

**NEWTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT  
100 WALNUT STREET  
NEWTON, MA 02460**

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** School Committee

**FROM:** David Fleishman  
Superintendent of Schools

**DATE:** October 23, 2014

**RE:** **High School Presentation Monday night**

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As School Committee members are aware, the high school goals cover both the academic and social and emotional realm. Monday's presentation will focus on the current strategies in place to narrow the achievement gap at the high schools. Almost two years ago, both high school principals presented a data-driven overview of the achievement gap at their schools, as well as the efforts underway by faculty and staff to mitigate these gaps. Joel and Jen will present an update based on additional data that highlights successes, acknowledges challenges and describes the next level of work. Among the topics that they will cover will be the initiative to enhance the number of underrepresented students in higher-level courses.

Both high schools have also just started their Signs of Suicide (SOS) training in all four grades, which is a very intensive and demanding initiative. Given the timing, the principals will report back to the School Committee on SOS and other social and emotional activities later in the spring.

Finally, the School Councils at both high schools are each undertaking one ambitious goal this year. The North School Council is exploring how to infuse growth mindset into the entire community. The South School Council is taking a look at the possibility of a later start time and will be working closely with both North and the Central Office as they proceed.

Given the interest of the School Committee on the start time issue, Joel will provide a brief overview of their work. However, my sense is that it is premature for a lengthy conversation on the merits of the topic. Instead, I have suggested to Joel that his School Council report back to the School Committee later in the year with their findings. I also think it would be valuable for the North School Council to share the results of their initiative.

DAF/mb