*****Massachusetts Department of***

***Elementary and Secondary Education***

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January 27, 2016

Dear Parents, Caregivers, and Other Members of the Southbridge Community:

On Tuesday, January 26th, after significant deliberation and after hearing from Southbridge educators, parents, community leaders, and teachers, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted to place the Southbridge school district in state receivership, effective immediately.

All children in Southbridge can be successful, but that is not happening now. I am committed to working with Southbridge parents, educators, partner organizations, and community members to ensure that all students achieve at high levels, reach their full potential, and are prepared to succeed in the world that awaits them after high school.

Within a short period of time, I will name a new leader, called a *receiver*, to lead the Southbridge Public Schools. This receiver will report directly to me and will be accountable for improving education in Southbridge for the benefit of every student. Please note, until the receiver is named, the current Interim Superintendent of the district, Mr. Timothy Connors, will continue as the on-the-ground senior administrator, under my direction.

I know there may be questions in the community about what will change with a state receiver. If you currently have a child in school, I do not expect a change in your child’s program for the remainder of this school year. During the spring and summer, we will be planning for improvements across the district. You will begin to see those positive changes next school year.

Many of you have already provided thoughtful ideas and I want to continue to hear from you and answer any questions you have about what this means for your child and your school. Therefore, I will be holding a meeting at the Cole Avenue Auditorium (25 Cole Avenue, Southbridge) on Monday, February 1st, from 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. to speak with you directly. I hope you will attend this meeting. A Spanish translator will be available if you need translation services. Please watch for notices about this meeting on the Department’s website ([www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu)) and on the Southbridge Public Schools website (<http://www.southbridge.k12.ma.us/>).

I look forward to working with you and serving the children of Southbridge.

Sincerely,

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.

Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education