

## King Philip Regional School District

Norfolk- Wrentham- Plainville

18 King Street

Norfolk, MA 02056



### **NOMINATION- MIAA WELLNESS DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR**

**Nominee: Mrs. Dorothy Pearl**

**Director of Wellness- King Philip, Norfolk, Plainville, and Wrentham**

**Nominators: Dr. Susan Gilson (King Philip Regional School District, Dr. Victoria Saldana (Norfolk Public School District), Dr. Ann Dargon (Plainville School District), and Dr. Vanessa Beauchaine (Wrentham Public Schools)**

January, 2021

Dear Committee:

It is with great pleasure that we support the nomination for Mrs. Dorothy (Dot) Pearl for the MIAA Wellness Director of the Year. The position that Mrs. Pearl holds is unique in that she was hired jointly by three towns/ four districts (Norfolk School District (preK-6); Plainville School District (preK-6); Wrentham School District (preK-6); and King Philip Regional School District (7-12) ) almost two years ago. Mrs. Pearl's commitment to influencing the lives of thousands of students has been outstanding and worthy of tremendous recognition that the MIAA Wellness Director of the Year represents.

Mrs. Pearl's career is one where she has demonstrated exemplary leadership that has involved planning, implementing, and sustaining wellness program changes that have influenced highly successful outcomes for students. Some specific examples that have been led by Mrs. Pearl have resulted in inclusion of mental health agencies within schools with a more expansive variety of services that go beyond what our school counselors support, improving long range success for students needing hospitalization or school re-entry after hospitalization, and working to decrease student rates of depression and suicide prevention. She has led efforts to support school based teams that have resulted in changes in protocols for re-entry meetings, in school academic programming (such as in Physical Education and Health), and mental health counseling.

Everyone understands the complicated challenges in navigating this pandemic. Throughout, Mrs. Pearl provided strong support as a regional four district community leader to be both proactive and responsive to our needs. During this health crisis, the first area was an essential need- food to make sure that no family went hungry. Mrs. Pearl worked with our cafeteria managers to ensure that there was communication and support to distribute food in three towns. In addition, two out of the four towns also had situations where we had to quarantine every

member of the cafeteria staff. While this situation could have interrupted the district's ability to continue in person instruction, Mrs. Pearl was able to lead the districts through all issues. She was on site daily during these quarantine situations, taking the lead role in actively preparing lunch, managed outreach to a food service, and gathered assistance from the Y to sustain several weeks of food service. This required additional long hours in addition to her job responsibilities so that she could handle food packaging, distribution, and daily food service for students being at the schools from early in the morning to late at night. Student education was uninterrupted and food distribution went smoothly. Many of us know that Mrs. Pearl is one of the "unsung" heroes of this pandemic crisis.

Mrs. Pearl's record for writing, securing, and directing grant funding towards essential wellness areas is also extraordinary. While I have described her past experiences, she has additional recent initiatives that are deserving of recognition. In early January, through her efforts, King Philip Regional School District, was **one of only two districts across the Commonwealth**, who were awarded a **five year \$625,000 grant** to support our Healthy KP coalition. The primary goal of this grant is to reduce youth substance abuse through community prevention strategies while increasing collaboration within our tri-town community of parents, police, community, and students, and the schools. This is yet another example of Mrs. Pearl's leadership and ability to lead a large group to influence positive outcomes for our students. Concurrently, she is also being supported by successful grants in reinforcing our district and town approach to connecting highly organized strategies to support academics along with social and emotional well being.

In addition to her emphasis on families, Mrs. Pearl has found time and meaningful experiences to support our staff. She understood the high stress and exhaustion that our staff was faced with as they moved from teaching in a physical classroom to the virtual world. Mrs. Pearl was both proactive and responsive by bringing in medical professionals to provide support through professional development targeting stress reduction and other wellness areas. As part of her investment in our community, she has offered either live or virtual staff sessions, (Yoga), to continue her work to mediate staff stress and wellness.

Mrs. Pearl approaches this profession with outstanding energy, training, passion, and thoughtful, persistent drive. These qualities can make all the difference in the world, particularly for our students. Large groups come together through her leadership to make positive change in all areas that reinforce protective factors for students preK-12. She continues to be our "unsung hero" . She is truly a model for the Director of Wellness position and I feel that she is highly deserving of being honored as the 2021 Wellness Director of the Year!

Sincerely,



Dr. Susan Gilson  
Assistant Superintendent  
King Philip Regional School District

18 King Street  
Norfolk, MA 02056  
Email: [gilsons@kingphilip.org](mailto:gilsons@kingphilip.org)

SIGNATURES AND CONTACT INFORMATION ALSO from

*Ann Dargon*

Dr. Ann Dargon  
Director of Student Services  
Plainville Public Schools  
68 Messenger St.  
Plainville, MA 02762  
508-699-1309  
[adargon@plainville.k12.ma.us](mailto:adargon@plainville.k12.ma.us)

*Victoria M. Saldana*

Victoria M. Saldana  
Director of Curriculum  
Norfolk Public Schools  
508-528-1225 ext. 1815  
[vsaldana@norfolk.k12.ma.us](mailto:vsaldana@norfolk.k12.ma.us)

*Vanessa C. Beauchaine*

Dr. Vanessa C. Beauchaine  
Director of Curriculum  
Wrentham Public Schools  
774-847-5289  
[beauchainev@wrenthamschools.org](mailto:beauchainev@wrenthamschools.org)