



Wachusett Regional School District
Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland, Sterling

April 18, 2014

To: *Wachusett Regional School District Committee*

Lance Harris, Chair	Matthew Lindberg
Robert Imber, Vice-chair	James Mason
Scott Brown	Robert McCarthy
Lisa Call	Kenneth Mills
William Clute	Tiffany Ralli
Thomas Curran	Robert Remillard
Matthew Ehrenworth	Barbara Renzoni
Stacey Jackson	Erik Scheinfeldt
Julianne Kelley	Christina Smith
Deidre Kosky	Margaret Watson
Sarah LaMountain	Charles Witkes

From: Darryll McCall, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Superintendent's Report

I am preparing and sending this Report early due to April vacation week. I will be out of the office from April 18th through April 25th. I will see you all at the School Committee meeting Monday evening, April 28th.

This is the last Superintendent's Report before the May 12th elections, and I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the following outgoing Wachusett Regional School District Committee members::

Lisa Call	member since June 2013
Matthew Lindberg	member since April 2013
James Mason	member since May 2011
Tiffany Ralli	member since April 2013
Margaret Watson	member since May 2002

On behalf of the students, parents, faculty, staff, and administration of the Wachusett Regional School District, I thank you for your service to our communities.

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Posting

Attached is the updated posting of School Committee, subcommittee, and SEPAC meetings for April, May, and June (attachment 1). You will note that in May the annual Organizational Meeting and the regular School Committee meeting will be held on **Wednesday, May 21st**.

At the conclusion of the April 28th meeting, there will be two executive sessions, one to discuss strategy of contract negotiations. Municipal Representative Robert Lavigne has been invited to the first executive session (attachment 2).

Presentation to the School Committee

At the meeting on the 28th, Sterling's Chockett/Houghton Schools Principal Tony Cipro will address the Committee and Principal Cipro's presentations will focus on RTI (Response to Intervention) - *Chocksett School - Global Skills RTI* and *Houghton School - Social Skills RTI*. RTI is a methodology for working with students that the District has been working on for several years. Principal Cipro has been at the forefront of the RTI process and has expanded the academically based interventions to include both social and global skills. This will be an interesting presentation that I am sure all will appreciate.

Upcoming Town Elections and Town Meetings

Annual Town Meeting/town election season is fast approaching. Below you will find the dates, times, and locations for the meetings, beginning with the Town of Sterling's Annual Town Meeting on Saturday, May 3rd. Please advise which member from the Committee will volunteer to officially represent the School Committee at their town's Annual Town Meeting.

	Holden	Paxton	Princeton	Rutland	Sterling
Annual Town Meeting Date	Monday, May 19 th	Monday, May 5 th	Tuesday, May 13 th	Saturday, May 17 th	Saturday, May 3 rd
Town Meeting Time	7:00 PM	7:00 PM	7:00 PM	Special – 5:00 PM Town Meeting – 6:00 PM	Special – 3:30 PM Town Meeting – 4:00 PM
Town Meeting Location	WRHS	Paxton Center School	Thomas Prince School	Glenwood Elementary School	Chocksett Middle School gym

Please be reminded that this year local elections in all five Member Towns will all be held on the same date in May - **Monday, May 12th**. Because some of the towns use schools as polling sites, **Monday, May 12th**, is a "no school" day (schools are not in session - students, teachers, and school-year staff do not report to school; it is a "work day" for District administration, school principals, and full-year staff (similar to a day during a school vacation week)). Since May 2014 is the first year the towns have held their elections on the same date, resulting in the first year that the local election date is a "no school" day, you may be questioned by town residents/parents about this. At the beginning of May, I will ask building principals to send out School Messenger notifications, reminding parents/guardians and students of this "no school" day.

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FY14 Assessment Letters

Treasurer Dunbar sent FY14 semi annual assessment billing notices to the Member Towns on April 7, 2014 (attachment 3).

MASC Day on the Hill

Just a reminder that this year's MASC *Day on the Hill* will take place at the State House on Tuesday, April 29th (attachment 4). At the last meeting, you voted to authorize the reimbursement of fees related to School Committee member attendance at this event. Chair Harris has been registered to attend. If there are other members who will be participating and have registered themselves, please let us know so that we may process the paperwork for the registration fee.

Community Outreach

As the first step in community outreach from my office, I am pleased to report that I have established a Superintendent's blog that will soon be found on the homepage of the District website. In my first blog, I write about Secretary of Education Matt Malone's visits to our district, which included visits to Paxton Center School, Mayo Elementary School, and Thomas Prince School. I look forward to sharing information about the District with residents of our towns, highlighting the many exciting and inspiring things that take place in the halls of our schools. My goal is to post my weekly blog every Monday morning. Once the page is complete, we will share the link with parents and staff. If you have a suggestion for a future "blog topic," please let me know.

Response to Public Hearing Comments

I want to take some time in my Report this week to address issues and concerns that were brought to my attention at the last School Committee meeting. We have had several changes in administration in the past month, and I want to review with you areas that should be discussed.

Recently, I made the decision to non-renew three sitting principals whose short term contracts were set to expire at the end of June this year. First, I would like to clarify the difference between a non-renewal and a dismissal. Chair Harris asked our legal counsel to define the differences between the two respective personnel actions. As you will note from Attorney Stonberg's April 14th memo, a non-renew is within the purview of a superintendent's authority as it is a matter associated with personnel and covered under MGL Chapter 71 Section 41 (attachment 5). At the time of the non-renewals, I did not anticipate that two of the building principals would immediately notify staff and families of their non-renewals before I had a chance to notify the School Committee. Also, at that time, I was working with the knowledge that the CTMS Assistant Principal had been offered another position outside of the District. Concurrently, Patty Scales, Principal at Dawson Elementary School, had submitted her retirement paperwork (she has since rescinded). I made the executive decision to promote Karen Cappucci and Jay Norton to principals at their respective buildings with the forethought that I would possibly have two more principalships vacant which would require search committees.

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With Tony Gasbarro's temporary position ending last month, I have attempted to consolidate and streamline as many processes as possible this spring, as we are again short a Central Office administrative position. To conduct several searches for building principals, while short staffed, would not have been prudent or reasonable. Since it has been past practice and due course to make administrative appointments throughout our district, and given the strong qualifications of the internal candidates, I confidently appointed both Karen Cappucci and Jay Norton to their respective posts. Among the several sitting principals in our district who have been appointed to their current roles without a search process are: Judy Evans, Erik Githmark, Siobhan Dennis, Kathi McCollumn, and Dixie Herbst. In fact, my own positions as principal of Naquag and then Director of Operations were both appointments made by the Superintendent without searches conducted. Accordingly, this practice that has regularly occurred in the WRSD for many years and is covered through WRSDC Policy 5221.

The question has also arisen concerning the evaluation process in reference to building principals and non-renewals. Currently, the 60 day notification requirement for a non-renewal does not align with the evaluation cycle for a principal. All principals in the WRSD are evaluated annually, with the evaluation meetings occurring during the summer months. The contracts for three principals expired on June 30th and each received a notice of non-renewal under their contract provision. By law (Chapter 71, Section 41), if the 60 day notification requirement is not met, the contract automatically rolls into another year for any principal whose contract is expiring by the end of the fiscal year. Under regulation 603 CMR 35.05, which discusses the evaluation of administrators under individual employment contracts, the language is very specific that such regulations do not "abridge the authority of a school or district to dismiss or non-renew an educator consistent with applicable law, including G.L. c. 71, sections 41 and 42."

As Superintendent, I am well aware of the fact that some of the recent personnel decisions that I have made have not been well received by some members of the public. I want to relay to our community that I take my role as Superintendent seriously, and that I honor all of my responsibilities and obligations to the District. When it comes to matters of personnel, I have been deliberate in my actions to assemble the strongest administrative leadership team possible to help advance the goals of the District moving forward. As I embark upon this new leadership role and am charged to ensure the success and viability of education in our district, I am confident that my decisions will be positive and beneficial to the Wachusett Regional School District.

Recommendation of the Audit Advisory Board

When the Audit Advisory Board met on April 15th, the members discussed at length the pros and cons of developing an RFP for auditing services for Fiscal Year 2014 through Fiscal Year 2016 Single Audit and End-of-Year Report Audits. At the April 15th meeting, the AAB voted "To recommend to the full School Committee that the Audit Advisory Board develop and send to auditing firms an RFP for the Fiscal Year 2014 through Fiscal Year 2016 Single Audit and End-of-Year Report Audits." At the April 28th School Committee meeting, you will be asked to authorize the Audit Advisory Board to develop and send to auditing firms an RFP for services. For your review in advance of that meeting, I have enclosed a copy of the RFP, as well as a copy of the February 29, 2012 letter to Powers & Sullivan (attachments 6 & 7). Please note the third

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paragraph of the letter to Powers & Sullivan where it is stated that the District may terminate services of that firm.

Audit by State Auditor's Office

We have not received any new information from the State Auditor's Office concerning our recent audit. We will keep the Committee updated as information is shared with this office.

School Choice

After reviewing information pertaining to class sizes and our current budget situation, I am recommending that the School Committee approve limited school choice for the 2014-2015 school year at Thomas Prince School, accepting students entering kindergarten and grade 2. Although other schools do have limited availability, I am very hesitant to permit more students to enter the District with the ongoing budget issues we will undoubtedly continue to face in the future. We are currently living with very large class sizes throughout the WRSD and it does not make sense to add more students to our schools knowing that our high school is already over enrolled.

May 7th Legislators Forum

As mentioned in my last Report, Wachusett Regional High School will be the location for MASC's Division IV Legislative Forum (attachment 8). The event will be held Wednesday, May 7th, beginning at 6:00 PM. Area senators and representatives have been invited to participate in this event and it seems like a wonderful opportunity to sit down and have frank conversations with our area legislators about the state of the budget and how they may assist the District and our students.

FLLAC Agreement

While you've previously been provided with a copy of the Agreement of the FLLAC Educational Collaborative awaiting signatures, I have again attached a copy for your information since you will be asked to act on the acceptance of the Agreement and to authorize Chair Harris to sign the Agreement at the April 28th meeting (attachment 9).

Quarterly Report on Reimbursements

Pursuant to Policy 5273.3 Policy Relating to Personnel Management *Employee Travel for Workshops, Conferences, Visitations* and Policy 5264.1 Policy Relating to Personnel Management *Payment or Reimbursement for Meals*, attached is the Report of Employee Travel for Workshops, Conferences, Visitations for the period January to March 2014 (attachment 10)

Amended Policies

Attached you will find copies of recently amended School Committee policies, which can also be found on the District website (attachment 11). These amended policies have been sent

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electronically to the Member Towns, school principals, and District administration.

Principal and Administrators Monthly Reports

The most recent topic for principals' reports is a summary of actions of school councils, which you will find attached (attachment 12). Also attached please find a consolidation of reports submitted by Catherine Schofield (Curriculum Supervisor), Kim Merrick (Administrator of Special Education), and Catherine Knowles (Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services) (attachment 13).

Executive Staff Reports

Director of Business and Finance Joseph Scanlon's Report to the Superintendent, dated April 18, 2014 (attachment A).

Subcommittee Minutes

Minutes of subcommittee and ad hoc committee meetings, which have been approved by those committees, are included with this report.

- Minutes of the March 10, 2014 meeting of the Education Subcommittee (Subcommittee Minutes attachment 1)
- Minutes of the March 17, 2014 meeting of the Business/Finance Subcommittee (Subcommittee Minutes attachment 2)
- Minutes of the March 19, 2014 meeting of the Audit Advisory Board (Subcommittee Minutes attachment 3)
- Minutes of the March 24, 2014 meeting of the Legal Affairs Subcommittee (Subcommittee Minutes attachment 4)

Chair's Correspondence

- Correspondence to Mr. and Mrs. Frank Vargas, dated April 8, 2014 (Chair's Correspondence 1)
- Correspondence to April 7, 2014 Public Hearing Speakers, dated April 8, 2014 (Chair's Correspondence 2)

Superintendent's Correspondence

- Correspondence from Beth Blumberg, dated April 2, 2014, and reply dated April 15, 2014 (Superintendent's Correspondence 1 & 2)
- Correspondence from Secretary of Education Matthew Malone, dated April 3, 2014, and

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reply dated April 15, 2014 (Superintendent's Correspondence 3)

- Correspondence from Senator Brewer and Representative Ferguson, dated April 7, 2014 (Superintendent's Correspondence 4)

Subcommittee and Ad Hoc Committee Chairs are reminded that all minutes of subcommittees/ad hoc committees, once approved by those subcommittees/ad hoc committees, should be forwarded to my office for inclusion in my reports to the School Committee.

District News

Attached you will find recent editions of District News (District News I).

Should you have any questions, please contact me at your convenience.

cc: Executive Staff
DM rlp