

To: School Committee
From: Michael Sullivan, Superintendent
Date: June 11, 2017
Re: Report for Meeting of June 13, 2017

1. Congratulations to the high school softball team, which, as of this writing, has advanced to the state Division III semi-finals to be played Tuesday, June 13, at 3:00 pm at UMass vs. Hopedale High School. On Saturday, they defeated Mt. Everett High School, 15-1 to clinch their fourth Western Mass Division III Championship.

2. It's an especially busy time of year for culminating events and I have attended several inspiring ones in addition to a couple of the softball playoff games. The high school awards night was on June 1st and was very well orchestrated by Sandy Bailey and the high school administration. The wonderful graduation the next evening also went very well and was marked by warm and thoughtful reflections shared by three members of the senior class. There was a terrific district choral and instrumental music concert performed by elementary, middle, and high school students on June 6th and teachers Susan Hoffman and Kayla Roth deserve high praise and recognition for the progress they have been making growing their respective programs. Also, during the school day on June 7th I was asked to be a judge for Great Falls Middle School's first annual Poetry Reading Contest where 14 sixth grade finalists bravely performed poetry readings with great poise, presence, and feeling to their entire grade level. Students were really into the event and into supporting each other and it was pleasing to see their enthusiasm for a great academic event. So hats off to English teacher David Brewster.

3. On Tuesday morning, June 6th, I was joined by Holly Kosisky, the Assistant Director of Youth Programs for Community Action at the radio studios of WHAI. Ms. Kosisky was letting area citizens know that for the second summer in a row a federal grant will fund an area Summer Jobs Program. The program will employ approximately 25 of our rising high school juniors and seniors in a range of employment situations from small businesses, to farms, to offices, to non-profit organizations. The program provides mentoring and oversight to students and has no cost to employers. It was a great success last summer and we are still looking for a few host employers for this summer. You can learn more at communityaction.us/for-employers.

4. I am pleased to report that on the evening of June 5th, the citizens of Gill voted unanimously to approve their town assessments for the district's FY18 district budget. They also approved capital improvement projects to improve the school's water supply, to upgrade the school's kitchen flooring, and to upgrade the building's electrical system.

5. On the agenda for this meeting is further discussion of developing an updated district strategic plan. As part of this process, we have been considering including discussions of the district's longer term fiscal challenges with members from our towns' governments—perhaps Selectboard and/or finance committee members. Similar discussions have taken place in Mohawk, and more recently Pioneer. One of the ways we might consider structuring these conversations would be to have an outside professional facilitator present to, well, facilitate the discussions. This would do

three things. In case we have a quorum of any of the political bodies present, it would allow us to turn the meeting over to someone who could run it, after any official calls to order or adjournment, in a manner unencumbered by Roberts Rules. It would also reduce concerns about whose meeting it was. And it would also allow all members present, including the superintendent, to listen to and share information without also needing to be thinking about the task of facilitation.

I expect we will discuss what we might wish to accomplish with such meetings later in the agenda, but I did want to provide you in advance with background information on the Mediation and Training Collaborative which is one local organization that could provide someone for this facilitation service. One of their staff members, Scott Smith, runs our terrific mediation project at the middle and high school. You can learn more about the other work they do at their website:

<http://www.communityaction.us/conflict-resolution.html>