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**September 2019**  
**Superintendent Communications to BOE**

We have experienced many changes in staffing over the last few weeks just prior to school opening. With the addition of the new third grade teacher at CES, middle school teacher, Patrice Merendina, voluntarily transferred into that position. In turn, our 7th/ 8th grade reading teacher voluntarily transferred herself to the 5th/ 6th science position. That leaves us with an opening in the 7th/ 8th grade reading teaching position. We currently have a substitute in that position and we are looking for a long-term sub while we review the applicants for the full-time position. Mr. Ferranti is heading up that search committee.

**Interim Principal**

As you know, the BMS Principal resigned on August 16, just 10 days prior to Convocation and school opening. I immediately initiated a search for Interims and interviewed candidates; the BOE chair sat in on some of the interviews. I appointed Mr. Neil Rinaldi as Interim Principal at BMS and he started on Friday August 23. On August 22, I sent an email to the entire BOE informing all of this decision to move forward with him. In my opinion, this was an emergency situation and following Policy # 2210

***Administrative Leeway in Absence of Board of Education Policy***

*In cases where emergency action must be taken within the school system and where the Board of Education has provided no guidelines for administrative action, the Superintendent shall have the power to act.*

*It shall be the duty of the Superintendent to inform the Board of Education promptly of such action and of the need for possible additional policies, or revision of existing policies, and the Superintendent's decisions shall be subject to review by the Board of Education at its next regular meeting. (Policy adopted: April 26, 2005)*

I suggest that the BOE review this Interim situation and provide guidance on next steps at the BOE meeting on September 10.

### **School Opening**

Convocation was a great success on August 27 as staff came together after summer break and we celebrated our successes and set the stage for the coming school year. We completed an exercise in defining what our *Vision of the Learner* looks like in Canterbury as a continuation of the strategic planning process set in motion over the summer months.

### **Open House**

Open house was another great success starting at CES at 3:30 with the younger grades and continuing on with grades one through four. As tradition has it, Ms. Cary rode the school bus with the incoming crowd of kindergarteners, well over 30 students, on the practice bus ride, as proud parents looked on. There was a great turnout at both schools. Mr. Rinaldi was able to welcome many students and parents at 5 pm in the BMS gym and students and parents were able to continue visiting teachers 6 p.m. that night. Open house is always a great time to have an informal conversation and build connections with students and families prior to school opening.

### **Buses**

As indicated at the last Board of Ed. meeting, the Board of a chair, another BOE member, and myself did attend a CIP meeting regarding the CIP funds that are set aside for purchasing buses. The question is still on the table whether the town will allow the funds set aside in the CIP to be used for the lease of buses rather than the purchase of buses. As an FYI there is currently three years of funding requests ( \$100,000 per year) in the CIP budget set aside to purchase buses over the next three years. The current funds in the CIP accumulated balance, **\$94,854** will cover the lease of three new buses under the current RFP that was opened on August 26th. The bus RFP was opened on August 26th and that information was sent to Ms. Duvall for review. I encourage the Board of Ed. to have a deep conversation regarding the purchase of new buses. Attached you will find photographs of our current buses. As the first selectman and the Board of Finance chair would like more information regarding the need to purchase buses, I urge you to look at the Excel spreadsheet attached with the bus mileage, see the email that our bus mechanic has sent, and review the pictures of the rust on many of our current buses. As your superintendent, I am urging you to purchase three new

school buses following the lease purchase offer in the current RFP. While I realize only one company responded to the RFP, I did communicate with multiple companies urging them to submit a proposal. The one company that did submit a proposal is the company that we have purchased buses from in the past. And their proposal is right in line with what buses would normally cost. Again I urge you to take action on this as it has been an ongoing issue for many months. As an FYI, it takes approximately 90 days from the date a signed contract is initiated to receive the new buses. As the Board of Ed. made a firm decision last year to move forward with your current bus driving staff and not to contract out with another company, it is imperative that you purchase new buses.

### **Strategic Visioning**

I hope you enjoyed attending and participating in the most recent feedback sessions regarding our *Vision of the Learner*. A few other Feedback sessions will be held with other groups of stakeholders. Then all of this information will be compiled into the top skills and qualifications stakeholders feel are necessary for our graduates. Next steps will be taken regarding these skills. They will be defined and a process for assessing achievement of these skills will be put in place. In the meantime we will continue to work on the *Strategic Plan*. We hope to bring a draft of the *Strategic Plan* to the Board of Ed. in January.

### **Comprehensive Residency Compliance**

The residency compliance check is going very well. I will inform the board of any issues along the way.