

Superintendent's Report: January 2023

Highlight of the Month: During my last visit to the Library Media Center, I had the opportunity to observe a class of middle school students selecting books with the assistance of James Salsich, our ELA teacher and Michelle Bibeault, our Media Technology Specialist. I extend a special thank you to Michelle for making our Library Media Center a welcoming environment for our students. I felt proud watching our middle school students respectfully interacting with each other and their teachers as they moved through the book selection process.

News and notes

Student Achievement:

- Our staff and students started the 2023 year with a renewed sense of commitment to the learning process.

Climate and Culture:

- The new set of doors between the rear playground entrance and the lower-level hallway was finally installed. This resulted in a noticeable improvement in the temperature in the lower-level hallway. It is small improvements like this that make a positive impact on the learning environment for staff and students.

Collaboration and Communication:

- Deb Richards and I continue to maintain regular communication between the school and the Town. Thanks to timely communication from public works, we were able to have school on a day when other districts were forced to close.
- The Town staff and school staff have been engaged in discussions regarding the continuation of our current website provider.
- There are plans in place for a joint emergency management meeting.

Comments on selected agenda items

XI New Business

- A. Policy 5140, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (sent via email)
- B. Policy 5116, Student Discipline (sent via email)
- C. Policy 5136, Drug & Alcohol Use by Students (sent via email)
- D. Policy 6141.321, Student Use of District Technology (sent via email)
- E. Policy 5131.81, Student Use of Private Technology Devices (sent via email)
There are minor changes to Policies 5140, 5116, 5136, 6141.321 and 5131.81 –BOE can vote to replace with new S&G policy on this reading
- F. Policy 5124, Report to Parents (sent via email)
- G. Policy 5131, Conduct at School and Activities (sent via email)
These policies are not required—BOE can vote to repeal
- H. New Policy, Chemical Health for Student Athletes (sent via email)
- I. New Policy, Education Stability Procedures (sent via email)
These are new policies that should be moved forward for a second reading
- J. Discussion of the Ethel Cushing Gardner Music Scholarship (Hartford Foundation)
Information regarding this scholarship program has been disseminated to our high schools, former recipients and posted on our website. Once all applications are received (deadline February 2, 2023), our scholarship committee, T. Cote, L. Barlow, and J. Perry will need to meet, review, and make recommendations.
- K. School Calendar 2023-2024, Discussion and Possible Action
The BOE does not need to vote on the calendar at this meeting. To save on additional transportation costs, the calendar is designed to have as many days as possible in common with

Woodstock Academy, that also work for our staff and students. It is important to note that the proposed calendar does not include a day off from school for the Woodstock Fair. By eliminating this day off we were able to provide for two back-back professional days for staff to prepare for the opening of school as well provide a short but solid 3-day week for students. The alternative would be to maintain what we did in 2022 which was a split Monday-Friday PD program for staff and a day off on Friday for the Woodstock Fair.

L. Capital Plan, Discussion and Possible Action

The Facilities Committee of the BOE will be reviewing this draft document at their meeting on January 12 at 5:45 PM. They will be bringing forward a recommendation concerning this document to the BOE. The document approved by the BOE will be forwarded to the Town for inclusion in the LOCIP meeting on February 4 at 10:00 AM.

M. Budget 2023-2024, Discussion

I will be presenting the 2023-24 administrative budget recommendation to the BOE. With the increase in so many non-negotiable costs, this will not be an easy budget year. In the past I have presented” hopes and dreams” in the original budget proposal. The budget we will begin discussing on January 12 does not include any “new nice to have”. It does, however, include cost estimates that could put us at risk with our “need to have”.

XIII Financial Reports

C. Budget Transfers

We will not be asking for any transfers at this meeting. In February, we will be coming forward with budget transfers as well as an update on the status of this year’s budget. As you know we have been carefully monitoring this budget given the unanticipated increases in costs such as diesel fuel, as well as unbudgeted costs for new outplacements. Last year we did give back to the town some dollars for unanticipated special education costs that may be needed to support our budget efforts this year.