

— November 21, 2024 —

Thursday Thoughts

By Superintendent William Burkhead



Thursday Thoughts is a monthly newsletter intended to keep community stakeholders connected to SPS.

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Superintendent's Goals for 2024-2026

Comprehensive Initiatives to Enhance Student Learning

As part of a process of guiding district decision-making related to initiatives and spending, I have established two-year goals which have been approved by the School Committee. These goals represent objectives for the district that will guide the schools in achieving their mission and strategic plan.

The overarching purpose of these goals is to elevate educational outcomes. To this end, SPS has launched a series of initiatives aimed at fostering a supportive and challenging learning environment for all students. These efforts prioritize individual needs and employ data-driven strategies to ensure that every student can achieve their full potential.

At the heart of these initiatives is the commitment to delivering an engaging and rigorous curriculum, complemented by high-quality instruction. Teachers will receive specialized training to address the unique needs of each student, creating tailored learning experiences that promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills, while also being aligned to state standards. The goal is to spark curiosity and keep learning enjoyable, thereby improving overall academic performance.

Key strategies include the Systemic Student Support (S3) Academy and Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), which focus on early identification of students requiring additional assistance. This proactive approach allows for timely interventions that can prevent academic struggles from escalating. Additionally, a new math program will offer up-to-date curriculum materials aligned with current standards, enhancing students' understanding and confidence in mathematics.

Moreover, the district will implement a data review process to inform instructional decisions, ensuring that educators can monitor student progress and provide necessary support promptly. A deep dive into the results of an equity audit will further address achievement gaps among specific student groups, promoting a more equitable learning environment.

Beyond curricular improvements, the district is enhancing functionality and outcomes of district-wide teams, which is expected to benefit students, staff, and families alike. Improved communication and collaboration among educators can lead to a cohesive learning atmosphere that directly impacts students' experiences. Additionally, families will be more engaged through consistent communication channels, fostering stronger partnerships in education.

I am also prioritizing a positive school culture through professional practice goals that emphasize succession planning and staff development. Initiatives like interest-based bargaining and coaching programs are designed to enhance job satisfaction among educators while improving instructional quality.

Finally, the district's School Building Committee continues to work on the design and planning of the new Cushing/Hatherly Elementary School, which is scheduled to open in September 2027. This year, we will continue to work on our enrollment plan and communicate to families how the new school will enhance teaching and learning at the elementary level.

With these comprehensive initiatives, I aim to create an inclusive and thriving educational environment where both students and staff can excel. By fostering collaboration, communication, and targeted support, I am committed to building a brighter future for all learners.

I encourage you to visit our website at www.scit.org or go directly to the [Superintendent's Goals](#) presentation.

News & Noteworthy:

SPS and our entire school community offer our congratulations to Athletic Director Scott Paine for receiving the 2024 Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) William N. Gaine, Jr. Sportsmanship Award. This award was developed by the MIAA Sportsmanship Committee to honor an individual for distinguished leadership in the promotion of sportsmanship throughout interscholastic athletics. Scott was selected based upon his leadership, service, and tireless commitment to providing high-quality interscholastic athletic experiences for student athletes across the state. The presentation of the MIAA William N. Gaine, Jr. Sportsmanship Award took place during the 30th Annual MIAA Sportsmanship Summit on Thursday, November 7, 2024, at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, MA.

Mr. Paine is also the recipient of the prestigious 2024 MIAA John Young Distinguished Service Award, which will be presented to AD Paine on December 11, 2024 at the MIAA awards banquet. Scituate High School is very proud of Scott Paine for receiving these awards!





WE Inspire

“WE Inspire” will be a monthly “Sailor Shoutout” to those SPS staff who inspire us to greatness through their own actions.



Four years ago, in the middle of the pandemic when everyone was struggling, our high school got a new librarian/ media specialist. I was already acquainted with Tracey Newman but didn't know her well. Within a month of her arrival, I was so impressed and delighted by my new colleague. She immediately turned the library into a structured, safe and welcoming environment for staff and students.

As the library is a hot spot for kids to try to go to, I sensed a significant improvement to the execution of school rules that felt orderly and clear. She drastically improved this common space within her first 6 months, and has continued to do so. All of my interactions with Tracey are extremely pleasant and I find her to be a dependably positive and kind person. We are SO lucky to have her add the high school.

Submitted by Jake Kovach, World Language Teacher, Scituate High School

WE encourage our school community to share your “WE Inspire” stories to be posted in future Thursday Thoughts newsletters. Please send to Sara Thurling, sthurling@scit.org



Wyllys Ames & Superintendent Burkhead

Shout out to Scituate High’s Wyllys Ames for leading the SPS Convocation in the pledge of allegiance!

Wyllys is a senior at SHS and heavily involved in the SPS community. He is a member of the varsity football & wrestling teams, a student rep for the Scituate School Committee and morning news announcer for the high school.

SPS Spotlight

What is METCO?

Founded in 1966, The Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity, Inc. (METCO), is a program funded by the state of Massachusetts to expand educational opportunities, increase diversity, and reduce racial isolation by permitting students from Boston to attend public schools in suburban communities. METCO is the nation's largest voluntary school desegregation program and fosters the opportunity for children from Boston and from neighboring suburbs to develop a deeper understanding of each other in an integrated public school setting which aids them to develop a strong academic foundation rich in cultural, educational, socioeconomic, and racial diversity. By allowing students from predominantly Black and Latino neighborhoods in Boston to attend predominantly white suburban schools, METCO aims to break down barriers and foster a more integrated educational environment for all!

Scituate METCO History

Scituate became a METCO District in the Fall of 1968 when 20 Boston resident students entered Scituate High School. Today, there are around 70 students in Scituate METCO each year in grades K-12. Boston resident students participate in all aspects of the academic and extracurricular life of the schools and become valued members of the Scituate community. Students get a great education, but METCO's true power goes beyond academics. Scituate METCO is committed to ensuring that students and families in each community - Boston and Scituate - benefit from the experience: appreciation for diversity, skills in navigating a multicultural world, and lifelong friendships.



Scituate METCO at a Glance

As we begin a new school year with new METCO Leadership, we want to highlight some of the initiatives and impacts of Scituate METCO.

- **Expansion of METCO Team:** In addition to our METCO Director & Visionary, MarKaveus Barnes and our METCO Program Manager, Sherilla Lestrade, we are excited to introduce our newest edition to the Scituate METCO team, the METCO Student Success Liaison. Once filled, the Student Success Liaison will work to provide targeted support for students in 1:1 or small group settings in collaboration with school staff. For the first time, we will have (3) METCO staff that are dedicated to supporting our students, ensuring they have the resources, advocacy and guidance needed to succeed academically and socially.
- **Livius Prep After-School STEM Enrichment Program:** For grades 3-8, this program offers hands-on STEM experiences, helping students develop critical thinking skills and ignite their passion for science, technology, engineering, and math. This is the first time that after school enrichment has been offered for grades 3-5.
- **Hispanic Heritage Month Breakfast:** Our METCO staff celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month with a special breakfast for students, honoring the rich cultural contributions of Hispanic and Latino communities, and fostering appreciation and understanding of cultures among all students.
- **METCO 101:** Our METCO Director has begun to present 'METCO 101' sessions at each school to educate staff about the program's history, mission, goals, and the impact that Scituate METCO creates for our Boston-Scituate community.

Scituate METCO continues to thrive, providing invaluable experiences and support to our students. As we celebrate these achievements, we look forward to building on this momentum and fostering a community that values progress and impact for all students and families!

Please review the infographic and resources linked below to learn more about METCO.



METCO Resources

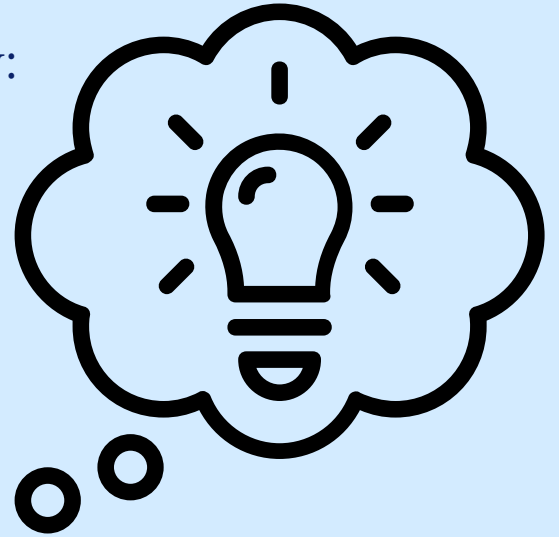
- [METCO FAQ](#)
- [METCO History](#)

What do you think?

We would like to know what you think about the start of school. Specifically, should the school year start before or after Labor Day?

To participate please visit the link below:

[Start of the School Year Survey](#)



Upcoming Events



Join Us for a Seaside Chat!

We're inviting you to two special sessions with Superintendent Burkhead, School Committee Chairperson Brandolini and members of the building project team to learn more about the Cushing/Hatherly new school project.

For SPS Staff

- December 11, 2024
- 3:45 PM
- Hatherly School Library

For the Scituate Community

- December 18, 2024
- 4:00 PM
- Hatherly School Library

Come join the conversation and get the latest updates on this exciting project