

## GREENFIELD

# Morning, after-school programs set up

By **MARY BYRNE**  
Staff Writer

GREENFIELD — As an alternative to the recently discontinued Expanded Learning Time grant program that provided financial support for morning and after-school enrichment opportunities and summer programs, the Greenfield School Department has arranged for in-house, before-school programming at the three elementary schools.

After school, families can also register for Recreation Department programming being offered at Federal Street School and Discovery School at Four Corners. Bussing will be provided for students at Newton School to go to Federal Street School.

"These are alternatives we can provide to families that will allow outside-of-school care, but also help us address the needs of the district, that need for teachers to really be able to collaborate together," said Interim Superintendent Judy Houle.

School Committee member Susan Hollins had previously said the \$800,000 Expanded Learning Time grant program initially came to Greenfield in 2007 in response to high poverty rates in parts of the district. Greenfield was one of 11 districts participating in the program statewide.

Houle explained that the Expanded Learning Time program had not only begun to see waning interest, it took away potential collaborative time for teachers.

"Anecdotally, at least, from talking with principals, parents were expressing that they weren't as interested in the extended learning program," she said.

Additionally, the district had been without anyone to "steer the curriculum work" for the last six years, she said.

"The establishment of a curriculum office and an assistant superintendent of teaching and learning is our methodology for getting that back on track," Houle said, referring to the district's recent appointment of Karin Patenaude, former principal of Greenfield High School, to the role.

"What led us to that deci-

sion was looking at MCAS data and some other assessments we use in-house," Houle said. "We were finding that on the state tests we consistently lagged behind the state in terms of either meeting or exceeding the benchmarks."

The intention of discontinuing the Expanded Learning Time program is that it will allow teachers, particularly those across the elementary schools, to collaborate, in an effort to help "move the needle" toward student success.

"That can't be something that happens in isolation," Houle said. "We really need to get together."

To meet the need of families who rely on before- or after-school care, programming is being offered from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. before school, and until about 5 p.m. after school, she said.

"It is my understanding that the before-school programming has not been as organized in the morning," Houle said. "Our goal is to be able to provide students with some structured activities they can engage in."

The morning program, which is funded through the school budget and will be provided at no cost to families, will be staffed by instructional assistants.

"We're starting to figure out our staffing needs," Houle said. "There's a registration form on the front page of the website that allows parents to register."

So far, 89 families have enrolled, Houle said, with 48 at the Discovery School at Four Corners, 19 at Newton School and 22 at Federal Street School. Registration can be completed at [bit.ly/3AUyl9B](https://bit.ly/3AUyl9B).

Registration for after-school programming can be done through the Recreation Department, she noted.

Houle said the Greenfield School Department is trying to balance both the needs of families for before- and after-school care, and the needs of the district for improving the education it provides.

"It's something for everybody, as it were," she said.

*Mary Byrne can be reached at [mbyrne@recorder.com](mailto:mbyrne@recorder.com) or 413-930-4429. Twitter: @MaryEByrne*