



## **An Update from the Superintendent**

*By Dr. Sara Ahern, Superintendent of Schools*

The 2018-2019 school year is shaping up to be an excellent one!

We started off the year with a focus on student and staff well-being. Guest speaker, Carrie Stack of the Say Yes Institute ([www.sayyesinstitute.com](http://www.sayyesinstitute.com)) delivered opening remarks in a humorous and accessible way to all faculty and staff on August 27. The theme was one of self-care; there were two reasons for this focus. First, we as educators are role models for the children we teach and they look to us as examples of living healthfully. Second, for us to care for and educate children in the way they need and deserve, we need to be our healthiest selves. Hence our district has expanded its focus on social-emotional learning to include staff in addition to students as part of our Strategy for District Improvement.

You may recall that last year, in my first year as Superintendent, I engaged with the community to look, listen, and learn as much as I could about Franklin Public Schools. I held forums with staff, parents, students, and community groups; I observed over 150 classrooms spread across each of our 11 buildings; and I read and reviewed reports, articles, manuals, and student learning data. Last winter, I published a report of findings. Throughout the spring and into the summer, I worked with the Administrative Team and the School Committee to turn the report of findings into a new [Strategy for District Improvement](#).

Our District Improvement highlights four main objectives (goals):

- Social-Emotional Well-being of Students and Staff
- Engaging and Rigorous Curriculum
- High-Quality Instruction to meet the Academic and SEL Needs of Each Learner
- Effective Two-Way Communication to Support Student learning

We have generated a one-page summary of these objectives and related initiatives, which represents our improvement efforts over the next three years. A detailed one-year improvement plan is also included and we are actively in the Action Planning stage in order to define our benchmarks of success over this period of time.

We are excited that this improvement plan captures so many of the wonderful efforts already under way in Franklin in recent years: social-emotional development, engaging communication, effective homework practices, and alignment of our curriculum to the MA curriculum frameworks. But we are also excited to look at our improvement efforts with a new lens. And with this lens we aim to sharpen our focus on personalized learning, technology integration, and student engagement in order to ensure we are preparing students with what they will need in in order to be successful in a rapidly changing, technologically advanced, globally interconnected world.

We look forward to reporting on these efforts regularly throughout the year through our [#FranklinPSNews](#) newsletter and our public presentations to the School Committee and the community.