



455 County Street – New Bedford, MA 02740
Superintendent Thomas Anderson

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Contact:
Arthur Motta
508-997-4511, ext. 14553
amotta@newbedfordschools.org

First regional Young Men's Leadership Meeting draws student delegates, principals and superintendents from four high schools

The first regional Young Men's Leadership Meeting was held today at the New Bedford Whaling Museum. Young men representing Brockton, Fall River, New Bedford, and Taunton High Schools, accompanied by their respective principals and superintendents, participated. Each district selected five young men in their senior year to participate in interactive discussions.

Welcoming attendees, Superintendent Thomas Anderson also thanked the Whaling Museum for hosting the conference, which took place throughout the museum complex.

Dr. Robert E. Johnson, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Chancellor and SouthCoast Chamber President Rick Kidder spoke to the assembly about leadership.

Dr. Johnson remarked that "good leaders understand that they are only as good as the individuals that they have on their leadership team, those who really carry out the work from day to day." On the importance of always expressing gratitude to others, Dr. Johnson noted that a hallmark of every good leader is that they thank the people they work with "on a daily, regular, ongoing basis."

Rick Kidder noted "a leader's role is infinitely less about talking than it is about listening, and that it is a learned skill; it is not about control. It is about helping others to execute, and it is never about casting blame, but always about praising those doing the work."

Breakout sessions included discussions on Masculinity & Gender Identity, Leadership to Combat Drugs & Alcohol, Race & Education Disparity, and Bullying & Social Media. Sessions were guided by Brockton Superintendent Michael Thomas, Fall River Superintendent Matthew Malone, New Bedford Superintendent Thomas Anderson, and Taunton Superintendent John Cabral.

After luncheon, the groups reconvened to give feedback and discuss next steps. The goal of the conference in part is to give students a better understanding of the issues impacting their lives and their communities, and exercise their voices to develop an action plan to address these issues when they return to their schools. A follow-up meeting will be planned in the spring.