



HOPKINTON SCHOOL DISTRICT School Administrative Unit 66

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Superintendent's Report
Hopkinton School District

Submitted: Friday, October 1, 2010 for a Tuesday, October 5, 2010 Meeting

It seems unbelievable that this report is being submitted for an October School Board meeting: how time flies. As budget season will soon be upon us, it seems appropriate to talk about CHANGE that DOES NOT require additional funding.

Early on in my educational leadership career, it became very evident why so much professional development was focused on the change process. Very few educational leaders have the chance to create a school from the ground up. Even fewer people get the opportunity to create a school district. Town Administrator Neal Cass and I marveled at the experience town and school leaders must have had as they developed Reston Virginia, an internationally known planned community in 1964.

Change is an important part of school leadership. The emotions of anxiety, excitement, and uncertainty are all connected to change. Change is further complicated in the school environment of collective bargaining, past practice, and state and federal law. One thing for sure is educational change is not boring.

In the current economic climate it is important to take a look at improvements/changes that do not rely on additional funding (or at least limited increased funding).

The district recently completed its first C – Time: calendar innovation designed to provide increased collaboration. Release time for teachers created collaboration time while families either took advantage of a slower morning, extra sleep, or came to school for planned activities.

All three schools have restructured time at the building level to provide academic support (WIN time to Z –block). This increase of service essentially was budget neutral.

The next phase of educational change will be policy development. Included in the board packet is a calendar for the development/revisions of five policies. The movement of the District to operate under 21st Century policies is important work. The first major policy work will involve bullying and harassment. The new state law considered years of research and best practice. The charge will be to develop a local policy that meets the requirements of the state law while ensuring it supports best practice for the Hopkinton community. Truancy, air quality, child restraint, and criminal background procedures are all in line for a 21st Century update.

New state laws could have an impact on the district outside of the policy development process. The new law (liability for special education and related services) that will receive some

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immediate attention is RSA 193:3, IV. This law went into effect on September 11, 2010. The law, developed to address tuition students as part of collective bargaining agreements, impacts all school districts that accept tuition students. The law prohibits the refusal of accepting a tuition student on the basis of special education. The law holds the district of residence responsible for special education costs. This law has interesting implications regarding the IEP development process and funding.

Change at the micro-level has to be a foundation of educational improvement. Perhaps old fashioned/traditional, but firsthand teacher and programmatic observation is a no additional cost approach to educational change. The month of October is observation month. I will be visiting classrooms with a focus on those recently hired. Building leaders will be charged to make clinical observations and walk throughs of all staff. District leaders will be encouraged to observe student services, business operations, and technology operations firsthand. The adage visibility is credibility, applies as firsthand observation creates a greater understanding of what is needed in our district. The focus of November board reports will likely address educational improvements that have budgetary implications.

Thank you for your continued support.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven M. Chamberlin
Superintendent of Schools