



HOPKINTON SCHOOL DISTRICT School Administrative Unit 66

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Superintendent's Report

Hopkinton School District

Submitted: Friday, January 28, 2011, for a Tuesday, February 1, 2011 Meeting

January has seemed to disappear far too quickly. The five snow events have impacted the flow and sense of normalcy. However, it is nice to see the high snowbanks that many of us were used to as youngsters.

During the holiday season it became evident that the Hopkinton School District staff and students participate in hours of meaningful service to others. From mitten trees, to shopping for needy families, supporting the Hopkinton Food Bank, caroling at senior centers, senior-to-senior program, providing senior lunch, tutoring programs, reading programs, the list goes on. It was awe-inspiring seeing so many staff members, parents, and young people helping others.

When I entered building level leadership twelve years ago, including compulsory community service as a high school graduation requirement was gaining popularity. Requiring community service would provide the opportunity for young people to give back to the community and develop the understanding of what it feels like to serve others. In discussions with local faculty and community members, requiring service was felt to be not as powerful as pure voluntary service. The true spirit of service has to be voluntary. Compulsory service was thought to lessen the warmth and good feeling one gets from true voluntary service. Young people are fulfilling a requirement, not simply serving others. Many believe whether mandatory or voluntary, community service strengthens connections between students and community and encourages caring for others.

Mandatory voluntary community service (interesting word combination) does exist in our schools. Honor societies, student councils, and some athletic teams have community service as part of their programs. Students voluntarily seek membership in these organizations knowing full well the expectations of membership.

During the 21st Century Learning/Graduation Requirements Task Force work, compulsory community service was discussed. The final determination that an *Experiential Education Requirement* providing a means by which important competencies can be achieved in a number of ways, including but not limited to community service, was the right approach. It is exciting to know that our first students required to obtain an experiential education requirement are now upper classmen.

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Superintendent

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A discussion of service cannot be completed without recognizing and appreciating the service of our school board members, from negotiations to budget committee meetings, to policy development, to listening posts, to school board meetings on December 21, to countless emails, committees, phone calls, and questions. Thank you for your service to the Hopkinton Community and young people.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven M. Chamberlin
Superintendent of Schools