

To: School Committee
From: Michael Sullivan, Superintendent
Date: January 29, 2017

Re: Report for School Committee meeting of January 31, 2017

1. Buzz-Off: On January 19, I was proud to be an observer of the Buzz-Off cancer support organization fund raiser at Sheffield Elementary School. It was completely inspiring to watch student wildly cheer on over 50 classmates and staff members from their school and the middle and high school as they received their buzz haircuts. So far the campaign has raised just under \$15,000. Many thanks go out to Christine Limoges, Sheffield's assistant principal, for being the driving force behind this wonderful community building event.

2. TV studio issues: There are several challenges faced by holding the school committee meetings in a classroom used daily. Dean Garvin will be here to explain the technical challenges. In addition to these you should know that one of our tech support staff members typically works from 2:30-5:30 pm each afternoon prior to a school committee meeting, setting up tables, microphones, and cameras. Custodial staff generally help with this as well. This is a challenge for us because there is always a high demand for the time of our tech assistant, helping teachers and staff with technology support tasks.

If you consider moving to a different location, I would like to provide you with some additional information presented once before. We have found no suitable alternative location on the first floor. The room brought up for your consideration on the front left corner of the third floor remains available.

In terms of building security, when there are no school committee meetings, the entire corridor in which we presently meet is closed and locked, allowing for the securing of the entire right side of the building (right as one faces the building from the front). The left side corridors remain accessible in the winter already for access to the gym.

3. FY18 Budget: Since our meeting of January 24, we have received additional information pertinent to next year's budget. While I am not recommending any change to our preliminary budget some of these changes are important:

- Our Excess and Deficiency Account (E&D), certified as of July 1, 2016, is \$390,484, which is approximately \$90,000 lower than anticipated. Joanne will explain the sources of this calculation and its implications later in the meeting.
- The state has released town minimum contribution calculations. These calculations have resulted in a shift in the operating budget assessments with an increase to Montague totaling \$28,053 over its affordable assessment determination and conversely a decrease to Gill's assessment by this same amount. Tomorrow, we will provide you with documents spelling out the details.
- The governor's budget proposal uses some figures different from those we have budgeted, such as a \$20 per student increase in Chapter 70 aid, compared to the \$25 we have estimated.

- After learning more about the needs of our students I am withdrawing my reduction of a special education teacher at Sheffield Elementary for next year. There will need to be the reduction of an equivalent dollar amount from staffing in another area, most likely a Unit A position. Where this cut will be made has yet to be determined but it will be impactful.

4. School Choice: In accordance with policy, “by February 1 of every school year, the school committee will determine whether or not the district will participate in Interdistrict School Choice for the following school year.” I apologize for not making this a separately listed agenda item but this issue requires a vote and I would like to request one at this time.