

SCHOOL UNION 76

BROOKLIN – DEER ISLE-STONINGTON CSD – SEDGWICK

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“It takes a whole community to educate a child.”

Superintendent’s Memo

To: Town of Brooklin
From: Christian M. Elkington
Re: Superintendent’s Town Report
Date: 2-2-17

It is my pleasure to be sharing my first Superintendent’s Report with you the citizens of Brooklin. I started as your interim superintendent this past May, taking over fulltime on July 1st. Having now been on the job for 9 months I can tell you that I have come to appreciate the positive efforts of our students, the dedication of our staff and the concern that our parents, guardians and community members have for education in Brooklin. I have had the pleasure of speaking with many, collecting feedback, learning concerns and just getting a feel for our school and community. Thanks for your willingness to share your thoughts and ideas with me.

As you know, “Leadership” from the Superintendent’s Office in Union 76 was under a cloud the previous two years. I agreed to take on the position of superintendent knowing full-well that budgeting, communication, system support and oversight of the Brooklin School, its students and staff were being questioned. During this past summer it became crystal clear to me that these concerns were driving a wedge into whether or not the Town of Brooklin would continue within Union 76.

In an effort to start to rebuild trust in both the Union 76 Superintendent’s Office and in the superintendent I have taken multiple steps to put our house in order. The following are a few of these efforts:

- **State Reporting expectations** have more clearly defined checks & balances at the Union and school level.
- **New Fiscal Controls**, procedures and systems have been developed internally, including new monthly budget reporting and cross training protocols. Replacement of old computer equipment along with new software is allowing for the streamlining of some procedures.
- **Developing coordinated, student interventions** is now a top priority as we must develop a more systemic plan, Union-wide so that teachers and schools within U76 can better support each other and thus better support our students!
- **Professional Development and staff training** is another top priority so that we support school and Union 76 initiatives with the new Teacher Evaluation System (TEPG), Response To Intervention (RTI), and Literacy (starting in grades pre-k – 2). We are now doing much of this work together so we can combine our resources, expertise and cut costs.

I have joked with people that my #1 goal in Union 76 this year is to re-establish the letters “T” and “R” in the word “trust” with our boards, schools and communities. In order to start this process, I must develop lines of communication by being available and present in our schools. I have had multiple meetings with staff, parents & guardians and will of course continue these. I regularly visit classrooms at the Brooklin School, attend Selectmen Meetings as needed or requested and will be unveiling a Union 76 web page, which we hope will become a source of information for all. Much has been started, with still much more to do!

The Brooklin School and the community of Brooklin did not let the concerns mentioned stop you from continuing your support of our school and most importantly our students! Your steady and continuous budget support certainly demonstrates the commitment to education in Brooklin. It is my hope that with transparency, communication and planning the Union 76 Office will be the support to the Brooklin School, which you expect and it deserves!

Over the last three years, our school, staff and board have been able to keep expenses down thereby increasing our unassigned funds balance. We have used more of this balance each of the last three years, in what is called balance-forward, to offset potential tax increases. The current school year budget in fact used \$200,000 the largest amount we have ever used as balance-forward. In part this allowed us to start some major renovations to the outside of our building, which were needed, along with again reducing potential tax increases. For the 17-18 Budget we will only be able to use \$123,712 in carry-forward as multiple expenses will not allow us to have added savings this year. Understanding that a reduction in balance-forward funding will have a major effect on taxes the school board and I looked at multiple ways to reduce this year’s budget, while still supporting student learning and growth at our school. The 17-18 Brooklin School Budget has an overall decrease of .9%. Even with the decrease in our spending the potential tax increase presented to you will be 2.2%, caused by the reduction in balance-forward mentioned previously. The school board and I will continue to look at our future instructional and programming needs so as to balance school and town needs.

In closing let me thank the staff of the Brooklin School and their principal Ms. Nawrot for their positive efforts in support of our students, parents & guardians. Our many, wonderful young people are well supported at the Brooklin School!