

To: School Committee

From: Michael Sullivan, Superintendent

Date: March 12, 2017

Re: Report for Meeting of 3/14/17

1. Congratulations to our girls' and boys' varsity basketball teams. Both teams made it to the western Massachusetts semi-final rounds in this year's playoffs and both had the opportunity to play in front of a large number of supportive fans at the UMass Currie Hicks Cage on March 6th and 7th. Their scrappy and unselfish team oriented styles of play made their community proud this year.

2. And sandwiched between these two games was the exciting visit of the New England Patriots' star tight end Rob Gronkowski to Sheffield Elementary on March 7. He came give a big shout out to the students and staff from Sheffield, Great Falls, and the High School who participated in the head shaving buzz-off fundraiser for One Mission. It was a very exciting culminating event, one that raised \$17,000 (blowing the \$10,000 goal out of the water!) to help support children who battle cancer. The event was spearheaded by Sheffield's assistant principal, Christine Limoges and was just a win-win experience for everyone.

3. Sticking with the events of Tuesday, March 7, I was joined by Jane Oakes that morning in viewing a well-researched panel discussion by Mr. Brennek's fifth grade class at Sheffield on the pros and cons of serving chocolate milk in schools. Students had done an impressive amount of research on the topic and engaged in careful listening and respectful responses to the views expressed by others. We will have to stay tuned to see if any changes are forthcoming in our chocolate milk practices.

4. After school on March 7th I attended a meeting of the elementary team leaders and heard about the progress grade level teams are making working together on implementation of the Calkins writing program, AVMR (advantage math recovery) program, and strategies to improve student oral discourse. I was struck by the positive experiences the team leaders reported regarding the usefulness of this year's team meetings as well as the positive feelings of collegiality teams have been experiencing. We also had some time to discuss priorities for this summer's and next year's professional development work.

5. Before heading to the boys' evening basketball game I also attended a meeting of the Rural Schools Coalition at Mohawk on March 7. Superintendent Buoniconi facilitated a discussion among approximately 30 area school district administrators and town government leaders about the financial challenges we mutually face. In addition to pressing state legislative leaders for ways to increase funding for rural schools, the group expressed an interest in exploring ways in which either neighboring districts and/or school districts and municipal governments could jointly fund tasks or services as a way to reduce costs.

6. Accompanying this report is a document I am calling a “transitional” district strategic plan. As you know, our current strategy was written and adopted three years ago. We have begun to discuss the need to gather stakeholders and collect data for the development of an updated plan. However, I anticipate that it will take at least a few months to complete the process of adopting a new inclusive strategic plan. In the meantime, we need to plan for summer and fall initiatives and our schools are in the process of completing new school improvement plans. To guide us through this short term planning process I have worked with the admin team on this transitional plan. It reflects the highest priority work going on now and over the next several months across the district and as you can see it does not deviate from the original five major objectives in the district strategy. It does communicate the growth and change in emphasis which has taken place, over time, with the initiatives under each objective. Principals may be referring to this document in their upcoming presentations over the next few meetings.