

To: The Berlin-Boylston Regional School Committee
From: Carol L. Costello
Re: Superintendent's Report
Date: August 22, 2023

This report captures activities that have taken place through the Office of the Superintendent through the summer and as we prepare for the 2023-2024 school year.

School Committee Summer Retreat Follow-Up:

- Access our attorney (pro bono) to conduct a legal workshop with School Committee members to clarify gray areas of the school committee work, including relationships with other town departments - *Kim is happy to do a workshop for the school committee, and do pro bono as requested. She would like to “nail down” a more concrete agenda for the workshop if that is possible. She suggested that she or I send an email to the committee, asking each member to list topics/questions they have that might be part of the workshop so that she can create the agenda.*
- Invite “Braver Angels” to host an open dialogue among townspeople to discuss concerns and ask questions in a respectful manner.
- Carol will send a list to the School Committee members with the names of new staff members once the list is fully compiled and before the start of the new school year. - *This updated list as of August 17th is located in the main 2023 School Committee folder.*
- Strengthen town-wide relationships by starting early with the parent-teacher organizations, 19 Carter sessions, newspaper articles, BEF, etc. - *The Superintendent attended a community meeting at 19 Carter related to TAH student volunteer/intern participation in municipal government, local committees and community events. Among those in attendance from the BBRSD, along with the Superintendent, were the Tahanto Administrative Team and Director of Curriculum.*
- Record and continue subcommittee meetings starting in early fall.
- Clarify the budget process - Carol will reach out to MARS for a workshop on Regional Town Meetings - *I have reached out to MARS to provide a workshop facilitator for us focused on regional school budgets and the budget process and am awaiting a response from MARS as well as available dates.*
- Attendance at the November MASS/MASC Conference in Hyannis - *Jessica and Carol have registered for the event.*

Administrative Summer Work: The Administrative Team met together seven times during the summer, including two days with our Competency-Based Education/Portrait of a Graduate consultant, Dan Joseph. We are currently drafting short-term and long term goals as a result of these sessions. The team also participated in a two-day retreat that included team-building

activities, our semi-annual crisis team meeting, and reviews of processes and protocols with our finance director, human resource specialist, nurse leader, and pupil personnel director. Finally, the administrative team reviewed the three-year District Improvement Plan and identified areas of need in anticipation of the start of budget season.

Berlin-Boylston Crisis Team Update: The police and fire chiefs, Berlin resource officer, and highway department supervisors were introduced to the new administrative team, including the Assistant to the Superintendent of Schools. All Crisis Plans for each building were updated so that current emergency numbers and procedures are in place. The Administrative Team is preparing a list of monthly practice exercises to occur in each building for a second year. A review of concerns and safety expectations was also addressed between all parties as well as adjustments to emergency evacuations as needed.

Opening Week Status: As of today, we are prepared to safely open our schools. The fire pump issue at Berlin Memorial School is being mitigated to ensure the safety of students and staff in the building until repairs are made; and landscaping at each location is expected to take place prior to the start of school. New Staff Orientation will be held on Wednesday, August 23rd. Included for the first time this year are newly hired paraprofessionals.

Superintendent Goals: At this time, this Superintendent Goals is considering the following goals for the 2023-2024 school year:

- **Standard I: Instructional Leadership** - Based on our work with competency-based education, my goal is to meet at regularly scheduled times with administrators to review, and review the following: progress on the administrative team goal of using real data for instructional improvement ; the consistency and accountability required for effective educator evaluation; and to participate in classroom walkthroughs with a focus on instructional practices.
- **Standard II: Management and Operations** - This goal will pertain to our focus on the budget process; involvement with various community stakeholders, and training on the budgetary process for regional schools.
- **Standard III: Family and Community Engagement** - Community outreach in both towns is essential to building partnerships and relationships that serve our students, staff and families, as well as honor our commitment to our towns and communities who support us. This goal will focus on continued and broader community outreach.

- **Standard IV: Professional Culture** - As a first “official” year Superintendent, my goal is to strengthen my understanding of the operation of a regional school as it pertains to policy and budget. I plan to maintain a log of meetings and discussions with my mentor based on these topics as well as issues that arise throughout the year including personnel matters, and communication with stakeholders. The mentor also has background experience in the work of the Portrait of a Graduate, which I plan to adapt to our own district work.

Background Checks: Earlier this summer, our Berlin LINK organization approached us on restrictions placed on all volunteers being asked to provide fingerprints in addition to CORIs/SORIs. A request was made to see if a mobile fingerprinting unit was available to come to the schools. Major concerns included greater access to fingerprinting for those unable to travel to these locations, the cost of fingerprinting, and the potential loss of volunteers due to the additional requirements.

The Superintendent’s Office made an effort to reach out to our local police and fire departments as well as SAFID, however, the mobile fingerprinting option is not available. We also extended information-gathering further by reaching out to other districts. In the process, we discovered that in addition to *Background Check* policies that exist similar to our policy (Policy ADDA - see attached), many districts have provided further **clarification** for volunteers that may be beneficial for us as well. This document sits outside of the policy, and may appear on the district website for reference as well as be distributed to families through correspondence from the Superintendent’s Office.

Attached is a proposed draft of a document taken from the Nashoba Valley Regional School District for consideration. (The school district has been changed to reflect the Berlin-Boylston Regional School District). It would not necessarily require a vote of acceptance but rather an endorsement of the language and parameters for volunteers. At this time, I would ask that the School Committee provide guidance on the topic based on an interpretation of the policy and as it exists in the reality and needs of school volunteerism.