

Hanscom Primary School
Beth Ludwig, Principal

Hanscom Primary School is committed to providing our youngest students with standards-based curriculum and skilled instruction in a warm, caring and respectful environment. Together with their families, we aim to launch successfully our student's educational journey. Through high quality teaching our goal is for our students to learn, to achieve, to care, and to contribute to their community.

The budget that accompanies this commentary seeks to maintain the high quality program we provide to meet the needs of our military families. Highly qualified teachers, small class size, teacher assistants, school supplies, differentiated services and materials, a full program of classes in the special areas, technology, field trips and professional development are all important pieces of the whole program.

Enrollment fluctuations make preparation and planning a challenge. We have been fortunate, however, to see stabilization in our strong enrollment in the past two years. We continue to monitor enrollment and make plans for adjustments.

Our school wide professional development focus will shift this year from the formative learning cycle to small group differentiated reading instruction. While our faculty is skilled reading teachers, there has been much growth in reading research and instructional strategies in the past five years. In partnership with the district module, HPS faculty will receive ongoing professional development and coaching that aims to:

- Develop a shared understanding of the elements of high quality, balanced, targeted, and differentiated small group reading instruction;
- Learn how to use assessment and observational data to identify individualized reading strengths, difficulties, and areas for growth to plan small group differentiated instruction;
- Develop a repertoire of language that supports readers and is consistent across the school/district;
- Learn how to share results from reading assessments, observations, and progress monitoring with colleagues, families, and students.

This year HPS has also launched a Service to Our School (SOS) program. The outcome of this program is for students to complete community service jobs at school. The goals of this program are for students to acquire real life experiences that translate into life skills and allow them to develop responsibility and pride in how they contribute to a community and serve others. The hope is that this will help instill a sense of leadership, self-confidence, engagement, and service.

During the month of September the principal held meetings with many K-3 students to solicit input on job ideas. During these meetings, students were able to brainstorm jobs kids can do in the community. Students have come up with an outstanding list of job ideas. During the school year, each student will have a least one opportunity to spend 15 minutes per day with the principal completing a school service project. Each day

(except Wednesdays), the principal (or a designee) will spend time with a small group of four students (one from each grade level, K-3) participating in a community service job they work on for our school. The entire HPS community is enjoying this work already.

Primary School is also preparing to move into temporary facilities in 2016. We are eager to begin the shift to our new temporary home and even more eager to see our new building project begin.

Given our transient population and unpredictable summer enrollment, our summer assessment and Kindergarten screening process has historically been a robust one. Most of our students do not arrive with comprehensive educational records to inform our placement process or academic support plans. Therefore, it is crucial for us to have a robust incoming student assessment protocol that informs our placement process and timely, responsive intervention plans.

This year the Massachusetts legislature voted to reduce funding for the Kindergarten grant. These reductions have impacted the funding of the Kindergarten summer screening process at HPS. Due to our unique population, HPS has historically conducted two screening sessions (spring and summer). Grant reductions have eliminated our capacity to pay staff for summer screening. We are requesting support to address this new gap created by the grant reduction.

Historically we have also paid readings specialists to assess all new grade 1 students. We are requesting support to expand our assessment practice to grades 1-3. We were fortunate to pilot this model this summer. We directly observed the impact this assessment information had on our placement process and ability to begin reading support services to struggling learners in the second week of school. In the past, we have not had the ability to begin intervention until October as the month of September was spent assessing new students.

I hope that this commentary gives you a snapshot of the district-wide collaborative thinking involved in the development of the FY17 Hanscom Primary School budget. As always, we are working hard to achieve the priorities and goals of our state, district and school. I believe that this budget will provide the foundation to both build on our prior work, as well as to create new opportunities for all of our young students to achieve. We welcome the ability to continue our fine program and still, we remain eager to improve.