

# **\$6000 donation aims to keep New Bedford students warm and healthy**

Last Monday's temperatures were seasonal for a midwinter afternoon on the south coast. But inside the sprawling cafeteria at Keith Middle School, the scene looked like command headquarters for polar vortex preparation, with hundreds of coats, hats, gloves and other winter clothing worth \$6000, stacked on tables as far as the eye could see and ready for distribution to New Bedford students in need – just in time the region's next blast of arctic air.

The donation was made possible by the New Bedford Educators Association (NBEA), presented by NBEA president Lou St. John, in collaboration with the nurses of New Bedford Public Schools. The huge inventory includes coats, winter clothing, educational supplies and personal hygiene products. NBPS school nurses worked to identify students that would most benefit from these items and plan to distribute everything over the next week.

When asked about the event, Lou St. John stated "The New Bedford Educators Association is proud to work with community partners and our school nurses to ensure the needs of our students are met. We hope that together we can raise awareness and provide tangible support to hundreds of students that do not have warm clothing and the basic essentials that all children deserve. These efforts would not have been possible if not for the support of many organizations and individuals that are committed to our children. I am incredibly proud of this year's event and look forward to many more."

In thanking the NBEA and district nurses, Superintendent Thomas Anderson noted "This is true teamwork; and a tremendous

representation of our district goals in practice – engaging the community to address specific needs within our student support systems. This thoughtful collaboration shows how challenges traditionally outside the scope of schools' ability to respond due to resource challenges can generate solutions with lasting impact on students' well-being," he said.

The New Bedford Educators Association was able to make the donation to the NBPS District due in part to a grant from the Massachusetts Teachers Association. In addition, the NBEA received contributions from Mayor Jon Mitchell, School Committee Members Josh Amaral and Bruce Oliveira, Sheriff Tom Hodgson, Jo-Anne Hodgson, the New Bedford Fishing Industry, Dias Lapalme & Martin, LLP, First Citizens' Federal Credit Union, Friendly Sons of St. Patrick, Gifts to Give, Inc., and Infinite Promises Healing Center @ Spiritual Destiny.

