

To: School Committee
From: Michael Sullivan, Superintendent
Date: May 22, 2016

Re: Report for School Committee meeting of May 24, 2016

1. Out and About: Meetings and events I have attended since the May 17th school committee meeting have included a meeting of the Community School Partnership's executive council, a Communities that Care Coalition lunch meeting, a meeting of the secondary level curriculum coordinators, varsity softball and baseball games, a presentation by western Massachusetts "turnaround schools" who have rapidly improved their state accountability levels, and the spring meeting of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents which featured a presentation by Harvard Professor, Robert Putnam on his recent book entitled, *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis*. This is a book I would recommend to committee members and anyone concerned about the growing opportunity gap between rich and poor children in America.

<http://robertdputnam.com/about-our-kids/>

2. Sheffield Afterschool Music Program: Earlier this school year, Ms. Vicki Citron started Musica Franklin as an instrumental music program in Greenfield. Recently she began piloting a similar program as part of our Sheffield afterschool program. Eight students are participating and it is expandable up to 15. It runs from 3:30-4:30 from April 15-June 8. The program uses some of our own school instruments but mostly Musica Franklin's. There is no additional cost to student participants as they are already enrolled in the after school program.

3. Student Jobs Grant: On May 16, the White House announced that we are one of 11 areas in the country selected to take part in a \$21 million summer jobs program for students. Patricia Crosby, Executive Director of the Franklin Hampshire Regional Employment Board headed up this effort and we were pleasantly surprised to receive this highly competitive grant which will bring just under \$2 million to Turners Falls, Orange, and Ware for summer employment and training opportunities to high school students starting this summer. A fact sheet summarizing the grant is attached and an excerpt from the White House press release is below:

Today, the White House and the Department of Labor are announcing new steps to advance that effort including the release of \$21 million in *Summer Jobs and Beyond* grants to 11 communities to connect disadvantaged young people with jobs this summer and year-round. The White House is also launching 16 Summer Impact Hubs--communities that will receive robust, coordinated support from 16 federal agencies to expand and refine their summer jobs, learning, including exposure to local innovation and entrepreneurship opportunities, meals, and violence reduction programs.

These announcements are aimed at supporting a range of state and local leaders, community-based organizations, private sector leaders, philanthropic leaders,

schools, other youth-serving agencies, and young people that are all coming together at the local level to ensure that our youth have productive, healthy summers that enhance their educational and career prospects.

Key Elements of Today's Announcements include:

- **Franklin Hampshire Region, MA: Franklin Hampshire Summer Jobs and Beyond** project will target three of the most high-need and least-served communities in the western Massachusetts region with intensive outreach and services to youth. One-hundred-eighty in-school youth with little to no work experience will receive intensive services, including job placement and college readiness.

4. Personnel Changes: I would like to make two sets of changes in our staffing for next school year that will not involve increasing our FY17 budget.

Change #1: First, we wish to increase our adjustment counselor staffing at Sheffield from 1.4 to 2.0 FTEs. This is necessary to meet the growing need for counseling services required in students' individual education plans and to provide as needed support for students having difficulty being available for learning during the school day. Additionally, we have been unable to meet all the service requirements for a school psychologist with a single staff member this year and have recently needed to contract out for some testing services. We plan to increase psychologist staffing from 1.0 to 1.4 FTEs.

To make these additions cost neutral we would like to not replace the vacancy that will be created when one of our school nurses retires at the end of this school year. Currently, the middle and high school are staffed by two nurses, one of whom also provides floating support to the other buildings when a nurse is out or requests additional support. With an enrollment of 447 students at the middle and high school, we believe this building can be sufficiently supported by a single nurse. I will provide more details about this change on Tuesday.

Change #2: The Sheffield therapeutic program will have an enrollment of at least 9 students next year, ranging from grades 2-5. The program has become too large for a single teacher and a single classroom so we wish to add a second teacher in a separate classroom. To make this addition cost neutral three paraprofessional positions will be eliminated at Sheffield, one in the therapeutic program, and two that support special education students across grade levels. This reduction is also made possible by an increase in special education teaching FTEs at Sheffield next year and by an overall decline in special education enrollment at the school next year.