of a strategy is aligning resources to the strategy. Strategy drives the budgeting process and the allocation of resources such as time, staff, or money. This may require shifting resources by making difficult, and sometimes unpopular, choices. The development of the budget is a collaborative process, the responsibility of which is shared by the Administrative Council, the School Councils via the School Improvement Plans, and the School Committee. The implementation of a strategic continuous improvement plan provides a laser focus on where precious resources will be allocated.

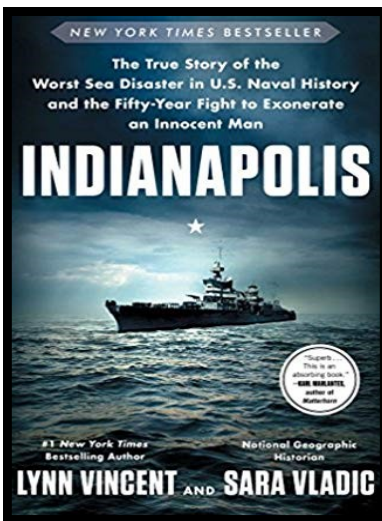
School systems exist to facilitate student learning. School systems also need to be intentional about facilitating adult learning. In schools where educators are actively engaged, it is quite likely to see students actively engaged. The North Reading School District continues on its path toward realizing the potential of strategic action through active engagement and concurs with the following as stated by Curtis and City: “School systems that focus on the core with a coherent strategy, executed and refined over time, are making progress in fulfilling their vision of supporting all children to learn at high levels, to contribute to their communities, and to be ready for career and college. To be sure, this is harder than it sounds; school systems face numerous compelling demands. But it is the only path toward improvement.”



Superintendent's Book Recommendation: *Indianapolis: The True Story of the Worst Sea Disaster in U. S. Naval History and the Fifty-Year Fight to Exonerate an Innocent Man*

by Lynn Vincent and Sara Vladic

I continue to receive a good deal of positive feedback on the book recommendations I offer. A fan of the non-fiction and historical fiction genres, I continue to be impressed with learning so much about subjects I previously had little of no knowledge. Such is the case with *Indianapolis: The True Story of the Worst Sea Disaster in U. S. Naval History and the Fifty-Year Fight to Exonerate an Innocent Man* by Lynn Vincent and Sara Vladic. A review on Amazon.com notes, "Just after midnight on July 30, 1945, days after delivering the components of the atomic bomb from California to the Pacific Islands in the most highly classified naval mission of the war, USS *Indianapolis* is sailing alone in the center of the Philippine Sea when she is struck by two Japanese torpedoes. The ship is instantly transformed into a fiery cauldron and sinks within minutes. Some 300 men go down with the ship. Nearly 900 make it into the water alive. For the next five nights and four days, almost three hundred miles from the nearest land, the men battle injuries, sharks, dehydration, insanity, and eventually each other. Only 316 will survive.



For the better part of a century, the story of USS *Indianapolis* has been understood as a sinking tale. The reality, however, is far more complicated—and compelling. Now, for the first time, thanks to a decade of original research and interviews with 107 survivors and eyewitnesses, Lynn Vincent and Sara Vladic tell the complete story of the ship, her crew, and their final mission to save one of their own.

It begins in 1932, when *Indianapolis* is christened and launched as the ship of state for President Franklin Roosevelt. After Pearl Harbor, *Indianapolis* leads the charge to the Pacific Islands, notching an unbroken string of victories in an uncharted theater of war. Then, under orders from President Harry Truman, the ship takes aboard a superspy and embarks on her final world-changing mission: delivering the core of the atomic bomb to the Pacific for the strike on Hiroshima. Vincent and Vladic provide a visceral, moment-by-moment account of the disaster that unfolds days later after the Japanese torpedo attack, from the chaos on board the sinking ship to the first moments of shock as

the crew plunge into the remote waters of the Philippine Sea, to the long days and nights during which terror and hunger morph into delusion and desperation, and the men must band together to survive.

Then, for the first time, the authors go beyond the men's rescue to chronicle *Indianapolis*'s extraordinary final mission: the survivors' fifty-year fight for justice on behalf of their skipper, Captain Charles McVay III, who is wrongly court-martialed for the sinking. What follows is a captivating courtroom drama that weaves through generations of American presidents, from Harry Truman to George W. Bush, and forever entwines the lives of three captains—McVay, whose life and career are never the same after the scandal; Mochitsura Hashimoto, the Japanese sub commander who sinks *Indianapolis* but later joins the battle to exonerate McVay; and William Toti, the captain of the modern-day submarine *Indianapolis*, who helps the survivors fight to vindicate their captain.

A sweeping saga of survival, sacrifice, justice, and love, *Indianapolis* stands as both groundbreaking naval history and spellbinding narrative—and brings the ship and her heroic crew back to full, vivid, unforgettable life. It is the definitive account of one of the most remarkable episodes in American history."

This is a thoroughly interesting and thrilling read, and I recommend the book highly.

School Cancellation and Delay Procedures

Given that the winter season is upon us, it is an opportune time to offer a reminder of the school district's cancellation and delay procedures to be observed in the event of inclement weather. Please access this link for important information https://www.north-reading.k12.ma.us/sites/northreadingps/files/pages/school_cancellation_procedures-2018.pdf

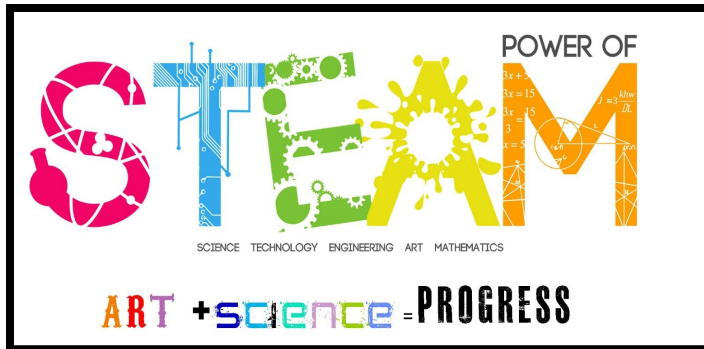
Also, please note that notifications will be sent to all families and staff included in the district's data base via email, telephone, text message, and notifications will also be made via the Superintendent's Twitter account (@nrpsupt) and on various Boston-based television stations.

STEAM Learning in the Age of Personalized Learning

By Dr. Daniel Downs, Director of Digital Learning

So what is STEAM learning and what is Personalized Learning? STEAM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math. These subject areas for many years were taught as separate knowledge areas and in the past decade have been collectively united as the demands for student skills in these areas grow. The term STEAM stands as a rallying call for the understanding that these subject areas provide essential skill sets, collaboration, and the intersection of deeper learning opportunities. Part of addressing our students needs related to 21st century skills includes the understanding as educators that all of these content areas intersect.

Some of the core elements of Personalized Learning include promoting student-centered, project-based student learning; these approaches support personal connections and personal learning paths. Components can include Competency-Based learning progressions and the development of learner profiles to best support student needs. Personalized Learning helps to meet a wide range of student learning no matter what the content area.



The connection that can be made between these two topics is that the STEAM is the what we want students to engage in and the Personalized Learning approach is the how we can enhance the use of instruction in these subject areas. STEAM topics, particularly those that require technology, collaboration, flexible learning environments and a progression of specific targeted skills are the new types of learning that require more personalized approaches and pedagogy to support student learning in

the 21st century. It is not enough to think that we can address STEAM learning and 21st century skill development without it including the most powerful tools and instructional approaches.

Student Access & Content Choices

Technology shifts and enhances the ways that we can work with students around addressing all of their learning needs. Students' adaptability with how they use technology increases every year and this adaptability allows educators to meet them at a variety of new intersections of learning experiences. Personalized learning can make powerful connections with the use of technology; but it's also important to understand that technology is just a part of it. As educators we have unique opportunities to look at the whole child in unique new ways with the use of technology and the data we can collect from the tools.

Learning Resources, Any Time, Anywhere

We continue to work in our schools with teachers in curriculum-centric ways. We dedicate more time to assisting teachers directly with approaches that relate to their curriculum needs and adapting instruction. This can mean finding a math tool that supports a specific type of assessment or a research tool for an English class that enhances a reading assignment. Digital pedagogy is more like the salt on a great lesson it enhances the flavor of an already great meal. This work supports our staff and students to be more adaptable and flexible to content changes and tools.

Extending the Classroom & Demonstrating Learning

Students want to show us what they know. Technology allows them to do that more efficiently and more effectively than ever. When we ask students to show us what they know we have to be open to allow them to use the best tools possible. This is particularly important when we are asking them to work on projects, collaborate with others, and to work across multiple disciplines and resources. This adaptability with the use of these resources and tools is much like the workplace that they'll be entering into. Most workplaces now have a heavy reliance on the use of technology and many of the tasks and processes that are necessary are woven within this reliance.

Preparing Students for Life and Work in the 21st Century

Working with technology can become a moving target. We are constantly adapting our learning to meet the needs of the environment. Preparing students for life and work in the 21st century requires preparing them to be adaptable and share what they know and to utilize the best resources to complete the job. As Educators we must continually remind ourselves that we are preparing students for a world that will be much different by the time they enter the workforce. We must do our best to envision and provide for them the resources to support their success.

2018 School and District Accountability Data

Recently, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) released the statewide school and district accountability data for 2018. Among the criteria considered in the accountability data are results of the statewide student assessment known as MCAS.

I am pleased and proud to report to the North Reading community that students across all of our five schools in the district have performed well on the spring 2018 MCAS assessment.

School district administrators and teachers have begun the process of conducting a comprehensive analysis of the results of the spring 2018 state assessments so as to further inform curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices.

There are two particularly significant data points from the performance of our students on the spring 2018 MCAS administration that I wish to share, and they are as follows:

Among the nearly 900 schools in Massachusetts with grade five students,

The J. T. Hood Elementary School is #1 in the state for students scoring “Advanced” (the highest performance level) of all grade five students tested in Science.

The L. D. Batchelder Elementary School is tied at #2 for students scoring “Advanced” of all grade five students tested in Science.

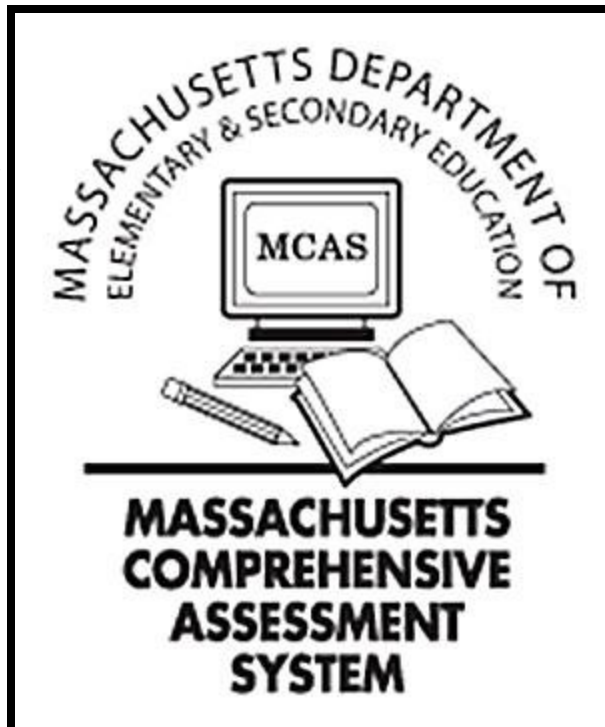
Only four elementary schools in Massachusetts have students scoring “Advanced” and “Proficient” (the second highest level of performance) at over 90% on the Science examination, and the L. D. Batchelder Elementary School and the J. T. Hood Elementary school are among the four schools.

There are approximately 1850 public schools (grades K-12) in Massachusetts and fifty-two of these schools have been identified as "Schools of Recognition" acknowledging outstanding performance and growth on the spring 2018 MCAS examinations. Two of North Reading's schools have been identified as "Schools of Recognition": the L. D. Batchelder Elementary School and the E. E. Little Elementary School.

I wish to acknowledge the dedicated efforts of our educators and support staff; the assistance of parents and guardians who work with the school district as vital partners in the education of their children; the students of our district who take very seriously the importance of their education and strive daily to meet very high academic expectations; and the support of the entire community of North Reading. Each of these constituencies plays a critical role in the success of our school district by providing the commitment, support, advocacy, and resources that are needed in order that teachers and students are able to do their very best work.

A public presentation on the performance of our school district as it relates to the 2018 statewide school and district accountability data was made at a public meeting of the North Reading School Committee on October 29, 2018. Individual student score reports were mailed home to families on October 12, 2018.

There is much to be proud of in North Reading, and I wish to both congratulate and thank everyone for their contributions to these most meaningful achievements and the successes at all of the district's schools.



From the Desk of the Assistant Superintendent

By Dr. Patrick Daly, Assistant Superintendent

As you may recall, in the fall of 2016 we shared several articles in order to measure interest in the school community about addressing issues related to student sleep and stress. One of the most pressing concerns for the well being of our students is the lack of sleep that many of our teenagers are receiving. The National Sleep Foundation has recently presented information following a two-year world-class study that our teenagers need between 8 and 10 hours of sleep per night. Studies have shown that, on average, teenagers receive about 7.5 hours each night.

The reasons for these sleep needs are rooted in biology. According to the coalition group School Start Later (<http://www.startschoollater.net>): “Sleep research shows that adolescents have a different—and later—sleep cycle than younger children and adults. This is not a matter of habit, lifestyle, or stubbornness. It is a matter of biology and natural circadian rhythms. The hormones that regulate sleep make it difficult for a typical teenager to fall asleep until after 11:00 p.m. and to wake up and be alert before around 8:00 a.m. Making students get up as early as 5:30 a.m. to catch the bus – right when they are in the deepest part of their sleep cycle - robs them of the deep sleep they need to grow and learn.”

There are many possible implications for students who do not receive the proper amount of sleep. According to the School Start Later site: “Lack of sleep has serious repercussions on teenagers’ physical, mental and emotional health. Sleep deprivation among teens is linked to depression, anxiety, susceptibility to illness and injury, irritability, car accidents, stunted growth, and even obesity and diabetes. Researchers found that sleep deprivation in adolescents leads to increases in so-called risky behaviors, including substance abuse, suicide ideation, suicide attempts and suicide. Sleep deprivation also lowers impulse control and reaction times (important for those driving). Student athletes who do not get at least 8 hours of sleep per night are at greater risk of sports-related injuries – 2.3 times higher risk for each additional grade in school. Lack of consistent sleep also negatively affects students’ ability to think and learn.”

Our district has been exploring this topic in several ways. In 2016, our Superintendent, Jon Bernard, led the way in the Cape Ann League by hosting several conversational meetings with other district Superintendents about the possibility of changing the school start times. There are many logistical considerations involved with a change of the school start times that would impact busing, athletic and extra-curricular activities, and other events in the communities. These meetings and conversations were a first step in exploring the possibilities for adjusting school start times.

Our social and emotional committee P.A.U.S.E. (Public Awareness and Understanding of Social Education) and our Wellness Committee have also been exploring this topic in greater detail over the past few years. One team focused on the topic of sleep and stress and survey the high school and piloted a curriculum at the E. Ethel Little School. Those working on this topic along with me included parent member Marci Bailey; School District Physician Dr. Meghan Tramontozzi; E. Ethel Little School Nurse, Nicole DiSpena; Middle School Principal, Catherine O’Connell, and Director of Pupil Personnel Services, Cynthia Conant.

In addition, we will be forming a School Start Times Advisory Committee to look specifically at the benefits and concerns generated by adjusting the school start times. Two North Reading parents, in particular, have recently met with the Superintendent, Director of Finance and Operations, Michael Connelly, and me to review the next steps. Many of the logistical obstacles, including after-school jobs and child-care, and several other factors will need to be considered. There are several districts who have overcome these challenges and we will be looking to those case studies and seeking input from all constituencies as we explore the best decision for North Reading.

More specific information about the School Start Times Advisory Committee and its work will be forthcoming; however if you have interest in participating please contact me via email at pdaly@nrpsk12.org at any time.

New North Reading Public Schools APP Unveiled

It is with excitement that I announce that the new North Reading Public Schools' APP is available for download in both the Apple Store (Search for NRPS) and the Android Store (Search for North Reading Public Schools). Students, parents, and the community will now have in-APP access to school and district calendars, lunch menus, athletic schedules, Twitter feeds, Plus Portals, Family ID, online payments, and more. Another feature included in the APP is a direct link for for Anonymous Tips. This web form allows the user to submit information that will be reviewed by the North Reading Police Department. Please note that although one is able to provide as much information as possible, one will have the option to remain anonymous. For reports of bullying, no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. The purpose of the Anonymous Tip form is to report those allegations that are potentially criminal in nature or to report any other information that may pose a risk to the safety of students or faculty. All other questions or concerns about our schools should continue to be directed to the school administration.

The introduction of the new North Reading Public Schools' APP follows many months of diligent work, and I am grateful to Dr. Patrick Daly, Assistant Superintendent; Dr. Daniel Downs, Director of Digital Learning; and especially North Reading High School senior student Michael Tyrrell, for their insights and assistance to me in bringing this project to fruition. Please download the new APP and enjoy it as an additional means of communication and as a resource of information about the North Reading Public Schools.



Upcoming Important Dates and Events

Early Release; Thanksgiving Recess Begins

November 21, 2018

Early Release; Elementary Parent Teacher Conferences

November 28, 29, 30, 2018

Early Release; Teacher Professional Development

December 14, 2018

Winter Recess

December 24, 2018 –January 1, 2019

High School Open House for Middle School Families

January 9, 2019

Kindergarten Parent Orientation

January 10, 2019

Martin Luther King Jr. Day; No School

January 21, 2019

Early Release; High School Mid-Year Examinations

January 23-25, 2019

Early Release; Middle School Parent Teacher Conferences

January 24 & 25, 2019

Kindergarten Registration

January 29, 2019

Early Release; Teacher Professional Development

January 30, 2019

Kindergarten Registration (Snow Date)

January 31, 2019

February Recess

February 18-22, 2019

From the Desk of the Director of Finance and Operations

By Michael A. Connelly, Director of Finance and Operations

School administrators recently completed making updates to the school district's five-year large capital improvements plan. The school administration spends a great deal of time each summer assessing the large capital needs of the school district and making annual updates and changes to its five-year large capital improvements plan. At the September 10, 2018 School Committee meeting, school officials presented their updated five-year large capital improvement plan. This plan was officially adopted by the School Committee on September 24, 2018. A project qualifies as a large capital project if it has a total cost of \$25,000 or more and a useful life of five years or more. The purpose of the capital plan is to identify short and long-term capital projects for funding to move the district's educational objectives forward and to continue to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for students and staff.

The school district's large capital plan projects fall into three major categories: vehicles, technology, and facilities. The school department currently maintains a fleet of four vans used by our Pupil Personnel Services Department for daily student transportation. Through the large capital program, the district has been able to replace three of these four vans over the last four years and hopes to replace the final vehicle in fiscal year 2020. This vehicle is over ten years old and has over 120,000 miles on it and is in need of replacement. The van is currently used as a spare van but it is used frequently on a weekly basis and is often used for athletic and extra-curricular transportation as well. The school department has also ordered a fifteen passenger multi-function activity vehicle for the Athletic Department to assist with transporting the smaller athletic teams to and from events. This vehicle was funded at the annual town meeting in June. The School Department will accept delivery of this vehicle in December. The vehicle will be put to frequent use for athletic and extra-curricular events on a regular basis and projections indicate it will help reduce annual athletic transportation costs.

In the area of technology, the district has worked on an ongoing computer/device replacement plan, which includes replacing devices as they reach the end of their useful life and continuing to add devices to increase the student-to-computer ratio. Funding an annual amount for computer replacement will allow the school district to meet its goals for digital learning and continue to advance a 1:1 initiative, and provide all students with a comprehensive 21st century learning experience. The district has received \$60,000 each of the last five years and it plans to continue with this request.

The final category is facilities. The facilities department has four requests in fiscal year 2020. The first is an \$85,000 request to repave the Little School parking lot, old playground area, and front loop. This project would both expand and repair sections of the existing parking lot. The old playground was removed in the summer of 2016, and gravel was placed in this area as a temporary solution for additional parking. The proposal includes paving this area, which would expand the parking lot and the number of parking spaces at the school. In addition, other sections of the parking lot are showing signs of deterioration and are in need of repair, which this request will address. The second request is a \$50,000 request to upgrade the lighting fixtures at the Hood and Little elementary schools in several highly utilized common areas such as the gymnasiums, cafeterias, libraries, and main hallways, with LED lighting fixtures. The project would not only improve the lighting but also enable the schools to be more energy efficient, thus leading to a reduction in electricity costs. The district also anticipates the ability to work with the Reading Municipal Light Department (RMLD), which could result in significant rebates that may be as high as 25% to 50% of the cost of the project. The third facilities request for fiscal year 2020 includes a request to upgrade the HVAC (heating, ventilation, air conditioning) system at the Little Elementary School at a cost of \$65,000. The request involves two main objectives that have been recommended by an engineering firm that recently performed an assessment of the systems. The recommended solutions would improve the heating system in the older C-wing of the school by replacing the unit ventilator discharge control mechanism, as well as a rebalancing of the system. The fourth and final facilities request for fiscal year 2020 includes an upgrade to the elementary school electronics systems in the amount of \$30,000. This project involves a two-phase project with the \$30,000 phase one request focusing on the more pertinent fire and security alarm systems at the Hood and Little elementary schools which are over twenty years old and are in need of replacement. There are many other facility needs and requests included in the five-year capital improvements plan. This plan and the September 10th School Committee presentation can be viewed in its entirety by accessing the budget pages on the district administration website: <https://www.north-reading.k12.ma.us/district/pages/district-links>.

(continued on page 9)

From the Desk of the Director of Finance and Operations

By Michael A. Connelly, Director of Finance and Operations

(continued from page 8)

The school administration has submitted these projects for consideration to the Capital Improvements Planning Committee (CIPC) for their review. The CIPC determines the guidelines, funding strategies, and policies to provide the foundation to guide the community's capital decisions. The nine member Capital Improvements Planning Committee consists of all major stakeholders, including members of the Select Board, Finance Committee, and School Committee, as well as town and school officials. All town wide departments have submitted their capital needs not only for next year but also over the next three years to the CIPC. The CIPC will then begin meeting to review and gather all relevant information to properly review each request. The school department's five-year capital plan and other school budget presentations can be accessed on the district administration budget link on the district website. You may also receive updates on important school budget updates throughout the 2018-2019 school year by following me on twitter @nrpsfinance.

From the Desk of the Director of Pupil Personnel Services

By Cynthia M. Conant, Director of Pupil Personnel Services

There are a number of new and exciting changes taking place in the Department of Pupil Personnel Services, as we orient the new position of Elementary Team Chairperson to the Special Education Department. It is my intention to share the specific responsibilities of this position and overall vision, as well as the subsequent implications to the special education department as a whole.

I am very excited to welcome Ms. Rachel Anastasia to her new position of Elementary Team Chairperson. Ms. Anastasia is a highly skilled special education teacher who has entered her tenth year working in the district. In her new position, Ms. Anastasia will assume special education team meeting facilitator responsibilities that were previously held by the Elementary Special Education Coordinator, Ms. Gina Sacco. Ms. Anastasia will facilitate evaluation Team meetings for grades PreK-5. Under this new model, Ms. Sacco's focus will shift to our in-district specialized programs, where she will provide programmatic oversight and support with respect to the delivery of instruction, IEP development, curriculum, and progress monitoring of student achievement.

Additionally, an impact at the secondary level is that the Secondary Special Education Coordinator, Ms. Maureen Ryan, will no longer be the point of contact for grade five students. By reassigning this responsibility, the Secondary Special Education Coordinator can also focus on strengthening our programming at the secondary level in terms of delivery of instruction, IEP development, curriculum, and progress monitoring of student achievement.

Under this model, the overarching goal is to strengthen our in-district programming by adding a layer of support and oversight and to ensure the delivery of high quality instruction to our students and also to provide support to our teaching teams in this endeavor.

This school year we are also excited to welcome Tracy Cincotta as the new Transportation Coordinator for Special Education. We are looking forward to working with Ms. Cincotta over the course of the school year in her new capacity.

2018-2019 PPS Contacts:

Cynthia Conant, Director of Pupil Personnel Services
Rachel Anastasia, PreK-grade 5 Elementary Team Chairperson
Andrea Barlow, Grade 6- PG Secondary Team Chairperson
Tracy Cincotta, Special Education Transportation Coordinator
Maureen Ryan, Secondary Coordinator of Special Education
Gina Sacco, Elementary Coordinator of Special Education
Terry Smith, Pupil Personnel Services Clerk

I wish everyone a successful school year!