

To: School Committee
From: Michael Sullivan, Superintendent
Date: September 11, 2016
Re: Report for School Committee meeting of September 13, 2016

1. Schools' Opening: I am pleased to announce that school has opened smoothly across all buildings. Bus routes, computer and communications systems, staff and student schedules, the appearance of buildings and classrooms, the efficiency of our first fire drills, and the hiring of staff have all come together nicely due to the hard work throughout the summer by the staff who work in these areas.

Small glitches always occur and this year's include a problem with the computer program used to track student lunch purchases at the middle/high school which resulted in some long serving lines for a few days. Bees in and around one entrance of the middle school have also been a problem. Also, a repercussion of our athletic field's readiness resulted in our area youth football program, the Franklin County Bulldogs, not having a place to play their four home games this season. Fortunately, the superintendent of the Franklin County Tech School, Rick Martin, came to the rescue by accelerating a facilities upgrade project going on at his school, which will allow the Bulldogs to be able to use their field for home games this year. Thank you Superintendent Martin.

2. My Work:

- I have already made my first round of joint classroom observations with principals to each school and I look forward to this work being an integral part of district improvement and principal professional development efforts this year.
- I am meeting Tuesday with Ms. Miranda Davis, the new Greenfield Recorder journalist covering the district and I am eager to see her begin covering events in the district.
- I have returned to recording radio messages and short radio conversations about district news with WHAI's Nick Danjer. This year these conversations will be aired every other Friday morning around 6:50 am.
- I have also begun interviewing candidates for the executive assistant to the superintendent position and am hopeful we will have a strong candidate in place to begin working alongside Robin for two weeks prior to Robin's retirement.

3. Hillcrest and Election Day: Tuesday, November 8, is election day and as it is a presidential election year voter turnout is expected to be relatively high at Hillcrest Elementary School. Principal Burstein and I are concerned primarily about the high number of citizens coming and going from school grounds around school drop off and pick up times. As it is already a challenge to manage parking and traffic flow on typical school days at Hillcrest, we feel the presence of significant numbers of voters could make this situation highly problematic. Therefore we would like to not hold school for pre-school and kindergarten students on this date. While this may pose child care challenges for some families, we hope that by making this decision two months in advance families will have sufficient time to make alternative arrangements. As you know, pre-school and kindergarten programs do not need to meet state rules about being in session for 180 days.

4. **Items for this Meeting's Agenda:**

a. **Appointment of Middle and High School Registered Nurse:** I would like to recommend for your official appointment, Ms. Christina Markwell. Ms. Markwell has been an emergency room nurse and emergency room nurse case manager at Baystate Franklin Medical Center since 2004 and has worked as a registered nurse since 2002. She has and an associates degree in nursing from Greenfield Community College and a bachelors degree in nursing from Indiana Wesleyan University. Ms. Markwell comes highly recommended as a positive and collaborative colleague who also possesses extensive nursing experience and knowledge.

b. **LPN Job Description:** Although the school committee does not need to appoint the hiring of a licensed practical nurse, I would like to inform you that we have hired Ms. Tamra Pace-Hersh as the LPN for the middle and high school. Ms. Pace-Hersh is coming to us from Holyoke Public Schools.

The committee first reviewed the LPN job description in August. We have since received feedback on it from the GMEA and some of the nurses. Two responsibilities that were in the earlier draft have been eliminated in the draft you have before you today and I am asking for your approval of this one.

c. **Substitute Nurse Pay:** Our district has found it difficult, at times, in the past, to obtain the services of a substitute nurse when needed. To help address this problem we would like to raise the pay of this position from \$18 to \$22 per hour. Area districts we have heard from pay between \$20 and \$25 an hour for RN substitutes.

d. **Indian Mascot:** Accompanying this report is a draft high school mascot review and selection process document for your consideration.