

To: The Butler Community

From: Thomas S. Kingston, Interim Superintendent

Date: December 5, 2011

We have completed our assessments of the playground and equipment at the Butler School. Rather than seek short-term fixes that might bring the equipment back into temporary use, we have decided to dismantle the existing equipment, prepare the ground for a new play area, and undertake Phase I of the comprehensive plan developed by the Butler Parents' and Teachers' Organization. We do not believe that there are any temporary repairs that can ensure reasonable safety of the play area, and what money is currently available would best support the comprehensive replacement plan.

The School Department is diverting \$10,000 from its maintenance budget to support the initial work, and we are optimistic that other fundraising efforts will support Phase I work so that the play equipment envisioned in Phase 1 might be assembled by next spring. The Playground Committee and Principal McAllister have applications for funding before a few major donors. I have received from a community-based service organization an expression of interest to help. Furthermore, the community group organizing to rebuild Joey's Playground has determined to help with fundraising for the Butler Playground first since the Department of Public Works has determined that there can be short-term repairs to the Joey's Playground equipment, even though permanent rebuilding will need to be undertaken within a year or two.

Finally, the School Department has placed a dedicated \$100,000 request in its capital budget request for fiscal year 2013 that begins July 1. If granted, those funds would support completion of Phases 2 and 3 of the Butler Playground plan. Preparation of the play area and purchasing of equipment will be done through the School Department in full consultation with the Butler Playground Committee. The Committee has expressed interest in making use of volunteer help whenever possible to extend available dollars. Long term, the facilities management team will follow maintenance schedules and protocols for all the new equipment and grounds work.

Groups, corporations, and individuals wishing to contribute to the rebuilding of the Butler Playground are invited to submit contributions directly to either the Daniel Butler School (designated for playground construction) or to the Daniel Butler Playground in care of the Butler Parents' and Teachers' Organization, 90 White Street, Belmont, MA 02478.

I have vowed to meet regularly with the Butler Playground Committee, and the Belmont School Committee has vowed to support as fully as it can the efforts to create a new, safe, and attractive play space for Belmont's children.