

TO: School Committee

FROM: Emily Parks, Superintendent

DATE: March 19, 2019

RE: Security Audit

The security consultants have completed their assessment and have provided the School Department with a draft report of their findings and recommendations. We are in the process of reviewing the report. While the report recognizes many good practices and security features that are already in place, it also presents action steps around security equipment, additional training, and suggested changes in protocol.

As you know from prior discussions, the Supplemental Appropriations article at this spring's town meeting, if approved, will provide an additional \$100,000 to the FY'19 appropriation for the School Department to begin implementing recommendations from the review. Though clearly the recommendations will have to be implemented and funded over time through the capital budget process, we will have an opportunity to get some significant work done this spring and summer. The consultants' report identifies priority recommendations. Over the next month, we will need to make some decisions about the order in which those recommendations are addressed. Clearly, those decisions will have to be made based on level of urgency, cost, and timing as it pertains to other scheduled capital projects and the school calendar.

I anticipate that some of our action steps will be appropriate and important topics for public discussion and transparency. On the other hand, it would clearly be counter to the goal of increased safety and security to publicly release the consultants' assessment of vulnerabilities. We have been apprised by town counsel that the report itself is exempted from Massachusetts public records statute (exemption n) as it relates to "security measures, and vulnerability assessments and other records relating to the security or safety of persons in buildings etc." and discussion of the report can be conducted in executive session, as provided by exception 4 of the Open Meeting law ("to discuss the deployment of security personnel or devices, or strategies with respect thereto.")

Finally, on March 12th, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security's (EOPSS) Office of Grants and Research (OGR) announced a competitive grant process for public school districts and charter schools related to funding "to address critical infrastructure equipment and technology needs as it relates to school building security and the safety of students and staff." Communities the size of Westwood can apply for grants up to a maximum of \$60,000. We have examined the grant criteria to determine if our needs and circumstances are appropriate for the grant and have determined that one recommendation from the security audit seems particularly on point for the grant. The grant deadline is April 3rd with award notifications on or about April 26th. If awarded funding, the project must be completed by December 31, 2019.