

Board of Education Meeting 10/4/16

During the Board of Education's October 4, 2016 meeting, the Board focused on the first annual update to the District Improvement Plan. The highlights for elementary school:

- Starting this year, Spanish instruction begins in Grade 3 rather than Grade 4. The town plans to expand Spanish instruction to kindergarten through Grade 2 students in the 2017-2018 school year.
- The Social Studies and Computer Literacy curricula have been revised; the new Social Studies curriculum will be implemented in 2017-2018 and the new Computer Literacy curriculum will be implemented this year.
- A review of the K-12 science curriculum is underway.
- The Plan includes provisions to improve the transition from elementary to middle school, and from middle to high school. To that end, the fifth and sixth grade teachers will be doing Instructional Rounds - the fifth grade teachers in the sixth grade classrooms, and the sixth grade teachers in the fifth grade classrooms - so that both sets of teachers understand how the expectations and standards change when students move from fifth to sixth grade. The middle schools are also reaching out to sixth grade students and parents to see what is working and what needs to be improved.

Although it was not discussed at the meeting, the update notes that the town is still exploring elementary redistricting options this year, both to reduce the cost of the Holland Hill and Mill Hill renovations and to design a Racial Imbalance Plan that complies with state requirements. A presentation on the Racial Imbalance Plan is tentatively scheduled for the next Board of Education meeting, which will be held on October 18th. We will continue to follow this issue closely.

For parents with children who are not yet in kindergarten, the town is considering changing its entry age rules to be consistent with a new state statute. Under both the new and old policies, children who turn five on or before December 31st of the calendar year may enter kindergarten, or

may be held out at the discretion of the parent/guardian. The new policy would change two aspects of the rule. First, under the old policy, children who turned five in January or February of the following calendar year were allowed to enter kindergarten at age four if they demonstrated “superior readiness,” but the new policy would only allow children who are five on or before December 31st. Second, under the new policy, all children would be required to be enrolled in school by the date the child turns seven.