

## November District Newsletter

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### **Important Dates:**

- 11/23 - Early Dismissal
- 11/24 - No School, Thanksgiving
- 11/25 - No School
- 12/3 - Craft Fair at LHS
- 12/5 - School Committee Workshop at LHS Media Center, 4:30 pm
- 12/13 – School Committee Meeting, 6:30 pm Town Hall Selectmen’s Mtg Room
- 12/23 - 1/2 - No School, Holiday Break

### **Connect With Us:**



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## Happy Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is more than a good excuse for a large meal; it is a time for us to remember to be thankful for the people in our lives. Thanks to the Leicester officials, dedicated educators, families, and students who make Leicester a wonderful place to learn and work.

*Judy Paolucci*  
superintendent

## Kuwaiti Visit

On October 27th, 20 Kuwaiti school administrators, 3 interpreters, and 4 consultants visited Leicester to learn about American education and practices for school improvement and supervision. Last month’s blog post focused on their observations of our middle school.



## Now Reading: *Balanced Leadership for Powerful Learning* (Goodwin & Cameron, 2015)

*“A study of high-needs, high-performing, “beat-the-odds” schools conducted by McREL researchers (McRel, 2005) found that two of the key characteristics that separated these schools from their lower-performing counterparts were academic press for achievement (high expectations for all students) and shared mission and goals (a clear focus for improvement efforts and resources.)”*

## **Staff Spotlight: Siddhi Kamat**

Siddhi Kamat's passion is teaching chemistry and anyone who has met her can verify her enthusiasm for the subject and for students. Prior to coming to Leicester High School, Siddhi served as a long term substitute then as an 8th grade teacher.



Ms. Kamat attended Vidyaprassarak Mandal's College of Education and Goa-University, both in India, where she majored in science and math. She then earned her teaching credentials at Worcester State College.

In addition to enjoying teaching chemistry, Ms. Kamat loves cooking, singing, and playing badminton. She is married and has a 10-year-old son, Shubhan Kamat.

## **Teacher Leadership Corner**

On November 2nd, Ashley Niggli, Memorial School Psychologist, presented, along with Paul McCarthy, Judy Paolucci, and Tina Boss, at the MASC conference. The subject of the presentation was the establishment of a positive behavioral support model and the development of a code of conduct.

The superintendents and school committee members in attendance was impressed by the actions of our school community to address the issues that plagued the Memorial School last year. They were also grateful to learn what steps they might take as the challenges we have faced are being faced in many schools across the Commonwealth.

When teachers present at conferences they extend their reach beyond their school's walls while also contributing toward a positive impression of Leicester schools.

## **Budget Update**

The first step in the budget process is for the Director of Finance and the Superintendent to do gross projections of budget lines. These projections are based upon what is known at the time and many assumptions are made. Still, these projections give us a good idea about how tight the budget will be over the next year. Projections for FY18 look good; we won't have a great amount of discretionary funds but we also won't be laying off staff.

Our next step is for principals to submit budget requests then to review those requests. Most likely, there will be more identified needs than may be supported through the budget process so plans will include some prioritization of needs. We will be ready to share our ideas with the School Committee in January at 2 budget workshops. The public is welcome to attend. Look for details to be shared in upcoming newsletters and on our website.

## **Water Testing**

Water testing done in early November revealed levels of copper and lead exceeding the state action levels in some of the taps in our schools. We have already begun to replace piping at those locations. We will then retest water samples from those locations.

While Leicester got on board quickly to secure state funding for water testing, many districts have not yet begun to test their taps. On November 15, 2016, an additional \$750,000 above the initial \$2 million investment was allocated from the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust to help fund efforts to test for lead and copper in public schools.

Since April, DEP has collected 25,900 water samples. Of those tested, 164 school buildings, including all four Leicester schools, have had at least one tap testing higher than the lead action level, while 76 school buildings, including all four Leicester schools, have had at least one tap testing higher than the copper action level.

Lead can be introduced into drinking water through plumbing and fixtures, especially when water is acidic and facilities are more than 20 years old. Here in Leicester, we anticipate that the replacement of affected fixtures will cost between \$6,000 and \$10,000.

