



**ANDOVER**  
**PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
Massachusetts

# Superintendent's Entry Plan Findings Executive Summary

June 2022

Andover Public Schools  
30 Whittier Court  
Andover, Massachusetts 01810

**Magda C. Parvey, Ed. D.**  
Superintendent, Andover Public Schools

*“Great schools are defined by great relationships with students, families, educators and the community we serve.”*

Dear Andover Public Schools families, students and staff,

It is my pleasure to provide the APS community with this Entry Plan Findings Executive Summary. The findings of this summary are a result of my conversations, visits and surveys with students, APS families, staff, and the community. This report includes an analysis of historical data and information I've gathered since my arrival in July 2021.

These findings also serve as a reflection of my goals and objectives introduced in the [Superintendent's Entry Plan](#) in October, 2021, [Superintendent's Goals](#) as approved by the School Committee in November, 2021, and [comprehensive findings](#) presented to the School Committee on April 7, 2022. I have discovered these findings through a balance of community meetings, feedback from staff, families, and students, a community survey and an analysis of the data and reports that preceded my arrival to the district. Additionally, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) visited the district in December 2021, and provided a draft of their Comprehensive District Review Report in May 2022 with a final report issued in June, 2022. Their draft review report supports much of what I have observed. This Executive Summary includes information from the DESE report and serves as a supplement to the April 7, 2022 presentation of my entry plan findings, and will provide data and information for creation of the district's Strategic Plan.

Overall, my transition work focused on identifying:

1. The strengths of the district;
2. the aspects of the Andover Public Schools that we do well and should preserve;
3. the district's greatest challenges;
4. how we might better address the needs of all our students.

In this summary, I provide some additional information from the community survey and analysis of data with respect to student achievement, curriculum, and the district's finances and personnel.

As educators, we strive and thrive in an environment where learning and growth are consistently promoted. This report also discusses some of the things we can do to improve the Andover Public Schools experience for all stakeholders and enhance the desired daily experience for our students. I am confident that we can collaboratively address some of the challenges and opportunities articulated in this summary. It is my goal to build on Andover's successes while accelerating growth and innovation for all students.

Sincerely,

Dr. Magda Parvey

# SUMMARY OF ENTRY PLAN FINDINGS PRESENTATION

At the April 7, 2022 School Committee meeting, I presented [data and findings](#) gathered since my tenure began as superintendent in July 2021. This presentation focused on the feedback from students, staff, families and community members from various data points.

The timeline for this entry plan is as follows:

- Phase 1: gather feedback and process data (June- August)
- Phase 2: review and reflection (September - March)
- Phase 3: conclusions and sharing (April - June)
- Phase 4: Strategic Plan Development (August - December)

Overall, the summary of findings presented a good balance of strengths, areas in need of growth and opportunities for the district.

## **District's strengths:**

- Overwhelming love of education; system and community
- Stakeholders sincerely care about and value public education
- High engagement from staff, families and community
- Our system offers a wide range of extracurriculars to our students
- The Town invests in, supports, and believes in APS
- Staff and Building Leadership are highly regarded and respected by students and parents
- Enduring commitment to student wellness, best practices, and educational excellence

## **District's challenges:**

- Inconsistent instructional practices and curriculum across all content areas
- Performance gaps persist among subgroups
- We must address equity and develop a common language at APS
- We must address aging infrastructure
- Need for clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- Need clarity around governance and what is operational
- Need for a strategic plan and direction
- Need for rigorous learning opportunities and critical thinking for all students
- Notable tensions between the teachers' association and the school committee

The entry plan process revealed common themes from our students, staff, and families. These themes present opportunities for district leadership to consider as we move forward to create the district's Strategic Plan.

## **Opportunities:**

- Targeted professional learning to support all our educators
- Common approach to Social Emotional Learning

- Work to elevate the student voice. Students have a lot to say about how they are taught, and content presented to them. Some feel disengaged and do not believe the curriculum reflects their values.
- Develop a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) structure to support mental health need of the district
- Clearly defined organizational structure
- Enhance classroom instruction through the use of evidence/research based instructional practices
- Create clearly articulated common curriculum and assessments across all content areas and grade levels
- Foster relationship between Andover Education Association (AEA), School Committee, and management to alleviate distractions from student learning

## CURRENT AND ON-GOING INITIATIVES

In my first year with the district, my administration has already taken some preliminary steps to address some of these opportunities.

### **Curriculum and Professional Learning**

A common and shared language regarding academic rigor and instruction must be established in APS so that we may address instructional disparities and improve student outcomes across the district for all learners. The *Principles of Learning*, born of the Institute for Learning (IFL) out of the University of Pittsburgh, has been introduced across the district to all administrators, teachers, IAs to begin this effort. In addition to an introduction of the *Principles of Learning* across schools in the district, Andover's Program Coordinators and Middle School principals participated in a six part leadership series focused on developing shared district language for academic rigor and the development of a shared vision for instructional practice in the district. Additionally, all middle school English Language Arts and mathematics teachers engaged in an instructionally-focused professional development series aimed at developing shared practices for students within middle school ELA and math content areas.

Andover Public Schools' Program Coordinators have begun to work with Weston Kieschnick to identify high leverage instructional practices to best support effective instruction and rigorous student learning. A four-day immersive professional development series was kicked off this year and will continue into 2022-2023.

### **Social Emotional Learning**

In November, 2021, the Andover Public Schools partnered with the [Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence](#) to learn more about how to support the well-being of our school community. This partnership will help us determine staff and students' needs as we work toward building a robust and supportive plan for SEL implementation in the upcoming school years. This year, our staff participated in Yale's national Educator Well-Being and SEL Practices survey designed to measure the sources of teachers' well-being as well as school-based SEL self-efficacy, SEL implementation support, and teacher perceptions of SEL intervention effectiveness. These data will inform our development of district wide



SEL practices. In addition, our administrative team has begun a professional development leadership series to define district-wide SEL practices for K-12 Tier 1 instruction, led by Dr. Christian Cipriano, Director of Research at Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. Coupled with this work, this summer, our district leadership team will participate in a series of district-wide Yale RULER trainings to begin the work of aligning research and best practices to build our district's vision for SEL in Andover Public Schools.

### **Excellence in Management**

Excellence in Management is essential to the success of APS. Principals are a key lever in facilitating partnership between the district level and their buildings. Excellence in their role as instructional and building leaders ultimately supports the quality and delivery of instruction and learning in the classroom. We also understand that developing a capacity for partnership in which people at varying levels of authority work in partnership to accomplish shared goals benefit the entire system. That is the work that we have been engaged in as a leadership team during our sessions with Teamworks International. This work will continue as we work on the development of the district strategic plan.

### **Excellence in Governance**

The key purpose of the School Committee (SC) is to serve as the single governing body. The role of SC entails governance, oversight, leadership, appraisal and advocacy. The SC's vision for the school district provides guidance for the continuous improvement process. Excellence in their role establishes a clear direction for implementation by management. That is the work that our SC has started with Teamworks International this year in alignment with the work being done with our leadership team on Excellence in Management. The SC and Administration are two key groups that are essential in moving the district's mission and vision forward.

### **Organizational Structure**

In April, 2022, I presented a draft version of an [organizational chart](#) to refine and define the roles within our district. The goal of this chart is to provide our staff and families with a clearly defined and linear representation of the roles within each department at APS. This chart will serve as the platform for the communications protocol document, which will provide guidance for our stakeholders for effective communications within the APS community.

This Executive Summary follows months of outreach and engagement with our students, staff, and families on how APS can effectively serve the community and to advance academic excellence and educational equity for our students. The goal of the April 7, 2022 presentation was to highlight findings that were student-focused and based on the voices and feedback from our students, staff and community. The following sections will focus on additional findings.

## **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

The Andover Public Schools prides itself on providing an excellent public education for students. In this section, I will share areas of strength and opportunities for continued improvement related to the district's commitment to student learning and academic achievement.

In the draft Comprehensive District Review Report provided by DESE, they noted that APS has two schools identified as Schools of Recognition (High Plain Elementary and South Elementary), and no school needs additional supports.

The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Gen MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System) is higher than the average state rate for all tested grades and subject areas. The tables below provide an overview of student performance in English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science by grade level between 2018 and 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, MCAS exams were not administered in 2020.

**DESE’s Next-Generation MCAS English Language Arts: Percentage Meeting or Exceeding Expectations, 2018-2021**

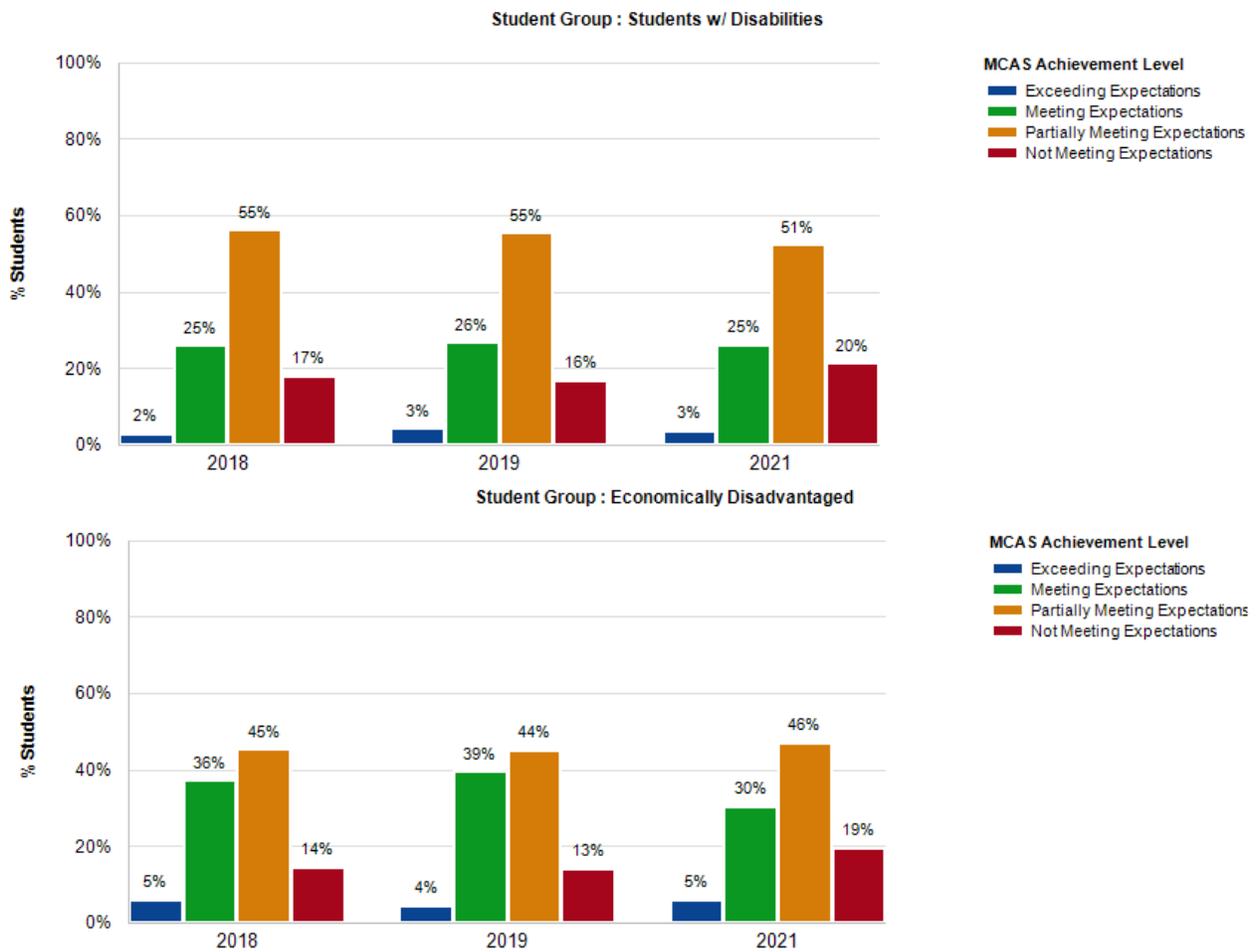
Grade	N (2021)	2018	2019	2021	Change	State (2021)	District above/below state
3	397	71	77	73	2	51	22
4	415	71	70	71	0	49	22
5	455	70	73	68	-2	47	21
6	445	73	68	67	-6	47	20
7	448	55	66	57	2	43	14
8	477	71	71	53	-18	41	12
3-8	2,637	68	71	65	-3	46	19
10	429	—	84	80	—	64	16

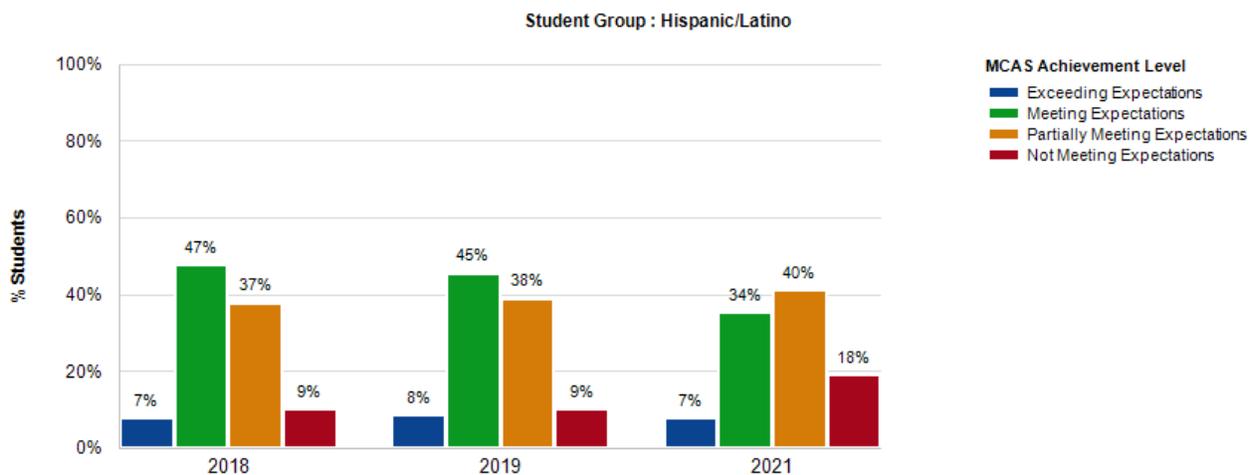
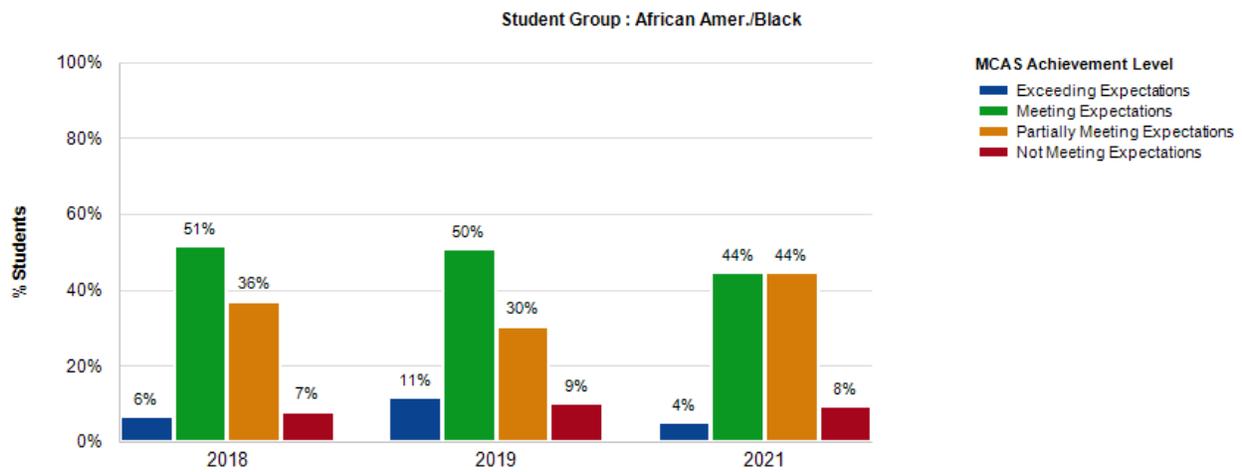
**DESE’s Next-Generation MCAS Math: Percentage Meeting or Exceeding Expectations, 2018-2021**

Grade	N (2021)	2018	2019	2021	Change	State (2021)	Above/below
3	398	64	67	56	-8	33	23
4	415	61	72	53	-8	33	20
5	455	65	72	60	-5	33	27
6	447	64	64	63	-1	33	30
7	449	63	64	55	-8	35	20
8	477	65	64	57	-8	32	25
3-8	2,641	64	67	57	-7	33	24
10	429	—	81	74	—	52	22

Grade	N (2021)	2019	2021	3-year change	State	Above/below
5	455	78	68	-10	42	26
8	408	71	58	-13	41	17
5 and 8		74	63	-11	42	21
10	—	—	—	—	—	—

While DESE’s MCAS data shows the district meeting or exceeding expectations, performance gaps do still exist in the district. A breakdown of district data for MCAS show areas of little or no growth, or a decline for Students with Disabilities, Economically Disadvantaged Students, African American/Black Students, and Hispanic/Latino Students in ELA grades 3-8. The percentage of students in these categories “partially meeting” or “not meeting” expectations have increased in all Student Groups.





## CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

APS's curriculum and instruction were prevalent themes in my research, office hours, and responses to the community survey from our staff and families. In my time with the district, I have come to recognize the need to reshape our direction with respect to curriculum and instruction. With the district's leadership team, we have started the process of addressing instructional disparities. As mentioned earlier in this summary, the *Principles of Learning* from the Institute of Learning, has been introduced across the district to all administrators, teachers, IAs in an effort to begin creating shared language for instruction.



DESE shared this view in their draft Comprehensive District Review Report, noting, "The superintendent and district leadership are currently setting a direction for the district relative to curriculum and instruction." They further added, "The district plans to review some key components of the curriculum to address a need cited by school and district staff: ensuring standards-aligned, grade-level curriculum and instruction are consistently available districtwide." Other areas noted the need to include social-

emotional learning supports and culturally responsive practices. The areas of growth as determined by DESE will be addressed through strategic planning and the development of district-wide expectations for curriculum alignment work, professional development, and scheduled time allotted to the development of a vertically and horizontally aligned curriculum and instructional practice.

#### DESE’s Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Curriculum and Instruction Standard

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<b>Curriculum selection and use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highly collaborative decision-making processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that curriculum materials are high quality, cohesive, aligned with appropriate standards, and aligned vertically and horizontally.</li> <li>Ensure coordinated oversight of instructional practices.</li> </ul>
<b>Classroom instruction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers’ use data from assessments and course grades to track student performance and adjust instruction.</li> <li>Heterogenous groups and project-based instruction encourage more rigorous and challenging learning activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that all teachers provide research- and evidence-based instruction that challenges and supports all students.</li> </ul>
<b>Student access to coursework</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>APS offers a wide range of academic experiences relevant for students’ goals, especially at the high-school level, including dual enrollment, Advanced Placement courses, and a small technical education program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that all students have equitable access to a range of academic coursework.</li> </ul>

## PERSONNEL, FINANCE, AND OPERATIONS

Much of this section of the Executive Summary stems from the personnel, finance and operations goals identified in the [FY23 Preliminary Budget](#). These plans continue the district’s recovery from the educational lag and gap caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, strengthens academics, ensures that extracurricular activities are available to all, and continues improvements to our transportation department and our school buildings. The FY23 budget reflects strategic thinking, efficiencies and careful planning that maximize the benefit to students and support the educators in providing innovative and challenging instruction for all.

### PERSONNEL AND HUMAN RESOURCES

I am happy to report that we will enter next year’s budget having completed all our contract negotiations with settlements that recognize the value of our devoted educators, administrators and staff while respecting the need to keep costs down.

In September 2021, and in partnership with the Town Manager, I restructured the Human Resources department, which historically served both town and school employees. The development of a dedicated Human Resources department for the district will allow us to create an improved model for hiring, development and retention.

In my first few months within the district, multiple staff members noted there was no organizational chart at APS. The lack of clarity surrounding a reporting structure creates challenges for our families and staff. In April 2022, I presented a [draft organizational chart](#) to the APS community. This chart has served as a blueprint for restructuring existing staff and adding support to enhance academics and bolster social-emotional services.

The report from DESE supports that budget development and resource allocation practices are areas for improvement. One area that was clearly identified by DESE was the use of data to drive decisions about the budget. DESE's recommendation to the district encouraged the use of data to inform goals and priorities in the new strategic plan and in all school improvement plans. They noted, "Decisions on the allocation of resources should be based on student achievement and other data and the strengthened district and school improvement plans."

### **ACADEMICS**

The budget adds a dedicated PK-5 math program coordinator, two elementary math coaches, and a math interventionist for the middle schools, all accomplished by internal restructuring of existing staff. It will require no new staff and will incur no new costs. In the middle schools, we will begin the essential tasks of redrawing the schedule to focus more on the core subjects.

### **SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING**

Social-emotional learning will be enhanced at all levels through a partnership with the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence and targeting ESSER grant funds to add three new middle school guidance counselors and an additional social-emotional learning position which will be funded for two years. In addition, through strategic budgeting, the BRIDGE program will be bolstered with two teachers, an analyst and a speech language pathologist, all funded through restructuring.

### **EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

The FY23 budget ends the \$125-per-student fee middle school families pay for the activities that enrich the educational experience. It also provides funds for costs, such as obtaining and maintaining performing arts costumes and athletics uniforms that until now have been families' obligation through the efforts of our boosters, PACs and PTOs. For some of our students, that can mean the difference between being able or unable to participate.

### **TECHNOLOGY**

The FY23 budget provides additional funds for technology, including student devices and support for innovation in STEM/STEAM, Maker Space, computer-aided design (CAD) and engineering.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

The FY23 budget adds two buses for improved services and will continue the improvements we have begun to make to the Transportation Department, bolstering the call center available to provide immediate information to parents about any busing matters. In addition, families of students in grades 7-12 will see a reduction in the per-student transportation fee from \$300 to \$200, with a maximum of \$400 per family.

## **FACILITIES**

The FY23 budget also prioritizes facilities projects that realistically cannot be addressed in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Doherty Middle School was identified as “high priority” in the 2016 Facility Master Plan, and Town Meeting has previously allocated funds to determine the most meaningful investments that can be made to the facility prior to a significant building project. In this budget, we allocate funds to offset the costs of debt service associated with making those improvements at Doherty Middle School. Funds are also included to continue exploring options to renovate or replace Andover High School.

## **COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NEXT STEPS**

Throughout my entry process, I enjoyed meeting families, students, and staff who are eager to partner with my administration to develop a vision for the future of APS. This participatory spirit was always accompanied by a desire to understand the “why” behind how decisions are made, be provided an opportunity to be heard during the decision-making process and have access to information that leads to important decisions.

Over the course of the past few years, the district has concentrated on the health and safety of our students and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic, which heightened our focus to address the academic and social emotional needs of our students. In addition to the pandemic, feedback from students, staff, and families centered around changes to school start times, transportation challenges, and negotiations with our unions.



These issues have created a strain in our community partnerships as these topics have been recurring themes during various in-person meetings. We are pleased that the negotiations with our instructional assistants have been successful. However, APS staff and families did share in their feedback that these changes and challenges have created tension between the community and School Committee. DESE also noted this in their Comprehensive District Review report, “Although many stakeholders expressed optimism about the new superintendent’s leadership, at the time of the site visit, multiple interviewees reported “palpable” tensions between the teachers’ association and the school committee and between the instructional assistants’ association and the school committee,” and “Stakeholders stated that a regular meeting between the superintendent and teachers’ association was not in place and grievances are a regular occurrence and each requires a meeting.”

Through a collaborative and inclusive strategic planning process, we will address many of the challenges presented in my findings and look for opportunities to address the needs of our students, families, and staff. These opportunities are not limited to but include: targeted professional development to support our educators, developing a common approach to Social Emotional Learning and mental health

supports, creating a clearly articulated common curriculum and assessments across all content areas and grade levels. Perhaps most importantly, work to elevate the voice of our students.

We have work ahead of us to restore the confidence of our community. With new members joining the district's leadership team and the commitment to excellence in governance of the School Committee, there are multiple opportunities to inform decisions and implement changes that are inclusive of stakeholder feedback.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Magda Parvey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "P".

Magda Parvey, Ed. D.  
Superintendent  
Andover Public Schools