



HOPKINTON SCHOOL DISTRICT School Administrative Unit 66

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Superintendent's Report Hopkinton School District

Submitted: Friday December 3, 2010 for a Tuesday, December 7, 2010 Meeting

It was difficult to miss the irony that at the same leadership meeting where we are classifying reductions, time was spent discussing the Hopkinton School District Mission, Vision, Values, and Collective Commitments. In difficult budgetary times, it is important to continue to focus on best practice, to exist in a continual improvement model, and to develop and fulfill one's mission/vision, with values and collective commitments.

In the past, board reports have been directed to look at overall curriculum, assessment, instruction, orientation, transition, and other broad topics. This month, the Arts are the theme of the board reports. The arts came to mind, as recently the Artist-in-Residence program flourished at the elementary schools, the high school presented its fall one-act plays, the Yappin Yodas are working hard on their presentation, and HHS graduates' artwork is displayed at the SAU office. During our discussion of mission, vision, and values, the Hopkinton brand was further articulated. The arts are certainly an important part of the Hopkinton brand.

In this day and age of math, science, and English standardized testing, Hopkinton has resisted the temptation to sacrifice time for the arts for the statewide tested subjects. Time for the arts is sacred and certainly leads to increased understanding and academic achievement in all subjects. The Hopkinton staff continues to support the integration of unique educational opportunities in the arts. From all state music auditions, to designing an airplane, to assessment of early elementary learning – the arts are a significant part of the daily operations of the schools.

However, all arts are not created equal. It is difficult to find time to support all programs, including all art programs. Currently, though flourishing with participation rates, opportunities for a student whose passion is voice are provided through a club at Maple Street School. The high school program does not adequately support course offerings for those students interested in music but not musicians. At Harold Martin School, the music teacher has expressed a need for increased music time.

Currently, one of the hottest educational topics is teacher pay linked to student achievement (merit pay). Applying merit pay to teachers of the arts is still under development. North Carolina, who won a federal Race to the Top grant, is currently designing a standardized approach to art assessment, which can be utilized in the merit pay atmosphere. The education community is watching this closely. Daniel Pink, author of the book *Drive*, on motivation, expressed an alternative view to merit pay. His belief about the successful application of merit pay to support complex tasks resonates. (Please feel encouraged to watch Daniel Pink's TED Talk on motivation on you tube at (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rrkrvAUbU9Y>.)

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At the recent McAuliffe Technology Conference, the ability to create and publish artwork on the web was repeatedly demonstrated. A third grader expressed her desire to have teachers allow her to use her laptop to draw, displaying her work on her web show for the world to see. Her approach to a colonial village was not cardboard paper and glue, but Google SketchUp. Holding on to the reins is not the right analogy, as this medium is further developed, the right analogy is to loosen the reins, allowing students to create using today's tools.

Thank you for your continued support.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven M. Chamberlin
Superintendent of Schools