

## Suggested next steps regarding MARS report recommendations

- Priority Level
  - High
  - Medium
  - Low
  - No priority – deemed inappropriate for district
- Timeline
  - Immediate – Next 6 to 12 months
  - Midrange – Next 2 to 5 years
  - Long Range – 5 plus years
- Resources Needed
  - Staffing
  - Time
  - Funding
  - Changes in regulation
- Action Required or already being taken
- Potential Cost
- Related Key School Committee Goal

### High Priority Level

#### Budget Related:

- Staff stipends:
  - would be very helpful in terms of getting curriculum work done, especially without a Curriculum Director
  - for teacher leaders in order for them to take on more responsibility; e.g., curriculum development, evaluation, professional development, testing, IEP team chair.
    - *High Priority*
    - *Next year*
    - *Next year's budget has stipends for curriculum work as well as other areas of concern to free up administrative time*
    - *Put into place upon budget approval (revising job descriptions, posting, filling)*
      - *Goal to make part of 2025 process to facilitate union approval*
      - *Review NEASC Curriculum subcommittee findings to support further development/editing*
    - *Depending on number of positions - \$15,000 to \$30,000*
    - *Goal #1 - Budget; Goal #5 - Effectiveness/Sustainability*
- Targeted increases might help the program and the District should continue to direct spending where it carries the most benefit to students. Areas where

additional funding would help the district: science supplies, summer stipends for curriculum development work, reinstating a director of curriculum and instruction, and stipends for department leaders to further efforts to incrementally improve content and pedagogy.

- *High Priority*
- *Ongoing as part of budget development, to be partially implemented next year (curriculum stipends, department/testing coordinator stipends)*
- *Budget documents, input from staff, approved budget*
- *Already in process of being implemented*
- *No additional cost if money being reallocated (potentially leading to the loss of staff) but if money not reallocated this could be a significant cost (\$115,00 to \$130,000)*
- *Goal #1 - Budget; Goal #5 - Effectiveness/Sustainability*
- Before the budget is presented for approval at town meeting, plan individual meetings with town finance committees and elected officials in order to promote the District, highlight student achievement, and garner support for the budget. Set up a permanent Finance Advisory Committee to keep the lines of communication open, especially throughout the fall and early winter next fiscal year budget process. Revise the current budget planning and presentation process beginning with communication to all member towns individually when the preliminary budget is completed.
  - *High Priority – we are always willing to meet with local finance committees and are already meeting with GTAC*
  - *Next budget cycle*
  - *Time and interest for all involved*
  - *Revise budget process*
    - *We move from inviting towns to ask us to come to meetings to inviting ourselves to one of their meetings and setting up time to review the district*
    - *We can look at either reformatting GTAC or create new mechanism to share information with town officials as we progress through budgetary process*
  - *No additional cost except perhaps utilities if held at Gateway*
  - *Goal #1 - Budget; Goal #4 - Community Engagement & Communications*
- Communicate:
  - with all six town boards to discuss sharing services; especially financial services and long-term capital and operational funding
  - more frequently and transparently on an ongoing basis regarding current and future fiscal year town and school budget needs.
    - *High Priority*

- *Immediate to midrange*
- *Time of our staff (or theirs) to provide services if not new*
- *I believe this is part of the hilltown collaborative process flowing from state grants.*
  - *This is an ongoing process and short of coming up with a new way to communicate with towns and citizens, I don't see how this could be greatly expanded.*
- *Minimal cost for potential mailings*
- *Goal #4 - Community Engagement & Communications; Goal #5 - Effectiveness & Sustainability*

**Curriculum:**

- The District should ensure that Google Docs will allow for easy access and revision moving forward.
  - *High Priority*
  - *Immediate*
  - *Google Suite for Education*
  - *Already in place and being used*
  - *No additional cost*
- Maintain the breadth of program at the secondary level.
  - *High Priority*
  - *Ongoing – we have changed to a seven period day and managed to keep staff positions, is part of yearly scheduling process (beginning in April)*
  - *Need to keep existing staff and potentially look at how we can meet student needs across interest areas through shared staff, online learning, and expanded opportunities for college credit/courses – need to maintain budgetary support for these items, is connected to solution for teacher leadership positions*
  - *Continue online programs, look at expanding online and college programs, consider non-Chapter 74 opportunities, identify and schedule teacher leadership positions as part of teaching duties (test coordination, curriculum, etc.)*
  - *Only additional cost is salary increases over time and potential to increase cost of online programs*
  - *Goal #3 - Elective Offerings & Student Opportunities*
- While there is general clarity on what teachers need to teach, the status of formal written curriculum at the elementary level is not completely in place and is something that needs to be completed as soon as time and resources allow.
  - *High Priority*
  - *Ongoing*
  - *Need curriculum support personnel*
  - *Continue revising and updating curriculum, look to provide*

*stipends or other ways to more involve staff in the process of developing curriculum*

- *Continued progress as part of 7 year curriculum cycle*
  - *uploading of existing documents to be done summer '17*
  - *teacher leadership positions to be put in place for 2017-'18 school year*
  - *schedule as part of teaching responsibilities if stipends not feasible*
- *Additional development and tracking support needed.*
  - *(very clear expectations for a final product, but also someone to organize K-12 for consistency)*
- *Potential for stipends (\$15,000 to \$30,000) or for part time/full time curriculum person (\$20,000 to \$100,000)*
- *Goal #2 - Superintendent Evaluation*
- *Research adding Chapter 74 Programs, especially in the areas of STEM, business, computers.*
  - *High Priority - Low priority (preventative cost & competition with area vocational programs)*
  - *Ongoing but primarily in non-Chapter 74 programs due to difficulties in starting the process and getting Chapter 74 approved (including lack of student numbers for some programs and the current availability of some programs in nearby vocational schools, Interest surveying could begin next school year*
  - *Need appropriate space, tools, staff, and interested students and the financial wherewithal to start and maintain programs, Guidance dept. could target interest as part of College & Career Readiness process*
  - *We continue to look at opportunities, i.e., digital production, helpdesk, computer art, tech crew and need to focus on the potential of these, perhaps developing courses with existing staff, If interest is high enough, could integrate related topics into newly developed electives in MS with potential expansion to HS (STEM focus)*
  - *Non-Chapter 74 programs - \$15,000 to \$50,000, Chapter 74 programs - \$250,000 each at minimum (depends on facilities)*
  - *Goal #3 - Elective Offerings and Opportunities*
- *Pay close attention to enrollment numbers at the two elementary schools.*
  - *High Priority*
  - *Ongoing*

- *Census and looking at town census numbers*
- *We do this consistently throughout the year and have made changes based upon enrollments*
- *No additional budgetary expense*

**Organization/Operations:**

- The District should continue to explore consortia, state contracts, and other large group purchases and/or leases for potential cost savings in acquiring technology equipment and services.
  - *High Priority*
  - *Ongoing as can be seen by work being done by our tech staff*
  - *Time for outreach and networking (tech conferences, etc.)*
  - *We will continue to focus on getting the best bang for the buck*
  - *Budget for conferences - \$2,500 to \$10,000*
  - *Goal #5 - Effectiveness and Sustainability*
- Do not decrease the number of administrators in the district and consider 12-month contracts for all positions.
  - *High Priority*
  - *Short term – some administrators don't want 12 month contracts and those that want more time have it built into next year's budget*
  - *Financial support*
  - *Already in place for those interested in expanding contract length*
  - *Budget of less than \$10,000 for FY'18, for all \$50,000*
  - *Goal #1 - Budget*
- The District should consider the development of a formal data backup and technology disaster recovery/business continuity plan.
  - *High Priority*
  - *Immediate*
  - *Fiscal resources depending on plan, time to research and implement*
  - *We have already begun this in many cases by moving to 'cloud' based services and will continue to look at other ways to improve backup of other systems*
  - *\$25,000*
- Communicate with all districts in a reasonable radius to explore interest in any kind of sharing to be more efficient, provide better programs for students, and lower assessments (Reach out to other regional and local school districts regarding sharing administrative services), (Look into sharing special transportation costs with nearby districts),
  - *High Priority*
  - *Ongoing – we have done this multiple times*
  - *Potential cost of having part time staff added to district*

- *Need common destinations and routes (working on this)*
- *We do this through professional organizations and our individual networks*
  - *We consistently look at transportation options and sharing routes with other districts and have now started looking at running some of our own routes.*
- *Consultants - \$10,000*
- *Goal #1 - Budget; Goal #5 - Effectiveness and Sustainability*

**Special Education:**

- A suggestion moving forward is to internally develop a department evaluation process that considers the same type of format as mandated in SE 56 of the Coordinated Program Review Procedures manual.
- The District should consider introducing an independent evaluation process that looks at addressing alignment with compliance issues.
- The District may wish to consider areas of restructuring the department.
  - *High Priority*
  - *Immediate*
  - *Based upon additional PSV secretarial and administrative time that have been addressed in the FY'18 budget (adding additional time in the summer for both positions.*
  - *Revision/implementation of evaluation process for PSV*
  - *Less than \$10,000*
- The District should examine the development of an internal 18-22 program for students with cognitive deficits.
  - *Imperative and of the highest priority*
  - *We presently have 6 students placed in the secondary Life Skills program who require this programming out in the community. We presently have no community sites, or job coaches necessary to facilitate the Transition Programming that will provide these students the functional vocational and independent living skills necessary to transition them to adulthood.*
  - *The district presently has one student placed privately out-of-district in one of these programs, at a cost of \$75k annually.*
  - *Steps have been made to purchase vans and the program development role will be the highest priority for the proposed ETL/Specialist position*
  - *\$95,000 to \$120,000*

- *Goal #3 - Elective Offerings and Opportunities*
- \$4,288.00 for a Prevocational stipend may be insufficient to accommodate the needs for these students and develop a separate 18-22 program.
  - *Highest priority*
  - *Ongoing*
  - *Provided for in budget*
  - *It is sufficient for the “internal” students. The successful development of transitioning programs will entail that we have a cadre of community based sites whereby students will augment the “work” they are presently doing on-site at Gateway, by participating at these community based businesses and providers to give them “real life” experiences to facilitate vocational and independent living skills.*
  - *\$95,000 to \$120,000*
  - *Goal #1 - Budget*
- For students that have an Autism diagnosis and a clearly identifiable and significant cognitive impairment, consider redefining the “Life Skills” classroom to accommodate a greater multi-modal focus of services. Examine if there are staff that are either working toward state licensure as a behavioral analyst or who could be utilized in that capacity and utilize various additional forms of reimbursement.
  - *High Priority*
  - *FY’18*
  - *Multiple recommendations are addressed by the proposed hire for an ETL/Specialist and Sean’s enrollment in a certification program.*
  - *These are ALL significant priorities that could be addressed by hiring three separate FTEs; an ETL, a BCBA and a Transition Program Developer. I am proposing we consolidate all three of these important priorities into one hire so long as the district can identify the right candidate. Sean is currently enrolled and will complete the coursework and supervision necessary to sit for the “boards” in December 2017-February 2018. Additionally, the new hire will be certified or certifiable as a BCBA within one year of hire.*
  - *\$75,000 to \$85,000*

- In considering the overall review, there are several key systemic changes that would be helpful for a final review:
  - Examine the inclusion model and the current staffing. Summer 2017 with Principals
  - Consider forming a community task force to define the needed program structure for those students that require additional supports from a significantly separate classroom.
    - *Task force is not necessary as the issues have been identified. Specialist needs to be hired to develop the programming. If the task force is required to ensure “ownership and support” from the community, I would be happy to facilitate.*
  - Consider the expectations of the Director of Pupil Services and consistent management involvement and leadership needed to conduct this role successfully.
    - *Adding additional time to the contract during the Summer, additional Secretarial time and hiring the ETL/Specialist will make the role and responsibilities for the PSV Director realistic and sustainable.*
    - *Less than \$10,000*

### **Facilities and Grounds**

- Ensure that air exchange in the middle school area is at healthy levels given the structure of the heating systems in that part of the building.
  - *High priority.*
  - *All rooftop units maintained and filters changed on a quarterly basis.*
  - *Staff Time*
  - *HVAC software already used which alerts maintenance staff when rooftop units are off.*
- Due to the original construction timeline, the District will need to anticipate and plan for the simultaneous aging of buildings and building systems.
  - *High Priority*
  - *FY'19 and future budgets*
  - *Funding and agreement of towns*
  - *This has been an ongoing concern of the administration and school committee but funding concerns have not made including money for long-term capital funding*
  - *Goal #1 - Budget; Goal #4 - Community Engagement &*

**Transportation:**

- The District should keep monitoring the student ridership and reduce buses when possible.
  - *High Priority*
  - *This is done on an ongoing basis.*
  - *Staff Time*
  - *Bus routes studied with ridership counted. Buses reduced from 29 - 16 in the past few years.*
- The District should work closely with the Association of Pupil Transportation as they continue with the study.
  - *High priority.*
  - *The study has been completed and the district has already incorporated many of the recommendations.*
- The District should be contacting the surrounding districts and the out-of-district schools to see if they can help with any cost sharing.
  - *High Priority*
  - *Ongoing*
  - *Staff time*
  - *Is currently being done each year*
  - *Goal #5 - Effectiveness and Sustainability*

**Medium Priority**

**Budget:**

- Fund and hire a Director of Curriculum and Instruction. Consider the requests of the Administrative Team with regard to new positions. Perhaps the District could develop a Leadership Staffing Plan that could be implemented over a few years.
  - *Medium Priority*
  - *Midrange (3 to 5 years)*
  - *Appropriate funding to begin process part-time and look to expand*
    - *While a staffing plan can certainly be developed (or more specifically, written up) it will take funding and/or sharing to provide the financial resources to implement*
  - *This is an ongoing discussion and more often than not revolves around potential funding through the budget process.*
    - *Fund part time curriculum position (\$20,000) and grow into a new position (\$100,000 + benefits)*
  - *Goal #1 - Budget*
- Provide more access to and incentives for online professional development training and support resources for teaching staff. Develop each year's professional development calendar to support inclusion and co-teacher training.
  - *Medium Priority*

- *Ongoing, to coincide with NEASC Self-Assessment process at the HS level*
- *We don't currently provide 'incentives' for PD training but do provide a tech committee who review technology, provide support in the schools, and provide individual and group training. We also have many programs that have built in training/PD modules built in that only require staff to participate.*
- *We are continuing an ongoing process of providing staff with resources and assistance in using technology appropriately in the classroom and in sharing what works throughout the district. We may wish to provide more information on these opportunities for staff. Prepare a multi-year PD plan focussed on inclusive practice connected with teacher findings during Self-Assessment process As discussed earlier, Summer with Principals*
- *Goal # 2 - Superintendent Evaluation*

**Curriculum:**

- The District needs to complete curriculum maps and pacing documents.
  - *Medium Priority as funding dictates*
  - *Ongoing – we do have a 7 year curriculum planning process which may be too long given the pace of change on the state and national level, create teacher leaders to develop the curriculum, but to then also work with district teachers to update/revise current curriculum pacing documents.*
  - *Stipends remain available for doing curriculum work on a rotational basis, stipends in FY'18 for teachers to help manage and develop finished products*
  - *Continue work on curricula, look at department level or subject area 'supervisors' for this work*
  - *Goal #2 - Superintendent Evaluation*

**Organization/Operations:**

- If the District has not already done so, it should look into why so many students choose to leave the District and attend school somewhere else. Perhaps a simple survey could be extended to Choice Out families to gather data. The data should then be examined to see if there are any viable changes that could be made to attract students to Gateway and reduce the high Choice out costs to the District. The practice of an exit survey could be expanded to include any departing student and by asking for more input about the Gateway educational experience.
  - *Medium Priority to low priority*
  - *Immediate - could take effect as part of training new Guidance secretary*
  - *Staff time for surveys and compilation of data - Guidance dept. to*

- make part of entrance/exit process*
- *Expand current school choice surveys - Simply amend forms to include relevant interview/survey questions*
      - *Was being done and can be done again, see previous answer regarding finding out why students are leaving for different options*
    - *Goal #1 - Budget; Goal #5 - Effectiveness and Sustainability*
  - The pace of change in the district has already been significant and perhaps assessing the capacity for additional change should be considered. The foreseeable future should involve solidifying these initiatives and sustaining the educational program.
    - *Medium Priority*
    - *Immediate*
    - *None*
    - *Need approved budgets and additional state revenue*
  - The new teacher evaluation system should continue to be “tweaked” to make it better suited to the priorities and goals of the District.
    - *Medium Priority*
    - *Ongoing Process*
    - *Teacher/Admin/State input*
    - *Changes to evaluation program based upon common agreement between parties*
  - A professional development plan for the District should be put into place for the entire year.
    - *Medium Priority*
    - *Ongoing (much of the ‘district’ PD is set for the year during the summer but the setting of additional PD is an ongoing process and part of the PD committee’s responsibility, The elementary level already does this, but mandated trainings, etc... can often derail plan*
    - *Already included in budget (stipends for PD committee, PD budget funds)*
    - *More time for administration and staff to focus on planning and implementation of PD, SPED and Para PD plan would be helpful*
  - Investigate sharing personnel with other regions and/or the vocational schools, Smith Vocational Agricultural School and/or Westfield Vocational School; e.g., professional development opportunities, IEP services, IEP team meeting leaders, educational technology specialist.
    - *Medium Priority (discuss with other administrators routinely when time allows)*
    - *Ongoing discussions with other administrators*
    - *Need time to meet and develop opportunities (in terms of PD)*

*opportunities – shared calendar, shared interests, shared needs); need other districts/schools to work on developing shared staff potential, to ‘add back’ staff would also need additional budgetary dollars*

- *Need to begin process of looking at collaborative calendar to provide certain opportunities*
- *Goal #1 - Budget*
- Share more services with the Education Collaboratives. Reach out to the Hampshire Collaborative regarding sharing educational services. Look into expanding the relationship with LPVEC to include special education programs and services. The District should consider looking at the Collaborative programs for some of the out-of-district needs of the students and should consider a paid membership to one of the Collaboratives
  - *Medium to High Priority*
  - *Short to midterm*
  - *Time to meet and dollars to potentially become members of local collaboratives, to be effective, we may have to allocate funds to become member schools (this also includes time to have administrators sit on their boards)*
  - *We have been discussing this with LPVEC and CES over the past year*
  - *Goal #1 - Budget*
- Impact bargain with a focus on eliminating the three preparation clause, bringing in business leaders and/or others to teach special electives/programs, create a high school to college program (current staff may want to teach these classes or might already teach at the college level). If necessary consider having teachers assigned to teach 20% outside their area(s) of certification.
  - *Medium Priority as we already have support in many of these areas and negotiations are not currently ongoing*
  - *Midrange*
  - *Negotiation language and buy in from staff*
  - *Start process with Staff Gateway 2025 meeting*
  - *Goal #2 - Superintendent Evaluation*
- Consider creating a dynamic technology plan that has built-in annual review components calibrated to the budget cycle, and is clearly articulated with the DIP/SIPs and other strategic plans.
  - *Medium Priority*
  - *Midrange (we’re already working on this and in ‘formalizing’ the current processes*
  - *Time for staff to research, write, and implement changes*
  - *This process is progressing slowly as time permits*
  - *Goal #1 - Budget*

- Evaluate current public relations' programs, activities and initiatives focusing on those that do the most to highlight the District and the education it provides.
  - *Medium Priority*
  - *Ongoing with use of Communications Council*
  - *Continued support of Communications Council*
  - *Put into place another survey of district stakeholders - Communications Program evaluated through SCoPE this year, paid for by Mass ItoI.*
  - *Goal #4 - Community Engagement and Communications*

**Special Education:**

- Revisit the structure of the inclusion model to assure that inclusion classrooms and their pull-out supports are the first priority when designing the schedule for classes next year. Consider that the inclusion model is the first tier, and pull-out services are the second tier. Students with inclusion or consultation services for speech and language should be assigned to classes in ELA together so that the SLP can supply the inclusion support in fewer classrooms when possible, and provide the consultation services to the teaching staff at the same time.
  - *Moderate-High priority (though this is done on a yearly basis), Low priority (this is already done at the K-5 level with SPED and ELL to the best of our ability)*
  - *To be part of yearly scheduling process (beginning in 2nd semester)*
  - *Collaboration time with Pupil Services Director and Sped teaching staff - Have met and discussed with the Principals and plan to spend part of this upcoming Summer developing a strategic plan to focus efforts on facilitating meaningful inclusion and an honest co-teach model district-wide.*
  - *Identify if incoming needs will alter MS Specials offerings or ability to use HS Sped staff as classroom teachers*
- The District needs to address a schedule that supports common planning time for special education and general education to engage in lesson planning.
  - *Moderate priority (given increasing student needs)*
  - *To be part of teacher long-term PD and Self-Study analysis related to inclusion, curriculum and instruction. We understand that this is important, but given small number of staffing SPED teachers covering multiple grade levels, this is not feasible on a regular*

*basis. Perhaps implementing this as a late day requirement (need GTA approval) would work or during staff meeting time.*

- *Collaboration time with Pupil Services Director and teaching staff*
- *Given small number of staffing in Sped and at each grade level, this is not practically feasible to schedule face-to-face. However, with the development and sharing of digital unit plans as part of 7 year curriculum cycle, this could be done through Google Docs. This could be integrated into “tweaks” in evaluation goals, teacher leadership model, and potential supported by language in teacher contracts.*
- For students that have an Autism diagnosis and a clearly identifiable and significant cognitive impairment, consider redefining the “Life Skills” classroom to accommodate a greater multi-modal focus of services. Currently, the high school “Life Skills” program has students that have greater than a 48-month age span between the oldest and youngest students in the classroom.
  - *Moderate-High priority*
  - *DESE review of waiver application 2017 with inform timeline*
  - *Collaboration with Pupil Services Director*
  - *Review DESE finding in combination with incoming needs to determine if program needs expansion or restructuring.*
  - *Goal #1 - Budget*
- Insure efforts to update IEP summaries, Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) processes, and attendance practice for IEP meetings for students. This process began at the start of school and will continue on-going.
  - *This is a moderate priority of this requested new position in the budget. Hiring for the position is the highest priority on this list but not necessarily for this reason.*
  - *Primary problem is Administrative time and breadth of responsibilities. With the current Administrative infrastructure, the PSV Director and/or Principals can not attend all Team meeting.*
  - *The hope is that with addition of an ETL (Educational Team Leader/Autism Specialist/Program Developer); some of these Administrative responsibilities may be shared to free up time to conduct some of these activities.*
  - *Planning process and then implementing*
  - *Goal #1 - Budget*

- Run eSped reports for each grade level on disability types starting with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) for math and Reading (ELA), and speech and language services.
  - *Medium Priority*
  - *Ongoing*
  - *Staff time*
  - *Reports by disability were run, analysed and disseminated as one of the first tasks completed upon hiring the new PSV Director. Modifications were made immediately and the identification of patterns will drive PD moving forward.*
- The District should provide professional development for special education teachers and paraprofessionals on Applied Behavior Analysis strategies.
  - *Priority*
  - *Addressed this past Summer by securing the services of a BCBA to train and supervise the significantly separate program at Chester. On-going through the appropriate utilization of our own district resources; once Sean has attained the required certification AND the ETL/Specialist has been hired.*
  - *Funding in FY'18 budget*
  - *Sean has a caseload over 100 students; hiring the ETL/Specialist is the HIGHEST priority although the development of Transition Programming is the 1st priority for this position; providing Administrative Support to the PSV department is 2nd and providing direct services to students on the autism spectrum is 3rd priority, in my humble opinion.*
  - *Goal #1 - Budget*
- Provide professional development to School Adjustment Counselors and special education teachers in the District on writing, implementing, and conducting integrity checks on behavior plans.
  - *On-going priority*
  - *Ongoing*
  - *Supervised by a BCBA; Sean is attaining this certification and the ETL/Specialist hire will have the same certification necessary*

### **Facilities and Grounds:**

- Consider installation of inspection ports in Chester Elementary School septic field to monitor functionality and hopefully avoid costly repairs
  - *Moderate priority.*
  - *Inspection ports will be installed this summer (2017)*
  - *Done by Gateway staff*
- Monitor the underground fuel tank at Chester Elementary School so the district can be confident about its integrity and avoid a high cost replacement and environmental issue.
  - *Moderate priority - already double walled fiberglass tank*
  - *Will have inspected when Chester tank is cleaned spring/summer 2017.*
  - *Already moved dumpster so that waste removal truck not driving in that area.*
- Investigate the high ambient temperature in the electrical rooms at the Chester and Littleville Elementary Schools to be certain that all equipment is functioning appropriately and safely.
  - *Moderate priority.*
  - *Will monitor exhaust fan functionality on a regular basis.*
- Assess the utility and appearance of the courtyard at the main complex. What is long-term plan for this space so it can be utilized by staff and students but also be efficiently maintained?
  - *Moderate priority*
  - *Courtyard on maintenance list this summer for reconstruction so that it is easy to maintain and usable.*
- Chester front entrance framework requires a bit of maintenance painting - metal beams will be painted this summer
  - *Moderate priority.*
  - *To be completed by Gateway staff in summer of 2017.*

### **Transportation:**

- Administrators might consider looking at running the transportation system themselves.
  - *Moderate Priority*
  - *First van purchase in 2016, staffing in FY'18 budget*
  - *Funding for vans and staff time*
  - *Looking at in house transportation of some special education routes and*

*possibly small field trips and small athletic trips.*

### **Low Priority**

#### **Budget:**

- The District should consider restoring and filling the vacant Technology Director position.
  - *Low Priority due to current functioning of department*
  - *Long term*
  - *Financial – additional salary and benefit package of 75,000 to 100,000 dollars*
  - *We will look at changing job descriptions to include more aspects of managing the department and increasing pay accordingly*
  - *Goal # 1 - Budget*

#### **Curriculum:**

- An electrical shop could also be considered if the vocational programs are expanded.
  - *Low Priority*
  - *Not applicable due to existing electrical programs in vocational schools*
  - *Not Applicable*
  - *Not Applicable*

#### **Organization/Operations:**

- School Improvement Plans should try to achieve a balance between brevity and utility.
  - *Low Priority - Moderate priority - Moderate priority*
  - *Ongoing - to begin with revisions to 2017 revisions - To begin with revisions to 2018 revisions (It was recommended to only have 3 goals and to have an “Elementary SIP” instead of one for each school)*
  - *Time and staff resources - Collaboration with those involved in NEASC Self Study and 2025 process*
  - *As we continue to review, update, and implement school improvement plans we will further attempt to balance brevity and utility - Spring 2017 HS & MS School Council meetings will target one improvement goal per meeting with publicized invite to others not on council with goal of parent/community “friendly” plans - Create a joint School Council committee*
- Initiate a high school to college partnership with the community college, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts in the Berkshires. Create a teaching and

learning partnership with Mass. College of Liberal Arts Students to intern, student teach or even shadow administrators, eventually taking on some responsibilities. The community college does have an education program and an educational leadership program.

- *Low to Medium Priority given the distance to MCLA and the existing work with HCC and STCC - Low priority (this partnership already exists with Westfield State University- placed 3 practicum and 3 pre-practicum students in MS/HS this year) - Low to Medium Priority given existing work with local colleges including WSU*
- *Ongoing with all schools*
- *Time – staff resources to initiate and follow-up with schools/students/parents*
- *We are already doing this to some extent with local colleges, time limits us in setting up additional opportunities - These recommendations could be expanded to sharing campus and professors to offers adult ed courses or potentially expand to dual-enrollment options for HS students (3 seniors taking a total of 5 dual enrollment courses this year)*
- *Goal #1 - Budget*
- Consider membership in Virtual High School.
  - *Low-moderate priority*
  - *Could take effect as early as next school year*
  - *Would need teachers willing to take this on (and risk ostracization by union?)*
  - *Already investigated....only affordable if teacher is willing to teach a VHS course (13 students currently taking a total of 17 courses this year with our current vendor- EdGenuity)*
  - *Goal #3 - Elective Offerings and Opportunities*
- Implement looping at the elementary level. Reduce teaching staff PreK-12.
  - *Low priority as this is already in progress (looping), and we would rather provide additional leadership opportunities to staff rather than reduce staff*
  - *Ongoing*
  - *Staff interest in expanding beyond teaching into school/district management and leadership*
  - *Develop a means to increase staff participation in leadership aspects of school/district management*
  - *Goal # 1 - Budget*
- All technology staff job descriptions should be examined and updated to ensure that they reflect the current state of technology and public policy.
  - *Low Priority*
  - *Midrange*
  - *Time to research and update descriptions*

- *This is a 'as time allows' issue given the other recommendations*
- The District should consider the makeup of the Technology Committee to include other stakeholders such as parents, a principal, and a member of the school committee, as well as students and other interested civic, business, and community members.
  - *Low Priority*
  - *Midrange*
  - *Time to research, create description and fill positions*
  - *This is a 'as time allows' issue given the other recommendations and the fact that we just expanded our 'in-house' technology committee with teachers*
- While there is general clarity on what teachers need to teach, the status of formal written curriculum at the elementary level is not completely in place and is something that needs to be completed as soon as time and resources allow.
  - *Low/Moderate priority*
  - *There is a misunderstanding of documents that are already created and in place at the elementary level due to the out dated information published on the website.*

### **Special Education:**

- The District should explore paying for a membership for MassPAC.
  - *Low priority (we have a three year waiver granted by DESE in April of 2016.*
- Use of District-wide phone announcement systems, listing on community calendars in regional papers, advertising on local access TV stations, and postings in community locations (post offices, grocery stores, laundromats, etc.) would be low cost ways to advertise the organizational efforts and outreach to form a new SEPAC.
  - *Low Priority*
  - *Wendy and the current protocols in place do a great job*
- Consider convening a task force of community partners (parents, teachers, school committee members, administrators, and community contacts) to identify available PreK-12 partners and seek out their input on identifying district needs.
  - *In my opinion, low priority*
  - *Long Term*
  - *We know what the district needs are. If however, the exercise of convening said task force would be helpful to engendering community support; I would be happy to take on this work.*

- *Goal #4 - Community Engagement & Communications*
- Considering that the average out-of-district tuition is over \$59,000.00, the department may want to consider raising the budgeted \$44,000.00 amount to reflect the average tuition cost for that given year.
  - Low Priority
  - *Agreed, the “phantom” student budgeted for FY18 should be average and realistic.*
  - *With continued hard work, luck and careful program development; this cost will never be expended (as we hope to see happen this year)*
  - *Goal #1 - Budget*
- The department may wish to review identification processes for speech and language service eligibility.
  - *Low Priority*
  - *Ongoing*
  - *Staff Review Process*
  - *Overidentification and utilization of students with “communication disorders was discovered as an “issue” prior to the start of school. The third FTE pathologist was eliminated and PD and supervision put into place to ensure the issue was ameliorated. There has already been a significant reduction in students since the start of the school year and this trend will continue until the “caseload” is reflective of where a “like” district average should be.*
- The District should consider looking at the Collaborative programs for some of the out-of-district needs of the students and should consider a paid membership to one of the Collaboratives.
  - *Low priority.*
  - *We presently have one student who is placed in LPVEC and are exploring the possibility of using HEC for another. Of highest importance is to hire the ETL/Specialist position; to successfully develop the kind of continuum necessary to serve ALL our students in-district.*
- A long-term goal may be to explore ways to integrate speech and language supports into the general education classrooms to enhance the intensity of their model into the early elementary grades.
  - *Low priority*

- *A strategic initiative to be addressed once we have reduced caseloads and are servicing only those students who meet the criteria for needing the service*

**Facilities and Grounds:**

- Complete periodic comparisons with outside contractors to ensure that snow removal is more cost efficient when done by District staff.
  - *Low priority.*
  - *N/A*
  - *N/A*
  - *Cost analysis completed when changing from contracted to inhouse. Inhouse more beneficial due cost savings as well as immediate attention as necessary to prevent unsafe conditions.*
- Assess whether stanchions should be installed to guard the main electrical box outside the main complex
  - *Low priority - possibly install concrete barriers instead of stanchions due to underground power supply.*
  - *Will revisit in the next 3-5 years.*

**Potential Cost Savings (from MARS Consultant)**

- It is apparent to the reader that the observations and recommendations herein, involve some degree of cost increase.