

## **Superintendent's Report: May 2025**

Highlight of the Month: When Kindergarten teacher Jessica Garvie needed to be away from her room to do a screening, I took advantage of the perfect opportunity to spend time interacting with our delightful and very inquisitive kindergarten children. In a short amount of time, they designed the Southwick Zoo, complete with a scratching post for the elephants, arranged pattern blocks into symmetric patterns and introduced me to their new and not yet named stuffies.

### **News and Notes**

#### **Educational Leadership:**

- I met online with the Title 1 State Coordinator. Based on our low-income student count (9) we are currently on the cusp of not qualifying for Title 1 funding. In the past, when we had a student count of 9 we did not receive funding. There is, however, still a possibility that a different cut point may be used.
- As you will see on the agenda, the Policy Committee has been busy reviewing the policies that will keep us current with changes in State and Federal legislation.

#### **Facilities:**

- Several projects have been scheduled, including the repair of the generator as well as a plan to upgrade the elevator over time.
- We have enlisted the assistance of plumber Jeff Paige to address a series of plumbing repairs and upgrades that were noted by our custodian, Lory Kneeland. We also requested that Jeff provide us with a proposal to improve the venting in the preschool.
- Following up on Rob Ellsworth's suggestion, I reached out to another HVAC company to gather information as to their rates and services.
- I reached out to Deb Richards to discuss a timeline for improving the condition of our fields.

#### **Finances:**

- As noted above, it is questionable whether we will receive additional Title 1 funding next year. At this point in time the After School Grant application has not been released.
- The administrative team has been meeting to review and prioritize building project needs, as well as equipment, including technology, repairs and replacement with respect to the status of our 2024-25 operating budget. In the past we have often waited until June to do this prioritization which, based on advice from our auditor, put some of the purchases too close to the end of the budget year. You will see requests for transfers that align with these needs.
- Given the possibility of delay and/or loss of grant funding sources, the administrative team also discussed ways we could adjust the allocation of some staffing costs to the 2024-25 operating budget to save some grant dollars for next year.

#### **Collaboration:**

- On Tuesday, I attended a meeting of small-town superintendents at Eastconn. Given the recent changes in early childhood education, the increase in the number and complexity of the needs of special education students, staff shortage areas and recent, often not fully delineated, mandates imposed by the State and the Federal government, there is an ever increasing need to find collaborative solutions. We will continue our discussion next Tuesday.
- Deb Richards, Carole McCombe and I attended a zoom meeting focused on the new readiness governance model. Thank you, Carole, for arranging this meeting. If you currently accept readiness funds you are encouraged to be part of one of the regional governance collaboratives, unless you develop an individual governance model that is approved by the review committee. The new governance plan requires much more involvement from town officials, community members and parents. Carole has been attending meetings and keeping you current as to the changes in her monthly reports.

## Comments on selected agenda items

### Unfinished Business

- A. High School Discussion  
*I do not believe any discussion is planned currently.*
- B. New CABE Climate Plan Policy
- C. New Shipman & Goodwin Climate Plan Regulations
- D. New Shipman & Goodwin Restorative Practices Policy
- E. Policy 5116, Student Discipline
- F. Policy 5152, Prohibition of Sex Discrimination Including Sex-Based Harassment (Students)
- G. Policy 4126, 4226, Prohibition of Sex Discrimination Including Sex-Based Harassment (Personnel)
- H. Policy 1610, Pesticide Application on School Property
- I. Policy 1250, Visitors and Observations in Schools
- J. Policy 1700, School Safety and Security  
*Items B-J are on the agenda for a second reading and are ready for adoption by the Board if they so desire.*

### New Business

- A. Change date of Grade 8 graduation  
*Due to a conflict with the awards night at The Woodstock Academy, we are asking the BOE to change the date of the Grade 8 graduation program to June 12 at 6:30 PM.*
- B. Change start time of June Board of Education Meeting:  
*To provide as much time as possible before the 6:30PM start of the Grade 8 graduation program, the BOE may want to consider beginning their meeting at 5:15PM.*
- C. Approval of the 2025-2027 IDEA Grants  
*We are in the process of submitting the 2025-27 Idea Grants. We are asking the BOE to approve acceptance of the grant dollars if funding is approved.*
- D. Policy 3524, Hazardous Materials in Schools
- E. Policy 3524.2, Green Cleaning
- F. Policy 4112, Increasing Educator Diversity Plan
- G. Policy 6159, Individualized Education Program/Special Education Program
- H. Policy 6159.1, Legal and Fiscal Responsibility for Children Placed in Certain Hospitals without Local Education Agency Prior Approval
- I. Policy 6160, Release Time  
*At its meeting on April 29, the Policy Committee recommended that the BOE repeal the policies listed in items D.-I. These policies are not required policies, and some may conflict with district established procedures, including those associated with the Special Education processes. Lauren Barlow, Policy chair, can provide you with additional information as needed.*
- J. Policy 4118.51/4228.51, Social Media, first reading
- K. Policy 4127/4227, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Personnel), first reading
- L. Policy 5140, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Students), first reading
- M. Policy 6158, Homework, first reading
- N. New Policy 1620, Green Cleaning Programs, first reading  
*At its meeting on April 29, the Policy Committee recommended that the BOE make a motion to accept for a first reading the most recent version of the Shipman & Goodwin model policies to replace the policies listed as items J.-N.. The Green Cleaning policy is being moved to the 1000 series and is replacing the 3000 Green Cleaning policies that are being repealed. Lauren Barlow, Policy chair, can provide you with additional information as needed.*
- O. Policy 5144, Administration of Student Medications in the School, first reading
- P. Policy 5125, Confidentiality and Access to Education Records, first reading

*At its meeting on April 29, the Policy Committee recommended that the BOE make a motion to update our current policies listed in items O.&P. in accordance with the most recent version of the Shipman & Goodwin model policies. The changes to the policies are minimal so the committee is recommending that the BOE accept these changes at this meeting.*

**Q. Discussion of the Before and After School Program**

*As noted in my previous report, Carole and I have been investigating other models for after school programming that may strengthen our program. I have reached out to other small districts and they either have outside providers or do not offer before or after school programs. We discussed our program needs with members of the Healthy Kids Program staff, the Hale YMCA Family and Youth Center in Putnam and the staff at Eastconn. Eastconn is currently unable to support a program at our site. Both of the other programs are able and interested in starting programs at our site. Carole and I have asked some follow-up questions from both organizations and will forward information as it is received. We believe either program would work well for us and provide the support our school administration and staff need to run these programs as effectively as possible, especially if we no longer receive after school grant funding which has allowed for the hiring of additional support staff. Based on a final review of the data requested we will be making a recommendation for moving forward.*

**Financial Reports**

*A.&B. If there are any questions regarding any items mentioned in the administrative reports and/or financial documents please, if possible, send your questions or concerns in advance of the meeting so we can be prepared to discuss.*

**C. Budget Transfers**

*At this time, we will be requesting the BOE to approve the following budget transfers. Please see my comments in the financial notes above for additional information.*

\$1400.00 from Salary, Custodial (100.2600.1.112.00.5) to Salary, Para, SE (100.1200.3.112.00.5)  
\$1000.00 from Salary, Custodial, OT (100.2600.1.112.01.5) to Salary, Para, SE (100.1200.3.112.00.5)  
\$5000.00 from Substitutes, Certified (100.1000.1.121.00.5) to Salary, Para, SE (100.1200.3.112.00.5)  
\$4700.00 from Stipend, Extra Duty (100.1000.1.121.02.5) to Salary, Para, SE (100.1200.3.112.00.5)  
\$1200.00 from Substitutes, Building Sub (100.1000.1.121.04.5) to Salary, Para, SE (100.1200.3.112.00.5)  
\$3000.00 from Substitutes, Certified, SE (100.1200.3.121.00.5) to Salary, Para, SE (100.1200.3.112.00.5)  
\$400.00 from Salary, Tutors (100.1200.3.121.01.5) to Salary, Para, SE (100.1200.3.112.00.5)  
\$900.00 from Substitutes, Custodial (100.2600.1.121.02.5) to Salary, Para, SE (100.1200.3.112.00.5)  
\$482.50 from Summer School, SE Teachers (100.1200.3.122.01.5) to Salary, Para, SE (100.1200.3.112.00.5)  
\$1100.00 from Summer School, SE Para (100.1200.3.122.02.5) to Salary, Para, SE (100.1200.3.112.00.5)

\$3000.00 from E/B Insurance, Reg (100.1000.1.210.00.5) to Purch Services, BOE Legal (100.2310.1.340.00.5)

\$3650.00 from E/B Insurance, Reg (100.1000.1.210.00.5) to Lawn/Grounds (100.2600.1.424.00.5)

\$49,800.00 from E/B Insurance, Reg (100.1000.1.210.00.5) to Building Repair (100.2600.1.431.00.5)

\$2090.00 from E/B Insurance, Reg (100.1000.1.210.00.5) to Equipment, Instructional, SE (100.1200.3.731.00.5)

\$28,400.00 from E/B Insurance, Reg (100.1000.1.210.00.5) to Equipment, Media (100.2220.1.731.00.5)

**Town Budget Meetings**

The Board of Selectmen have set the dates for the Town Budget meetings. The Budget Hearing meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 21, 2025 at 6:30 PM and the Annual Town meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 4, 2025 at 6:30 PM.