
**SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
GATEWAY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

BLANDFORD CHESTER HUNTINGTON MIDDLEFIELD MONTGOMERY RUSSELL WORTHINGTON

TO: SCHOOL COMMITTEE
FROM: DAVE
SUBJECT: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE
DATE: SEPTEMBER 20, 2007
CC: STACY

At the last school committee meeting I provided a brief financial and population overview of the district for us to consider in developing a five-year plan. I also asked that each of you come to the next meeting with one vital aspect that you feel is necessary for a quality education at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. We also discussed the very real potential of overlap occurring both in the committee and in the community regarding future planning of what we'd like to offer, the question of expanding learning time, and the ongoing concerns regarding consolidation of schools. I'm not sure there is any way to eliminate people thinking of those subjects as one, but I'd like to concentrate on what we'd like to see and leave the other aspects as potential ways to reach our objective—i.e., let's not throw out good ideas because we may believe they'll lead to an unintended consequence such as closing schools. Rather, let's think about what we want to see in schools and leave the implementation plan for later.

Much work was already completed during the 2015 planning of two years ago so I'd like to recap the findings of what people in that process wanted to see in our schools:

1. That our goal as educators is to help children become productive members of society so that they can make good decisions. This includes holding high expectations for outcome-based education while balancing the 'whole-child/MCAS' issues, i.e., need to focus on both simultaneously while remembering that there are multiple ways to demonstrate intelligence.
2. That our schools need a curriculum that demonstrates both horizontal and vertical articulation while providing for 'Real World' skills, including more foreign language, more choices in electives, participation in democratic activities, good citizenship (good manners, courtesy, appropriate language), more advanced courses, college partnerships, and increased exposure to technology.
3. That we look at vision first and finances second. We should find ways to finance the vision, even if it is in stages. That we consider expanding after-school, preschool and wrap around programs in the district for students, and add community classes in the evenings for our community members. There also was a concern with budget cuts and the question of how can we keep providing the same offerings and add more without adequate financing.

If you compare these items with what we've accomplished over the past 4 years, despite state cutbacks, and with the district mission statement and current 5-year goals, I believe you'll see consistency and a large degree of success. Given that, the question of what do we want to accomplish in the next 5 years appears to be both valid and realistic given past performance.