



## Spencer East Brookfield Regional School District

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Superintendent of Schools: N. Tracy Crowe, Ed.D.

### Superintendent Report to School Committee

October 11, 2016

September is behind us and, as we enter the beautiful fall foliage season of thanks in New England, I would like to once again begin with gratitude for the extraordinary efforts put forth by so many to make this year's start to the school year a resounding success. I take pride in knowing that each school is celebrating success in so many different ways...there are so many *pockets of excellence* that are now being shared across the District and well beyond our two towns.

Tonight my report contains information that highlights these *pockets of excellence* from the collaborative efforts that made the Open House and Staff Showdown so successful, to assessment results, to the technology rollout, to teacher-driven PD, to new ventures with Spencer Cable Access, and to the many activities that are providing our students and staff with reasons to have Prouty Pride and a renewed spirit of enthusiasm for the future of this District.

This past month has been both busy and productive with Open House and other celebrations, extensive PD trainings, the AP kickoff, the DA's Town Hall Forum and Safe School Summit, the Staff Showdown, a Task Force Launch, tech rollouts, various school activities and meetings.

#### **SEPTEMBER 10- Spencer Cable Access Open House**

On September 10<sup>th</sup>, the HS parking lot was full of people for the Spencer Cable Access Open House/Community Food Drive combined with 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration for David Prouty HS. In addition to the Food Drive and live SCA broadcast, there were musical presentations by the HS Chorus, HS Band, and the Boston Piano Kid. (Unfortunately, Mr. Suter's musical presentation was rained out at the last minute.) The Prouty National Honor Society and Student Council provided guests with tours of the HS.

The Athletic Boosters, Spencer Public Library, PBIS, Coaches and Athletes, and a "*Prouty History*" table provided the community with information; there were demonstrations of plant arranging by Bemis Nurseries, SMARTboards by Innovation Teacher Pete Bogren, and a hands-on workshop on robots and drones by Integration Specialist Chris Gniadek and KT Robotics Club Advisor Casey Suter.

*(attachment #1)*

### **SEPTEMBER 14- Town Hall Forum on Opioid Crisis**

Chief Darrin, HS Principal Elizabeth York and I hosted a public event at the HS on Wednesday September 14<sup>th</sup> for addressing the opioid issue. The forum included District Attorney Joseph Early, Senator Anne Gobi, Rep. Donny Berthiaume, fire and police, a local judge, community resources and the Sheriff's Office.

It was well-attended and provided participants with an opportunity to share experiences, expertise, and ideas for addressing the problem. This opioid epidemic will continue to be a focus of work for our communities due to its impact on families, our schools and our towns. We all have a vested interest in working together to address the issue honestly and openly if we are to influence the safety of our communities and the health and welfare of our citizens.

### **SEPTEMBER 15- First Annual Districtwide Staff Showdown**

The challenge was thrown down by EB Elementary School for the entire district to try to win the Bowling/Mini-golf/Trivia Challenge on September 15. Over 60 participants golfed, bowled and answered trivia questions for 3 hours of fun and comradery at Bogey Lanes in East Brookfield. And at the end of the festivities, Knox Trail's Team was victorious!! Thanks again for EB's challenge to provide staff with a fun activity that brought so many together in a spirited team endeavor....watch out next year Knox Trail...because EB intends to redeem its honor!

### **SEPTEMBER 29- District Attorney's Safe Schools Summit**

On September 29<sup>th</sup> HS Principal Liz York and I attended an event hosted by DA Joe Early at Worcester Technical HS. The topics covered were commercial sexual exploitation of children and understanding its victims relative to gang activity, the internet and recruitment. It was sobering to say the least and reinforced the notion of how important relationships are in the prevention of this type of exploitation.

### **Tech Update**

Chromebook rollout has been completed and there are now charging and storage carts in each of our four school buildings. Students now have access to gmail accounts for schoolwork and the Chromebooks will be used in regular instruction and assessment so that students will be prepared to use the devices for standardized testing in the spring.

At this point, in only 3 short months, over 75 teachers have attended SMARTboard training and now have access to the technology. Additional trainings are being provided in the coming weeks and months due to the high demand for their use and based upon my observations during school visits in September and October, students are already reaping the incredible benefits of this interactive technology.

### **OCTOBER 6- Retention Task Force**

I met with 9 people on Thursday, October 6 to discuss ways in which we can ensure that district students and high quality staff are being retained. It was a very productive meeting in which we discussed communication, PR, and ways in which we can encourage pride in all our schools and our communities. A byproduct of the meeting was to foster "Prouty Pride" for Homecoming weekend by inviting everyone- students, parents and community- to the Homecoming Game on Friday October 14<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm. As the premier school of the District, Prouty should be able to boast huge community support for its events. That is why the Task Force felt it was important to get everyone to support the HS and come out for this year's Homecoming. District staff are invited to a "pre-game huddle" after which we will march up to the field for the big event. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend!

*(attachments #2 and #3)*

### **OCTOBER 7- Student Reps**

I had my monthly meeting with the HS student representatives last Friday. We discussed many topics including tech updates, building improvements, the process for filling a SC vacancy, next year's schedule, AP scores, senior stairs and other activities, graduation, and national college signing day on April 26<sup>th</sup>.

### **Massachusetts School Building Authority(MSBA)**

Recently, Mr. Suter and I did a telephone conference with MSBA and learned that they have assigned STV Associates to conduct assessments of Prouty, Knox Trail and Wire Village. We have been asked to complete questionnaires for each building relative to facilities, usage, maintenance and technology in preparation for the onsite visits. Building principals, Mr. Suter, Mr. Karlstad and I will be present during the visits which will be led by building administration and staff. We will give a report to the Committee as soon as we hear back from MSBA after the onsite meetings.

### **Ongoing Professional Development**

On October 3<sup>rd</sup>, teachers attended various professional development sessions across the District including Empowering Writers, Mimeo Interactive classroom technology, Google Classroom, NEASC preparation and SMARTboard trainings. That same afternoon, the PD Committee met to discuss training opportunities for the 2016-2017 school year. The Committee reviewed the PD goals, state PD standards, logistics and forms for this year's teacher-driven PD that will occur from now until next May. All SEBRSD staff received (via email) the Request for Proposals which can be submitted by any licensed educator in the District by the deadline of October 21<sup>st</sup>. The proposals will then be vetted by the PD Committee for my office's final approval. Once the offerings are finalized, the PD Committee will produce a brochure for distribution to all staff. Staff will then register for their choices.

The typical course will be worth 10 PDPs (6 hours of instruction and 4 hours for a project), offered after school and offered free of charge. All PD offerings will be evaluated by participants to gather feedback for future offerings. We firmly believe that our teachers have incredible expertise that they are willing to share with their colleagues and we are excited about the possibilities that this approach has for the future of professional development in the District. *(attachments #4, #5, and #6)*

Gratitude for their work on this year's PD Committee goes to:

Knox Trail	Beth Johnson and Pete Bogren
Prouty HS	Liz York
East Brookfield	Chrissy Lavin, Melanie Ethier, Vicky Zaring and Meaghan Pope
Wire Village	Patti Murphy and Suzanne Vashugin
District	Chris Gniadek

In other PD news, our District Innovation Teachers have been invited to attend the annual conference at Gillette in Foxborough on October 19 & 20. The MassCUE and M.A.S.S. Annual Technology Conference is co-sponsored by the Massachusetts Computer Using Educators (MassCUE) and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (M.A.S.S.). Both organizations promote collaborative partnerships that focus on the collective interests of school districts and the conference is intended to provide educators from across the Commonwealth and New England with exciting ways to enhance teaching and learning with technology. Upon their return, our Innovation Teachers will share at future faculty meetings what they experienced at this important conference.

Teachers21, a highly respected Massachusetts-based educational consulting organization, will be working with schools on District PD half days from November through February. The focus of their work will be on Growth Mindset and Student Engagement, the general theme for our District PD this year.

**Advanced Placement (AP)**

I am proud to announce that SEBRSD is making progress in academic achievement and tonight I have invited a Director from Mass Insight Education to report on the encouraging progress we have made in the past year. The annual AP kickoff was held on September 27 for a full student assembly at Prouty HS. Mr. John Smolenski, Senior Field Director for Mass Insight Education the group that manages the Massachusetts Math & Science Initiative (MMSI) Grant, presented exciting news about our District's results on Advanced Placement and scores; he is here with us tonight to present the news publicly detailing our progress toward the goal of developing college-ready graduates.

*(Introduction of Mr. Smolenski)*

Respectfully Submitted,

N. Tracy Crowe, Ed.D.