

To: School Committee
From: Michael Sullivan, Superintendent
Date: March 26, 2017
Re: Report for SC Meeting of March 28, 2017

1. On Thursday, March 16, I attended the middle and high school musical, the Lion King, and it was a great show. The acting, singing, dancing, sets, lights, and sound, were all performed with a lot of talent and enthusiasm across the board. Congratulations to Director Kayla Roth and everyone involved.

2. I am pleased to inform you of a grant the district has received with Four Rivers Charter School. The grant is a Massachusetts Mathematics and Science Partnership (MMSP) grant for \$34,667. It was a competitive application process with only four grants funded across the state. Our grant is called *Science Teaching for the Next Generation* and it will bring together the secondary level science teachers of our two schools who will collaborate with faculty from Clark University to study ways to implement the state's new science and technology standards. The implementation model Clark developing focuses on helping students better understand how scientists and engineers form evidence-based explanations for phenomena in the world. Teachers from our schools will learn together this summer how to help our students develop the skills of argumentation, explanation, and modeling through core concepts in science and engineering. Since the November we have been meeting with the administrators at Four Rivers to explore ways both schools might be able to collaborate and learn from each other and this grant became available just at the right time. I look forward to updating you on our progress.

3. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is conducting a Coordinated Program Review (CPR) of the district this spring. DESE routinely conduct such reviews at each district every six years it is our turn once again. As part of this Coordinated Program Review, Department staff will visit the district during the week of April 24, 2017. The review satisfies federal and state requirements for the periodic review of specific education programs and services in schools throughout the state. The CPR will address the following programs: Special Education, English Learner Education and Civil Rights. During its onsite visit, the DESE team will review individual student records, interview administrators, teachers and paraprofessional staff, survey parents and observe instructional spaces. After the onsite visit it will prepare a report for the superintendent and school committee with detailed findings for each program.

Using a scale of ratings ranging from "Commendable" to "Not Implemented," the report will rate the implementation of each requirement reviewed by the Department. Where requirements are found not implemented or only partially implemented, the district must propose to the Department corrective action to bring those areas into compliance with statutes and regulations. Districts and schools are encouraged to incorporate the corrective action into their district and school improvement plans and professional development plan. The school district will be provided with technical assistance from the Department in developing a corrective action plan. Both the Department's report and the corrective action plan are public information and will be available to the public upon request. Program Review Final Reports will also be available on the Department's Internet website at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa/review/cpr/reports/>.

Any member of the public may request to be interviewed by telephone by a member of the Department's visiting team. Those wishing to be interviewed should call the superintendent's office at 413-863-9324 no later than 3/31/17 to leave their name and phone number, or they may call the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education at (413) 314-6707.

To meet a requirement of the CPR process, Pupil Services Director, Nancy Parlakulas had to write a summary of her department's practices to DESE. I am attaching it here because, frankly, I think it is pretty impressive. Nancy is doing a terrific job for the district and I think her good works are reflected in this summary. I look forward to having her provide a report to you in person at the conclusion of the CPR audit.

4. As you know, for the last two years I have been promoting the accomplishments, events, and news of the district on the airways of WHAI and Bear Country radio stations. This year I record biweekly radio conversations with morning DJ Nick Danjer which are aired every other Friday morning. These talks run about three minutes long and frequently involve conversations with guests I bring along to do things like recognizing student leaders and community service organizers, to spotlighting faculty for innovative projects, to recognizing outstanding academic or extra-curricular accomplishments, or informing the public about important budgetary or legislative topics.

In addition, I record, and the stations run, one minute summaries of the week's conversation topics. These spots are played six times a week at a variety of times. On average, the monthly cost to the district of these broadcast activities is \$325 a month during the school year.

It is difficult for me to say, at the moment, if these funds are money well spent. I certainly believe the information shared is worthwhile and valuable for the public to know. To find out more about how these messages are being received I have just recently solicited feedback from families via the district Facebook page and our One-Call-Now email system. I will be happy to share the feedback received at a future meeting and if you have other ideas about how to obtain feedback please let me know.