

Fairhaven Public Schools
Annual Report 2016

This year's report begins by providing highlights of the accomplishments that have taken place throughout the 2016 school year in the Fairhaven Public Schools. It is followed by district reset that has taken place due to the transition in District and School Leadership. A synopsis of the key activities that occurred in the area of Student Services is presented. An update of the activities that took place in the area of Facilities and Maintenance and the transition in leadership that was cause for a re-structuring plan conclude the report.

A plan for district improvement instituted a decade ago has transformed our culture where stakeholders from all avenues are choosing Fairhaven. The district is able to secure the talents of bold administrators who are making extraordinary differences in the buildings and programs that they lead. The best and brightest in new faculty and staff have chosen to teach in Fairhaven. Most importantly, parents of school aged children and future school aged children have openly stated that they have chosen to live Fairhaven due in large part to the school system.

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) presented a Showcase of Model School Programs on Thursday, October 13, 2016 at Westford Regency Hotel, Westford. Tracy Higgins, Paula Jardin, and Andy Kulak, were selected to present at the NEASC Model Schools presentation. Their presentation that highlighted Fairhaven High School was titled, The Road to a High School Humanities Professional Learning Community.

Christine Neville was chosen recipient of the Secondary Art Educator of the Year Award for 2016. Her passion and dedication to the arts and creative learning make a powerful impact on our community. She was honored at the Annual MAEA Conference on Saturday, November 12 at 5:00 pm at an Awards ceremony.

To epitomize our culture in a two-minute video production, please go to Youtube.com and search for [Fairhaven High School: Excellence](#). This video was published on January 15, 2016. The Fairhaven High School Media Production class produced it. It was written and produced by Acushnet resident and Class of 2016 Fairhaven High School graduate Bethany Fernandes.

A record total of students have been inducted into the National Honor Society at Fairhaven High School. We have increased student participation, while increasing student achievement results in the prestigious Advanced Placement Program. We have received national recognition from the College Board. Recently, Fairhaven High was shortlisted for inclusion in Newsweek's ranking of America's Best High Schools. Fairhaven High School continues to be named a Level One School now for three consecutive years!

The high school band has grown from 18 students in 2003 to 54 students this year. In the past our district had 8 string students enrolled in its string program. The program was re-established in 2002 with lessons starting in the 4th grade. Today there are 210 string students in the Fairhaven Public Schools. This has allowed a total of 67 students to be enrolled in the Fairhaven High School Orchestra.

For the past 10 years, the high school band, orchestra, concert choir and jazz band have competed at the national level. Overall, the total number of students enrolled in band in the district is now 213. The total number of students enrolled in strings is 210, and the total number of students enrolled in chorus at the secondary level (6 – 12) is 121. The average school district in Massachusetts has less than 10% of their high school students involved in music. Roughly 25% of the student population at Fairhaven High School is involved in these performing groups.

We expanded opportunities in drama. In the fall of 2012, the Fairhaven High School Drama Club put on its first fall play, Rumors. Since then, this has become the norm, as we have two productions per year at the high school level. There were 63 students involved with the play and the musical "South Pacific" ranging from actors to students behind the scenes. We recently

shifted our student activities appropriation to fund a drama production so that we could grow the program at the middle school level.

In the past four years there are 200 more student athletes participating in sports at FHS. This past year 367 student athletes (52%) participated in high school athletics. During the past four years (25) banners have been added to the gymnasium walls. Girls volleyball continues to dominate. Cheerleaders own the State and are National Champions!

Fairhaven High School was nominated for three NATIONAL High School Emmy Awards!!! Bethany Fernandes, Amelia Ostiguy, and Erick Sa were nominated for their music video "White Teeth Teens," Bethany was also nominated for her writing of "Excellence," and her video essay "Close to 190,000"." The awards were announced on October 4, 2016 at the Newseum in Washington, DC. Fairhaven was the winner of its first ever, National Emmy Award!

The combined efforts of Graphic Design and Media Production have joined the Media League. This is a national competition designed for the digital arts. Each month there is a different "game" or challenge. Fairhaven has 24 varsity members; thirteen from Media Production and 11 from Digital Arts.

In CAD, Fairhaven now is an authorized testing site through Certiport. This has allowed our students with the opportunity to take and pass the certification exams for Autodesk Inventor (our CAD program) as well as the Adobe Certified Associate and the Microsoft Certification. Many students have not only been certified because of this course, they have learned that the colleges and schools they will be attending after high school have already waived certain coursework because of the knowledge and skills attained through the Computer Aided Design competencies learned at Fairhaven High School.

Fairhaven High School graduates are absolutely prepared for institutions for higher learning and are graduating from colleges and universities cum laude, summa cum laude, and as valedictorians. One clear example of this is a 2015 graduate, was able to secure a part time directing/production job at WLNE Channel 6, based from his training and experience at Fairhaven High School! He was only in his first year at Bridgewater State College, and is now working in the industry. It's to be noted that most media employers do not hire college students, never mind a college freshman!

There is a clear correlation between strong academic programming, co-curricular opportunities and the decisions parents and students make when deciding on their high school education. Because of this level of academic excellence many more students are choosing Fairhaven High School as their high school than ever before. Acushnet students attending Fairhaven High School is one indicator that clearly substantiates that something special is happening at Fairhaven High School.

In 2010, the total number of Acushnet students attending Fairhaven High School was 101 students. In 2016, the total number of Acushnet Students attending Fairhaven High School is 236 students. Over the past four years, the number of Acushnet students attending Fairhaven High School has doubled. We can proudly state that Fairhaven High School is Acushnet's High School. We also know that there is a clear and distinct reason why parents and students are Choosing Fairhaven!

Because of the opportunities that our students are provided and because of the talents of our adults in getting the most out of those talents, the Class of 2013 collectively received over \$2,598,580.00 in scholarship money for higher education. This marked the first time this scholarship money for higher education has ever exceeded \$2,000,000.00. The Class of 2014 received \$2,029,352.00. The Class of 2015 surpassed \$3,000,000.00 in earned scholarships. The new normal is now consistently above 2.5 million dollars on an annual basis. To the students and their families who had the cost of higher education defrayed, their Fairhaven education was an investment with significant returns.

The average single family house value has increased from \$246,911 in fiscal year 2015 to \$259,500 in fiscal year 2016, Home values are on the rise, assessors told selectmen. The value of

single-family homes increased by 3.2 percent, while two- and three-family home values grew by 3 percent and multi-families by 2.5 percent.

Entering the FY 2006 budget process the town projected the Acushnet Tuition at \$500,000.00. It has been our adage that if we produced the quality educational system that our children deserve that staff, parents, and students would choose Fairhaven. In December of 2016, the town of Fairhaven received its first payment for Acushnet Tuition for FY 16 of \$839,835.08. There will be two more payments made in March and June. This should conservatively project out to a rounded off figure of \$2,500,000.00 for FY 2017.

School revenue is now the largest producer of revenue in Local Receipts portion of the Town budget. In the General Fund History and Projections report to the Town of Fairhaven, Melanson, Heath & Company P.C. state that, "the large surplus in actual over budgeted revenue over the past few years has played a significant role in the Town of Fairhaven's surplus revenue. This surplus revenue provided the Town the opportunity to balance the budget using free cash."

DISTRICT AND SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Our plan for district improvement places the people, structures, and systems in position to support the mission and core values of the district. The procedures to implement this plan for district improvement are not, one policy, system, or program for one core value or goal. Many, if not all programs are dependent upon the other.

The coordination between and among each system is the responsibility of district and school leadership. District and School Leadership includes the School Committee, the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, the Office of Student Services, and the building principals. They purposefully prioritize our people and culture. We strive to continually improve the climate, conditions, and culture of the Fairhaven Public School District.

The Office of the Superintendent of Schools and the Administrative Council work in concert with each other regarding the categories set forth in this document. This team of leaders is responsible for the collective and complete operation of the district and the schools.

Throughout the past decade we have transformed our Leadership, governance and communication that was rated "very poor" in a past DESE audit to a highly effective district and school leadership team that sustains the priorities, drive, and mindset of the district. Whereas, continuity and consistency matter, through June 2016, the median tenure of district and school administrators in the Fairhaven Public Schools is seven years.

This past year, a number of transitions took place in district and school leadership. Mr. Wayne Miller retired from his position as the Hastings Middle School Principal. Dr. Nicholas Bettencourt began his tenure as the Hastings Middle School building principal in July 2016. Dr. Bettencourt has served in a leadership capacity in the Fall River Public Schools since 2010. His professional experience shows clear evidence that he is a strong instructional leader. He served as the English Language Arts Department Chair where he coordinated the development and implementation of the district K – 12 ELA curriculum, provided in-service training, and assigning of staff, based on the needs identified in the district and school improvement plans, and assisted teachers in resolving instructional problems. Beginning in 2013, he served as the 6-12 Pre-AP Vertical Team Leader in the area of ELA, the district facilitator for Professional Development Critical Friends Group (CFG), and has served as the ELA representative for Collaboratory for Adolescent Literacy Leadership at Brown University. Most recently, he was the building principal of the Tansey Elementary School in the Fall River Public Schools, where he has moved the school's accountability status from a level three to a level two.

He is all about his students and has a proven track record of resetting multiple cultures toward that focus. He is completely data driven and is able to focus a faculty's efforts on results. He models lessons for teachers and he is able to model interventions as well. He currently is an instructor of Rethinking Equity for Teaching English Language Learners (RETELL).

Also this year, Mrs. Wendy Williams accepted a position in another district. Wendy Weidenfeller began her tenure as the building principal of the East Fairhaven School on July 1, 2016. Ms. Weidenfeller has served as a building principal in the New Bedford Public Schools since 2012. Previously she served as an assistant principal at the James M. Quinn School in Dartmouth, Massachusetts. Her professional experience shows clear evidence that she is a strong builder of school culture.

Colleagues describe Ms. Weidenfeller as having a great temperament that allows her to work well with others. She believes that all students can learn at the highest levels given that we as educators create the conditions to maximize the learning environment. She has the ability to motivate both seasoned and new teachers to work toward the common goal of educating each child. Others consistently describe her as fair, consistent and committed to improving student learning. She is currently involved with the implementation of the Reading Program “Reading Street,” which is the reading program that our elementary schools utilize. Another reference describes her as a master of data analysis. She has a reputation as a tireless advocate for the needs of her school community.

STUDENT SERVICES

Pursuant to the 2014 – 2015 District Improvement Plan, we conducted a self-assessment to identify the continuum of student services that are provided to meet each student’s academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs, including students with disabilities and English language learners (DIP Goal #5).

This self-assessment and subsequent re-structuring left specific roles and responsibilities with the position of the Director of Special Needs. As a result, during the FY 2017 budget process, the re-structuring of the Director of Special Needs position was addressed. The entire plan was funded and the system and structure of the Office of Student Services is in its initial year of full implementation. The following key actions being utilized in the full implementation of the Office of Student Services.

- Appoint a Director of Student Services to oversee all student support resources for learning.
- Combine the positions of Director of Special Education and Early Childhood Coordinator.
- Eliminate the Assistant Principal for Student Services (6-12) position and restructure it to be a district-wide Assistant Director of Student Services position.
- Provide one additional School Psychologist/Team Chairperson

In 2016, Mr. David Kenney accepted a position in another district. Diane Sullivan was appointed as the Director of Student Services for the Fairhaven Public Schools. She began this role in the spring of 2016. Mrs. Sullivan has served in a leadership capacity in the New Bedford Public Schools since 2011. Her professional experience shows clear evidence that she is a strong advocate for all children. She served as the Diagnostic Classroom Teacher/Psychometrist at R.E.A.D.S. Collaborative. She was the Director of Children’s Services for PACE Head Start prior to her assignment in the New Bedford Public Schools. In New Bedford, she was the Supervisor of Early Childhood Special Education.

Mrs. Sullivan is an educator with a tremendous amount of dedication, integrity, energy, and exuberance. She has a proven track record as a first-class professional that always puts children first. Colleagues state that she is a skilled professional who has demonstrated the ability to work with a variety of student and adult populations, as a teacher, mentor, administrator and collaborator. She has worked with staff and offered feedback and intervention necessary to raise academic proficiency of students. She has a wealth of knowledge regarding developmentally appropriate practice, curriculum, assessment, and services to children with disabilities.

FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE

Our system of Facilities and Maintenance ensures that facilities are clean, safe, well-lit, well-maintained, and conducive to promoting student learning and achievement. The following projects took place during the 2016 school year.

- Fairhaven High School Building Conditions Report submitted to the Fairhaven Capital Planning Committee
- HMS Drop Ceiling and Lighting Project
- Completion of HMS Flooring Project
- Inside Security Cameras
- Kitchen Serving Line
- Power in Classrooms for New Projectors/HDMI Cable
- MSBA Roofing Project Approved and Completed
- FHS Window Project
- Painting of the FHS Flag Pole
- FHS Hot Water Tank Project
- FHS Gym Locker Room Floor
- FHS Clock Tower
- FHS Kitchen Equipment
- FHS Water Cooler Plumbing/Masonry
- FHS Gym Floors November
- Tripp School Lease

In 2016, the following transition occurred at the Job C. Tripp School located at 56 Bridge Street. The Superintendent of Schools received an e-mail entitled “move notification.” as an official notification of the Nemasket Group’s intent to relocate effective September 30, 2016. While tenants of 56 Bridge Street for over thirty years, they have always worked with the Fairhaven Public School District as partners. Their encouragement of use of the building by other town entities has always been in the best interest of the school-community along with the values and principles of their organization. Their organization has served as a noble steward of the “Job C. Tripp School.” The improvements and renovations that they have completed as tenants has benefited the Town of Fairhaven by restoring, maintaining, and bringing educational life to the former Tripp School.

As we received the information of The Nemasket Group’s relocation, it was cause for our district to move forward and take immediate action to assess the potential future of 56 Bridge Street. Our district immediately elicited the services of structural engineers to determine the present and future structural potential and capacity of the premises.

In 2016, the Fairhaven Public Schools found a matching tenant in the Southeastern Massachusetts Educational Collaborative (SMEC). SMEC is a regional cooperative of eight member school districts including the Fairhaven Public Schools. SMEC is considered a public educational agency, a political subdivision and a legal extension of each of the member districts. A Board of Directors made up of one appointed member from each of the member school committees, including Fairhaven, governs the Collaborative. SMEC operates special education programs and services pursuant to MGL Chapter 71 and Chapter 766 at the behest of its member school committees. Each district is responsible to fund the services that it receives from the Educational Collaborative including all direct and indirect costs associated with operating and providing said services. The transition has been seamless.

Currently, the Superintendent of Schools is a sitting member of the Town of Fairhaven Capital Planning Committee. The Fairhaven Public Schools has formally submitted multiple proposals as a part of its five-year capital plan with the town specific to the school department. The following is a synopsis of that submission.

- Fairhaven High School Wood Window Restoration Project

- Fairhaven High School Exterior Major Improvements
- Fairhaven Ethernet Dedicated Internet Service
- Fairhaven High School Gymnasium Dehumidification

In 2016, Mr. Paul Kitchen accepted a position in another district. We will forever be indebted to his dedicated contributions to the Fairhaven Public Schools. During his tenure in the Fairhaven Public Schools, Mr. Kitchen developed and maintained the trust and credibility of our school community by the accuracy and management of his numbers when it came to the school department budget. He was extremely proactive regarding preventative maintenance and capital plans that reflect future capital development and improvement needs.

With his departure in 2016, the 2016 – 2017 District Improvement Plan Goal is to “Develop and implement a long-term, sustainable District and School Leadership/Operations Plan that provides the support and resources to expand and enhance powerful teaching and learning.” A continuum of District Leadership and Operations functions and duties were utilized to develop and implement a plan to determine the best roles and responsibilities needed to efficiently and effectively meet the needs of the district. It was developed by matching the capabilities of the people in the district with the right functions and duties. Under the direction of the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, the following is that plan. Much like the Student Services Plan developed and implemented during the 2015 – 2016 school year, the District Leadership and Operations Plan consists of the following key actions:

- Re-structure the Business Manager Position to an Assistant Superintendent and
- Combine the positions of Director of Instructional Technology and Director of Finance
- Re-structure IT positions to a Manager of Infrastructure and Connectivity and Information Systems/Data Analyst
- Re-structure current positions to a Business Office Manager and a Facility Manager

In conclusion, this report serves to highlight the many happenings that occurred within the Fairhaven Public Schools throughout the 2016 school year. As the superintendent of schools, I continue to be humbled and honored to serve this wonderful school district and town that we live in. It is with deep conviction that we will all collectively continue to work on the behalf of our students and school community to make our district even better.