Date: (TBD in April)
To: (School Committee)
From: (Superintendent)
Re: Special Education Planning Committee

The Special Education Planning Committee, which was initiated last year following a recommendation from the Evaluation of Special Education Programs by Walker Partnerships, has met three times this year to date. This committee has maintained consistent membership from the 2016-2017 school year and has continued the strategic planning process related to the two identified areas of shared interest: (a) the development of more effective supports for students with social/emotional learning (SEL) needs and (b) the refinement of the transition planning process to ensure a positive experience for students and families that is supported by effective and efficient decision making regarding program resources. The committee of the whole has divided into two working subcommittees that have developed specific activities related to long-term and short-term goals in each area, which are identified below:

Social/Emotional Learning Supports
Long Term Vision
• To develop a shared understanding of social/emotional terminology and supports in order to align curriculum and services across all districts.
• To ensure effective collaboration among all districts related to special education programming for students with social-emotional/behavioral health needs in order to ensure a continuum of services.

Short Term Goal to be completed this year
• To share and analyze information concerning programming for students with social/emotional needs in order to make recommendations to support continued collaboration and alignment of programs among districts.

Transition Planning
Long Term Vision
• To develop a clear process for sharing information that works for all parties and supports a strong understanding of needs, programs and models among staff, administration and families.
• To develop opportunities for relationship building and shared dialog among staff in all districts to support curricular and programmatic continuity for students.

Short Term Goal to be completed this year
• To develop a clear system for collaborating and sharing information concerning student needs in order to plan for the programmatic and financial impact of students transitioning to the secondary level and to develop a process to determine the effectiveness of the planning activities.

In order to support each of the identified short-term goals, the subcommittees have met independently and have recently reported on their progress at our meeting on March 19th. A summary of the work of each subcommittee follows.

SEL Programming Subcommittee
Work to date
• The subcommittee has gathered and reviewed information from all four districts regarding the current social emotional supports and programming for general education and special education students.
By April
- The SEL subcommittee will develop a consistent reporting format, compile information in a synthesis report and share this information with the individual districts.

By May
- Each district will review the synthesis report and identify areas of commonality and gaps in programming.
- The SEL subcommittee will review the district-level analyses and summarize the identified areas of commonality and gaps.
- The SEL subcommittee will develop recommendations for specific activities for the 2018-2019 school year and present these recommendations to the committee of the whole in June.
- The special education administrators and/or their designees will identify and share specific information regarding specialized programming for students with SEL disabilities, including entrance and exit criteria, the typical profile of a student receiving services, and the numbers of students in each program.

Transition Planning Subcommittee
Work to date
- The special education administrators have met to review the template currently used to share relevant 6th to 7th grade transition information for planning purposes and the current process for sharing student specific information between 6th and 7th grade liaisons.

By May
- The special education administrators and/or their designees will refine the current transition planning document and develop a final template.
- The special education administrators and/or their designees will develop a single protocol for sharing student specific information to be used by all 6th grade liaisons who are sending information to the 7th grade liaisons at the King Philip Middle School.
- The special education administrators and/or their designees will develop a preliminary plan for professional development related to the transition process to be implemented in a fall professional development day.

By August
- The information technology specialists from each district will collaborate to develop a shared information-gathering instrument based upon the final template. This instrument will be accessible by all districts, allow for updating in real time and protect the confidentiality of students.
- The special education administrators will finalize the plan to provide professional development and information sharing regarding the transition process for all relevant stakeholders, including teachers, service providers and liaisons. The goal of this professional development will be to increase general awareness among all stakeholders about instructional practices and programs at the 6th and 7th grade level and to gather feedback about the effectiveness of the current transition process.

At the final meeting in June, the committee of the whole will review the work of both subcommittees, develop short-term goals for the 2018-2019 school year and make recommendations for specific activities to be completed during the upcoming year in order to meet those goals.