



LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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To: Lowell School Committee

From: Rick Underwood

Date: May 7, 2019

Re: School Grounds' Maintenance

Who would have thought that picking up fallen leaves would become a hazardous job? However, this is exactly what it has become in many of our school yards.

The days of having students go out and help clean a playground or a school yard is gone at several school locations such as the Rogers, Murkland, Robinson, Morey, LHS and others due to increased danger of discarded needles. Knowing the importance of keeping our school grounds clean, inviting and safe to everyone, we understand this job still needs to be done.

To help combat this problem it is this Department's intention to revisit a previously used idea of putting together a landscaping crew made up of Security Guards who have the option of becoming Custodians during school breaks. Part of this plan is to use some of the FY20 fiscal year equipment account funds to invest in a commercial leaf vacuum that will add to our landscaping equipment inventory, because we can't always rely on the availability of equipment and man power of the Parks Department to help us as they so often do.

Together with the newly formed landscaping crew and an investment in added landscaping equipment (leaf vacuum, backpack blowers, puncture resistant gloves and already existing equipment utility/landscaping trailer, ride on mowers, trimers, and walk behind blowers), a schedule for each school will be created. It is my thought that this will increase the curb appeal and safety of our schools throughout the district.

The down side of this will leave us 3 or 4 employees short of last year's already stretched custodial staff. However, I wouldn't recommend this new approach if I didn't think this was something unachievable, as we have a very dedicated hard working custodial staff.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any question or concerns.