May 2025 School Committee Report/Director of Curriculum and Grants, Grades 6-12
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Grants: In our last year of working with EDC (Education Development Center) grantees in the area of DLCS (Digital Literacy Computer Science), we have accomplished some very exciting tasks! Funds from the grant associated with this organization has allowed us to develop and incorporate into the curriculum a new Python computer course for high school students. We were very excited to see the high number of requests for this course as students and administration are working diligently to create next year's schedule for students. In addition, our grade eight Computer Science Discoveries students were invited to participate in an exhibition at Worcester State College over the winter that allowed students to showcase applications they coded to help younger students learn basic facts such as the alphabet, numbers, colors, and many other topics. They earned two awards for their work and have been invited to attend a second exhibition, to be held at EDC in Waltham on June 3rd. We wish them the best of luck!

Through our ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) grant, we were able to fund Enjoy Life Education's (www.enjoylifeacademy.org) Evren Gundez, founder of this leadership academy and motivational speaker, to deliver an interactive and inspiring presentation for grades six, seven, and eight. Evren's presentation costs are then used to provide three scholarships for students from Tahanto to participate in his summer camp at Babson College at no cost. School Adjustment Counselor Kara Ford and I were invited to be guests at this camp last summer and were impressed by the level of inspiration, engagement, and curriculum which encourages students to build upon self esteem, confidence, and giving your best in all you do. We are excited to have three students benefit from this collaboration and for them to bring back the skills they have learned as they enter grade nine.

Professional Development: This year we provided many professional development offerings ranging from Safety Care and ABA training for many staff, Safety Information for the entire district, several sessions of Vertical Alignment for grades five and six for all core subjects, two books studies (High Expectation Teaching and The Anxious Generation) for staff along with Teach Like a Champion with the Administrative Team. In addition to topics related to use of Artificial Intelligence in schooling, we also had several "series" of professional development such as "The Year of Math" for the elementary schools, working with school wide goals at all three schools to works towards lowering gaps between our high needs and all students groups, and preparing for next years focus on UDL (Universal Design for Learning) and formative assessment, which is a strategy used to help teachers gather information about what students are comprehending and to inform further instruction. We are excited to welcome UDL expert and author of UDL Now, Katie Novak, to kick off our opening day for the 2025-2026 school year and are purchasing her book for all teaching and paraprofessional staff to use for professional development purposes next year.

Wellness Committee: This year the Wellness Committee prepared and took a presentation about the new Wellness policy to various groups such as the faculties of all three schools, school council, Health classrooms for grades one through five at both elementary schools, the Boosters club, The PTO, and SEPAC and we are in the process of making plans to visit Tahanto's new Sweet and Savory club to present our presentation and then cook with them. We have also sent information about the policy to parents through newsletters. During these presentations, we have collected feedback data that we will use to adjust the policy next year.

STEAM Committee: The STEAM Committee organized a community event that will take place on Monday, May 12th at Tahanto from 5 - 6:30 pm. The event is the first of our new "Eureka Series" events that we plan to have each fall and spring where we invite someone who works in the STEAM areas to come and present to our community. We were fortunate enough to have STEAM members such as parent Eric Baehrecke, who works at UMASS Worcester and knows the 2024 Nobel prize winner Victor Ambros and his wife Candy Lee, who researched with Victor. We are eagerly awaiting this presentation to hear all about Victor and Candy's journey in the field of physiology and medicine.