

A comment from the Superintendent on the proposal to consolidate school district administrations.

I have been receiving a number of questions about the School Administration Consolidation proposal. I wanted to share my thoughts as we all consider this important issue.

The report of the Sudbury Budget Review Task Force (BRTF) has brought forward several compelling ideas to reduce costs, reallocate existing resources and generate new revenues for the Sudbury community. While the Sudbury School Committee and administration has read each recommendation, the one getting the most attention at this time is the proposal to consolidate the district-level administration and operations of the school districts.

It is my belief that this is an idea that merits dedicating time and resources to considering. There have been attestations that this concept can save between \$800,000 and \$1million. I reviewed the recommendation and have some concerns that this is overstated. I also believe there was only cursory attention given to resulting service levels and the work requirements of the current and proposed staffing levels. Finally, it seems unclear whether any savings would be to reduce the cost of doing business or would be redistributed to providing more teachers and service to the classroom. This latter option of more teachers, less administration may seem appealing in direct service to students, but it does not lower spending, nor addresses the ongoing structural deficit.

This being said, it seems that the decision of the Board of Selectmen to appoint an eleven member working group of involved, smart, well-intended citizens, members of the BRTF, and representatives of various boards of Sudbury and Lincoln is exactly the next step in moving this conversation forward. School administrators, including superintendents, are not members but will serve as a resource to the committee when requested. This group will look at the costs, the benefits, the implications and the consequences involved and make a recommendation of what, if any, consolidation will occur. There is an expected deadline for a report of their efforts which should move their work forward in a timely fashion.

I believe there may be educational and operational benefits that would derive from a more "K-12" approach. Can two separate districts like L-S and SPS share a central administration? Certainly, there are a number of models in the state and region. But like any proposal, the devil is in the details and the factors involved are quite complex and interrelated. That's why the working group provides the best avenue to a careful, thorough assessment of the financial, operational, and educational implications of such a proposal.

From the perspective of one who is committed to improving student learning and providing a quality education and educational opportunities for our students, if this is the outcome of a consolidation proposal, even if there are no savings, then we should all be supporting it.

