

From the Desk of the Superintendent

Volume I No.5 FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER February 28, 2018

Twitter: @maldenpublic



Superintendent John Oteri



Lots of creativity @ Salemwood School!

Students at the Salemwood K-8 School display their box puppet show creations during a recent festival held at the school. There are so many talented, creative students learning in our schools.



MALDEN READS: One City, One Book program program partners with Malden Public Schools

Christina, right and Gigi, left, were on hand at the Malden School Committee meeting to talk about plans by the Malden High Black Culture Club to help promote Malden Reads 2018 book selection *The Hate U Give*. See P.6

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings to all,

Safe schools and the safety of all the students and staff in the Malden Public Schools are not reactions and responses to either singular or collective statements, events or tragedies. The safety of all students and staff comprise the foundation from which all education emanates in the Malden Public Schools.

Recent events make it imperative that we review, assess and also reflect on the manner and the approach we take in maintaining a safe and nurturing environment for educating our students. It is done and continues to be done, each and every day.

—Superintendent John Oteri

Follow us on Twitter: @maldenpublic

Malden Public Schools Mission Statement

Malden Public Schools is a place where students are encouraged to follow their dreams and become well rounded members of our community. The Malden Public Schools prepare students to be independent thinkers & enthusiastic learners who: Work hard; Respect others; Cherish our diversity; Seek challenges; Discover and Develop their individual talents; Strive for academic excellence; and look to Demonstrate personal and social responsibility. Malden Public Schools graduates are prepared to be active participants in our economy and democracy.

Superintendent's response to the Parkland, Florida tragedy for educators in the Malden Public Schools

The following was written and distributed to MPS staff just hours after the Parkland, Fla. tragedy

Good Evening Malden Educators,

It is with a sickened feeling that I write this to you. Today was yet another day of tragedy in our country with the horrible news of a mass shooting at a high school in Florida. At this writing, 17 are confirmed dead, many remain in critical condition, creating a feeling of dread that this number could rise. The nature of the shooting, the calculated manner of attack, the profile and history of the alleged shooter, and the worsening news that many predicted and knew of his tendencies, forces me to pause and offer some guidance for all of us.

We believe safety is the top priority for all of us. We need to make sure our students are physically and emotionally safe in order for them to learn. We must remain vigilant and monitor our students for any signs of distress or concern. We have an outstanding team of counselors and support staff who respond swiftly and appropriately to all issues. We work cooperatively and collaboratively with all of our public safety teams in Malden who are highly trained to respond to any situation. We conducted a review of physical security improvements in the fall and made repairs where needed. We have practiced our safety drills in hopes we never have to use them. We should all review our safety protocols and make sure we know what to do in an emergency.

There may be new guidelines that come along as a result of today's tragedy. If so, we will update and respond to these to ensure we are current and provide the best protection for all of us. In the meantime we need to hold Florida in our thoughts and prayers. The loss of any student to violence is unacceptable. Seventeen students is inexplicable.



Treat each child as your own. As educators, you all go above just teaching. Your ability to understand our students is what separates us from being simply teachers. Keep that compassion and connection flowing. Remain vigilant for anything that seems out of place and report it. If you think something isn't right, you may be correct so report it to your principal and we will investigate.

We hope we never have a tragedy in Malden or anywhere. Schools are sanctuaries from the violent and unkind world. Schools launch futures, unlock potentials and allow growth and foster citizenship. Schools should not be the place where violence manifests or futures end decades prematurely. The Malden Public Schools motto is "Where futures begin." We commit to this every day as we usher our students to become global citizens and ambassadors of change.

Let's renew this commitment by checking on our students and making sure we are all safe. It is making sure that EVERY student has at least one adult they can turn to and talk to when something has been posted, stated or videoed and makes them uncomfortable. In over 98% of these cases someone knew and didn't say anything. We have to change this culture. If every student has a trusted adult they can talk with and report these concerns, we can save lives. At times like this, I am reminded of the Margaret Mead quote which states, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has". Each one of you is that one thoughtful and committed adult who can make that change.

—**Superintendent John Oteri**

Superintendent, Police Chief Molis give safety status update to the City Council

Councilor Matheson had requested a report and Supt. Oteri and City Facilities Director Rubin appeared



Superintendent Oteri, at podium, speaks to the Malden City Council on the status of the safety of the Malden Public Schools, along with Malden Police Chief Kevin Molis, left.



Superintendent Oteri and Chief Molis

MALDEN — Police Chief Kevin Molis made it clear he believes, above all, the most important element in helping keep students and staff in Malden's schools safe on a daily basis "is talking to each other ... and speaking up if something doesn't appear quite right." The Malden official spoke to the City Council Tuesday, giving a status update on safety at the local schools.

"We are doing this in our community. We have regular communication, regular conversations and on many levels regarding our schools and what is going on inside them," Molis said. "They are not on an island. They are part of the fabric of our community and the Malden Police Department is highly involved with our schools."

Molis, Malden Superintendent of Schools John Oteri and city Facilities Director Eric Rubin were on hand following a request from Ward 3 City Councilor John Matheson seeking a school safety status update in the wake of last week's school shootings in Parkland, Fla. Molis stressed constant and consistent communication was an essential ingredient to providing safety in Malden's schools. It is especially important when dealing with individuals who may be troubled and could potentially harm themselves or others.

"Our consistent goal is to make sure every kid is connected to an adult who they could turn to if they needed to share how they were feeling, what they were concerned with, or to relay something they heard or saw that was out of the ordinary," said Supt. Oteri, who came on board as superintendent last June. "Safety is our highest priority on a daily basis in the Malden Public Schools."

"Early intervention is so important in identifying someone who might feel alone and alienated or trending that way," Molis said.

Continued Next Page



Linden STEAM Academy Principal Mr. Bransfield reports that students there are 'all in' for the 'Writing With Colors' program, being implemented citywide in all of the Malden Public Schools over this school year and next.



PARENT-TEACHER NIGHTS have been drawing good attendance citywide, including at Malden High School, shown above.

Supt. Oteri, Chief Molis give school safety update

Continued from Previous Page

Sharing information is so important in this regard. That is why we are in constant contact with the school department. We have established a strong relationship by way of communications with Superintendent Oteri, with whom I confer regularly, and it means everything in being able to identify behavior trends right down to individuals."

Oteri said every instance or reference which may have any type of connection to Malden Public Schools or its students and staff is noted, checked out and addressed, at any time. "In addition to maintaining safety and security in our physical school facilities, there is constant emphasis on monitoring online and social media activity," he said.

Oteri recalled a recent instance where local students retweeted a reference of a possible threat "at mhs."

"We checked it out, had discussions with Malden police and other city officials, late on a Sunday night and finally concluded the post referred to Monticello High School ('mhs') in Virginia," Oteri said. "It allayed some anxiety and showed we can address issues of that nature swiftly and efficiently. We take these things seriously."

"It is gratifying to hear your assessments," said Ward 7 Councilor Neal Anderson. "But as safe as we feel here, we just never know. We may think 'it will never happen here' but there are no guarantees. We must follow your directives — shared responsibility, shared information — at all levels. We must stay vigilant." Ward 6 City Councilor Stephen Winslow noted the alleged perpetrator in Florida was not a member of that town's school system at the time of the tragedy. Oteri said the vigilance does not stop when students are graduated out of the school system. "We have a number of instances in this school year where we have been able to offer assistance to former students in ways they needed it," Supt. Oteri said.

The Malden Public Schools: 'Our Diversity is Our Strength'

The Malden district is near the top as one of the most diverse in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts with Malden High School rated the #1 most diverse secondary education school overall. Throughout the district we embrace our diversity and strive to progress as one.



Many Malden High U.S. History and Government classes took part in an inspiring "Model United Nations" session in the MHS Library in the week before the February break.

A POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE

IS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COMMON LANGUAGE
USED, EXEMPLIFYING THE BELIEFS, VALUES,
STRENGTH IN RELATIONSHIPS AND RESPECT FOR
DIVERSITY IN THE COMMUNITY.

Malden Public Schools helping city become a very 'well read' community with *Malden Reads* partnership and Little Free Library contributions

MALDEN – It is very difficult to get around the city these days without bumping into a book.

The popular Malden Reads ... One City, One Book program has seemingly taken the community by storm, this year more than ever, as its facilitators make presentations of its 2018 book selection all around the city.

Maldonians also have the generosity of their own neighbors and high school students to thank for the arrival of a quaint, but inspiring addition to their hometown, "Little Free Libraries."

Recently, the Little Free Library expanded to Malden's schools as Design and Engineering teacher Ashley Freeman and her class built several installable book sanctuaries that are to be erected outside each of the city's five K-8 schools as well as the Early Learning Center.

All signs are certainly pointing to Malden's residents becoming the most "well-read" citizenry in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

"We are thrilled at the tremendous response we are getting from many people around the community and the partnership we have established with the Malden Public Schools," said Jodie Zalk, a co-founder of Malden Reads in 2010 with Anne D'Urso-Rose, "Malden students are fortunate to have programs such as Title I and the excellent work being done under the direction of Janice Raymond," Zalk said during a presentation to the Malden School Committee on Malden Reads, "and we are all very pleased to see a librarian added for the K-8 schools this year in Malden."

Malden High School student Christina Charles, representing the school's Black Culture Club, recently told School Committee members students are excited about partnering with Malden Reads with this year's book selection, *The Hate U Give*, by Angie Thomas, which depicts the story of a young black woman trying to find her way following a series of tragic events in her home city.

"We are supporting Malden Reads in getting the word out on this book selection, and we would like to make

this a tradition, not just a one-year partnership this year," Charles said. She added that the subject matter of the *The Hate U Give* book made it especially pertinent for joining in the promotion by the Black Culture Club.

Malden Reads joined up with the Malden High Black Culture Club for its major kickoff event, which was held Feb. 15 at the high school's Jenkins Auditorium. The evening featured a formal presentation of the book selection and its companion books for younger readers, dialogue on topical issues associated with the book, as well as artwork, exhibit tables & refreshments.

Several hundred were in attendance at the Malden Reads kickoff presentation at Malden High School's Jenkins Auditorium on February 15

"It is exciting to see so much attention around these programs and projects and the partnerships being established with the Malden Public Schools and our students and staff," Malden Superintendent John Oteri said. "We were honored to host the presentation at the high school."

"My family and many families I know have really embraced Malden Reads and it has been a part of our lives for years and we are better for it," said Malden Ward 5 School Committee member Tara Beardsley.

TWITTER PHOTO CONTEST

1. Follow **@MALDENPUBLIC**
2. Tweet **@MALDENPUBLIC** your favorite MPS photo
3. Use the hashtag **#SPRINGPHOTOCONTEST**

Safety of students and staff and prompt sharing of accurate information is standard procedure in the Malden Public Schools

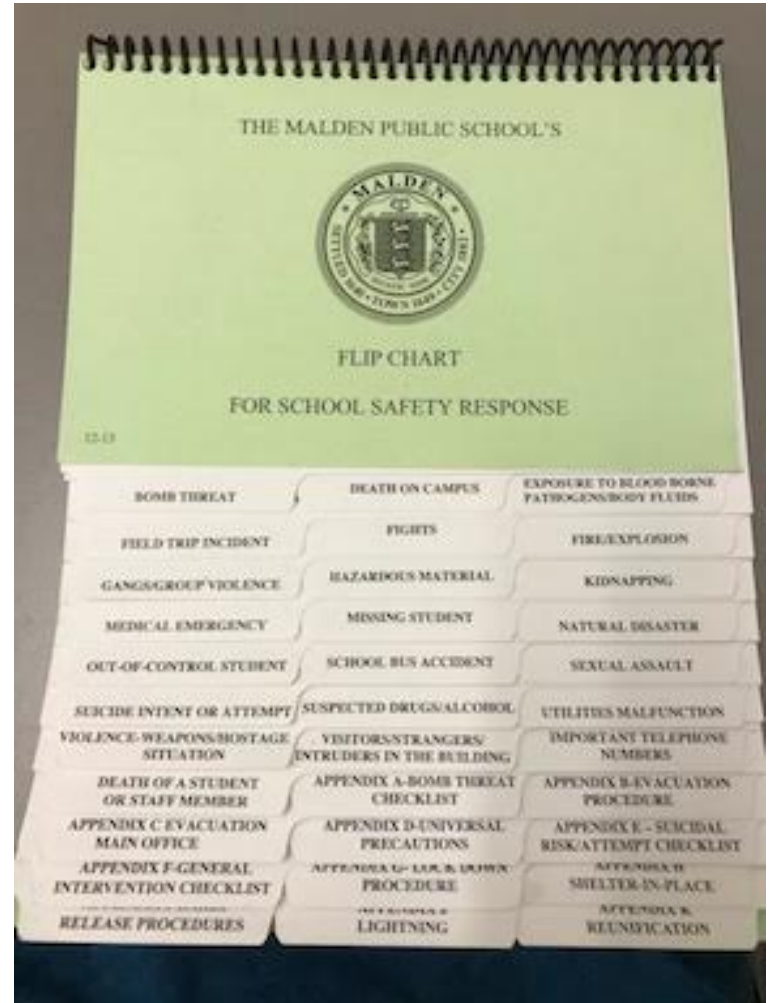
The following was an open letter to all staff members of the Malden Public Schools that was distributed at the beginning of the school year. It is reprinted here to reinforce and inform all of the principles that are held and followed in the Malden Public Schools

Dear Malden Public Schools Staff,

One of the tenets of my administration is open, honest, transparent and collaborative communication. During my time here so far, I am pleased to say that I have found there to be a cooperative spirit and open, transparent communication between the schools and various departments in the City. I firmly believe that this is necessary in order for all of us to be successful. I thoroughly enjoy working here and truly appreciate the commitment of both our staff and members of other City departments.

To that end, I would like to address an issue that, unfortunately, is becoming all-too-familiar in our society, an emergency situation. We are quite fortunate in Malden to have a manual that covers nearly every situation that we could potentially face in the Malden Public Schools. As you know, we have detailed protocol and procedural steps that are to be taken in case of an emergency. The building principal remains in contact with Central Office (me, unless I am unavailable) and our public safety officials. It is critical that when an emergency situation arises, we as educators, listen for the next steps. Unless instructions and pertinent information comes directly from my office and our public safety officials, then it is not true.

Please remember, our commitment is to first



A copy of the regulatory, mandatory emergency response protocol of the Malden Public Schools is available in every classroom and office

keep our students and staff safe. If we commit to this, then I am confident we should not have any issues. I look forward to our continued partnership towards safety, student achievement and constant communication that supports all of our goals. Stay well and stay safe! Truly,

—Superintendent John Oteri