

To: School Committee
From: Michael Sullivan, Superintendent
Date: June 11, 2016
Re: Report for School Committee meeting of June 14, 2016

1. Personnel Changes:

As you know, Secondary Assistant Principal Earl McGraw has resigned his position effective June 1st due to health reasons. I know our whole school community sends our thoughts, wishes and prayers out to Mr. McGraw and his family at this time and we are deeply saddened that his promising return to Turners Falls was cut short by his illness. Principal Leonard has begun a search process for a new assistant principal and I will share the details with you as they are finalized.

As you also know, Sheffield Elementary School Principal, Sharon Moberg has resigned effective June 30th. Ms. Moberg has taken an elementary school principalship in Hampden, MA. Ms. Moberg has made public her desire to reduce her substantial daily commute from Springfield in order to be closer to home to care for a family member. I would like to thank Sharon for her four years of service to the district. Sharon brings a great deal of energy and charisma to her work and this combined with the very long hours she works every week have gone a long way to make Sheffield Elementary a proud, inclusive, and vibrant school well connected to its parents and families. We wish her all the best and promise to build upon the work she has begun.

Here is the search process planned for her replacement. On Wednesday, June 15, at 11:00 am, I will hold a meeting in the Sheffield auditorium to hear from parents and community members who wish to provide their ideas about the qualities they most wish to see in the new principal. An additional evening event for this purpose will be offered for parents and community members on Wednesday, June 22, at 6:30 pm at Sheffield. I will meet with Sheffield staff on Thursday, June 16, at 1:30 pm.

The search process is subject to change as circumstances evolve but my intention at this point is to convene a search committee consisting of four Sheffield staff, two district administrators, two parents, and one school committee member. As has been done in the past, if multiple school committee members express an interest in serving on this committee we will draw straws to make a random selection. I anticipate that the committee will review applications, interview candidates and select two or three finalists. The finalists will have second interviews with me and also participate in an evening public meet and greet event. After thorough reference checks, I will select the final candidate. The position has been posted and the process will progress as quickly as possible without sacrificing careful deliberation.

2. Events: This is an extremely busy time of year as we plan for staffing changes and program initiatives for next year while we are also engaged in multiple employee contract negotiations. I have enjoyed carving out time for saying goodbye to our seniors at their awards night and graduation, as well as having attended the Gill grade six graduation. I look forward to attending the eighth grade recognition ceremony on June 15th and the district recognition of our retiring faculty and staff on June 14th at 4:00 pm. I would like to recognize and thank Jane Oakes and Robin Hamlett for organizing this event with no time to spare. I also want to say congratulations to our varsity softball team for clinching its third straight western Mass Championship on Saturday at

UMass with an impressive 7-0 win over Hoosac Valley High School. We wish them luck in Worcester on Tuesday (or Wednesday).

3. **Hillcrest Calm-Down Room:** On June 7, I received a report from the *Disability Law Center* as a follow-up to its February visit to Hillcrest, in which it investigated claims of abuse and neglect of children. I am happy but not surprised to report that the DLC had no findings of neglect or abuse. Here is the introductory paragraph of its findings:

Our review of the school's calm down room did not result in major or systemic findings that would warrant issuing a public report. There are some areas in which we believe the school's practices could be better aligned with the new DESE state regulations and our understanding of best practices in the field. We write to you in a constructive spirit, with the hope that you will consider action on the following topics:"

The report goes on to recommend improvements in seven areas. We will review these in detail and I expect we will be making additional adjustments for the fall. I will provide you with a full report on this once our review is completed.

4. **School Resource Officer Grant:** (The information below pertains to a New Business agenda item for this meeting.)

- Accompanying this report is a draft job description for Greenfield's SRO. I am providing it so you may see the kinds of work undertaken by SROs.
- One thing not specifically listed in the job description that we would be interested in having an SRO do would be to assist with improving the attendance of chronically absent students, including visiting their homes.
- To date, the police have been called to the middle/high school three times this year; once related to a drug confiscation and twice to help deescalate emotionally dysregulated students, but not for any fights or other violent acts.