To: Emily Parks, Superintendent
From: Abby Hanscom, Director of Student Services
Date: February 9, 2018
RE: SBIRT Initiative Update

Emily,

In late December 2017, the District was informed that the State of Massachusetts has clarified the requirements regarding the Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) Initiative. As you are aware, WPS has been following the evolution of this initiative around the screening of students annually regarding substance use and referral to treatment. As of 2018, it is now clear that the State considers the appropriation of funding to the Department of Public Health as de-facto funding to the public schools and the SBIRT initiative is no longer voluntary; but instead a requirement.

Given this development, WPS has begun to actively plan for implementation of the required screening for the 2018-2019 school year. While screening two grade levels (at the middle and/or high school levels) is required, the late clarification of this new requirement combined with Thurston Middle School's ongoing process of hiring a new principal present challenges to screening two grade levels in 2018-2019. The District has convened a steering committee with input from WPS administration, guidance and wellness departments to recommend next steps. This group has completed their work and recommends that only one grade level at WHS implement screening next year, TMS coming on board in 2019-2020, with input and direction from the new principal.

A WHS specific planning group is now in place and will be meeting this month to plan the logistics of staff training, student interview scheduling, parent and community outreach and communication. It is anticipated that one grade level of WHS students will be screened in January of 2019 and the planning group will use information learned during that process to inform and assist the TMS leadership team in planning for a second grade level to be screened the following year.

I will continue to update you as the WHS planning process moves forward.