

## March Update

### Focus on Student Success

This is the time of year where the focus seems to always be on budget. The budget should be a reflection of the resources needed to provide an exemplary educational experience for every child. When given the proper resources, amazing things can happen. Without resources, limits are placed on what can be accomplished. Student success must remain our priority and our focus. Resources make the difference.

For example, with a minimal increase last year, we were able to re-prioritize funding and implement a full-day kindergarten program for the first time. The concept of a full-day kindergarten program had been discussed for years but the resources were not available. Next week we will be presenting the first report to the Board of Education outlining successes of the new kindergarten program. One of the very positive outcomes is that our kindergartners' scores on a reading test went from 64% at goal last year to 90% at goal this year. Giving our youngest students this head start on school will result in narrowing the achievement gap and in better preparation for future instruction.

This is just one example of what we can do for our youngest citizens to help make their lives better. I am a property owner and a taxpayer in our town. The small increase last year that resulted in a stronger educational base for all of our incoming kindergarten students was well worth the expense. This year when we decide as a community on our education budget, I hope we can look at the short-term and long-term needs and goals as well as the desire to be conservative with any potential increase.