

To: Watertown School Committee
From: John R. Brackett, Interim Superintendent
Date: May 1, 2017

RE: Recommendation to employ Mary DeLai as Assistant Superintendent, Finance and Operations, effective July 1, 2017

I am please to recommend Mary DeLai for the position of Assistant Superintendent, Finance and Operations effective July 1, 2017 and that she be extended a contract for this position from July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2020. I further recommend we remove "Interim" from her current title, effective immediately.

Since she joined the district on November 14, 2016 as Interim Business Manager, Mary has distinguished herself in every aspect of the role. As primary architect of the FY18 budget document she has established a standard that is an exemplar in school budgeting. Mary has contributed her vast experience as an educator and school business official to create or redesign several operating systems and practices, to provide clear, comprehensive and regular reporting to the School Committee, prepare the Statement of Interest to MSBA for the high school, strengthen the linkage between business functions and HR systems, and improve communication with Town officials and the public. While her title indicated 'Interim' she quickly became a respected and valued member of the district team.

As a reminder from my recommendation of her as Interim Business Manager last November...

"Mary DeLai comes with a wealth of successful experience in the field of finance and business management in a number of public, non-for-profit and private settings. Most notably, she served as Assistant Superintendent, Finance and Administration and Director of Human Resources and Finance for ten years in the Reading Public Schools. She has served as a board member, officer and Past President for the Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials (MASBO); was a Policy Fellow in the Institute for Educational Leadership's Education Policy Fellowship Program; and managed the MASBO-commissioned Rennie Center "Smart Budgeting" research guide.

Her resume also highlights service as Member Service Coordinator for the Massachusetts Municipal Association, as well as Budget and Grants Manager for the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Agency. Ms. DeLai was a frequent presenter to various state organizations on school finance, effective school budgeting and benchmarking for continuous improvement. Just prior to joining us, she was Superintendent of Schools in Wilmington (MA) Public Schools.

Ms. DeLai earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Economics and Sociology at St. Michaels College, and a Master of Environmental Management in Resource Economics and Policy at the Duke University School of the Environment.

As with any hire, but especially with a position as critical as chief business official, we conducted a very thorough reference check and fully vetted prior experiences. I am confident that Mary DeLai's long history of successful school business leadership, skill-set in a myriad of areas of business, finance and operations, and her deep understanding of the interrelatedness of budget and educational programming, will make her a real asset to our leadership team and district. As a result of our vetting and reference checks, I am confident she possesses the integrity and talents I seek in a school district leader."