

# GATEWAY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

12 Littleville Road Huntington, MA 01050

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## *Superintendent's Corner*

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Progress seems to require change and isn't always welcomed, especially if we've all become comfortable with the status quo. Sometimes progress is welcomed if it helps resolve an issue that has been vexing folks for some time. It seems that the work being done in our hilltown communities to encourage sustainability through economic growth, to become more efficient through shared services, and to explore common areas of interest are often seen through very different lenses depending on the individual or group and how they're being affected. Thankfully people in our towns are still able to discuss issues in a generally calm and reason-based manner so that differing viewpoints can be shared, debated, and even modified enough so that a majority can agree on how best to move forward.

Among other issues, it seems that the six Gateway towns have done this by supporting the region's economic development position after state funding for the position ended. I believe we're also seeing this in the recent completion of the IT Services process (another item supported by the state's compact grants) that selected an IT firm that individual towns can contract with under a region-wide umbrella, using the PVPC as the oversight organization. I'm pleased that these two examples of progress in the area also included the schools to some degree. This ranges from working with the economic development person on marketing the towns and schools to being part of the complex selection process for IT services. I remain impressed with the dedication of our local officials in going the extra mile to ensure that their towns, and the schools, are meeting the needs of our residents; of putting in the extra time and effort to make sure work is accomplished in a timely and professional manner; and in doing much of this work for little more than the good of the towns. This of course is nothing new (I've seen this going on for the decades I've been involved in town government) but it does seem to be building upon past successes in working across town lines and moving towards a much more collaborative view of what's needed to not just survive, but to flourish as small towns.

I hope that we'll all continue down this road and work towards a better understanding of everyone's needs, of being willing to openly discuss the pros and cons of available options, and of remaining friends and good neighbors despite the potential for holding different viewpoints. I'm certainly bolstered in this hope by the work that is ongoing, from this past year's work on developing and adopting the district's school budget, to the collaborative work done on reaching agreement on a change in school assessment methodology; from the energy being put into developing economic development opportunities to the work being done on shared services like the IT process; and from the ongoing discussions on the potential for new shared services to the continuing support of services that have been shared for years.

While my crystal ball is rather cloudy on the specifics of the future, the fact that our towns are moving in a positive direction to make progress without changing the historical benefits or identities of our small towns is certainly something to recognize and celebrate.

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