

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Michael A. Morgan, Superintendent of Schools—SAU 16

October 2013

Prestigious Honor for Newfields Elementary School

Newfields Elementary School (NES) was recently selected as only one of three elementary schools in New Hampshire to receive the National Blue Ribbon Award presented by the US Department of Education. Nominated by NH Commissioner of Education, Dr. Virginia Barry, NES was recognized in the “Commissioner’s Circle of Excellence” that highlights schools and districts that aspire to excellence by being bold and innovative in service to children. In conjunction with the Blue Ribbon Award, NES is a school where students achieve at high academic levels and/or where the achievement gap is narrowing. It is among the NH schools that demonstrated the greatest gains in composite Median Student Growth Percentile in Reading and Mathematics based on the most recent three years of New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) results. Representatives from NES will travel to Washington, DC in November to receive the Award which is characterized by the Blue Ribbon Banner that will be displayed proudly at the school. Principal Helen Rist and the outstanding faculty and staff are commended for the wonderful work that they do with their students and their families!

Athletic Director Bill Ball Honored

Coach Bill Ball, long-time Athletic Director and Varsity Football Coach at Exeter High School (EHS), was recently awarded the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) State Award of Merit. This prestigious award is presented by the association to a National Interscholastic Athletic Administration Association (NIAAA) member who demonstrates outstanding leadership and meritorious service and achievement in the vocation of interscholastic administration.

Coach Ball has been Athletic Director at EHS for the past 14 years. He has been a football coach at Exeter since 1979. He served as co-head coach for five years and was named the program’s sole head coach in 1993. His teams have captured NHIAA Sportsmanship Awards in 11 different school years.

Coach Ball has also served on the National Football Federation and College Hall of Fame Board of Directors for five years. During his time at EHS, he has overseen the addition of girls’ ice hockey, gymnastics, swimming, and bass fishing. He is also the boys’ lacrosse assigner for officials and serves on the NHIAA Football Committee as assistant chairperson.

Meeting with Local Police

Efforts to collaborate with local police from the six towns in SAU 16 continue. The major focus of the work is to provide assistance to each other in the event of an emergency in one of the schools. School board members and building principals have joined SAU administrators to coordinate key services in the event of a lockdown or response to a critical incident. Exeter

Chief Richard Kane, Stratham Chief John Scippa, and Newfields Chief Art Reed have played important roles in this process.

The recent meeting was held on Wednesday, October 16, 2013 at the Virtual Learning Academy Charter School which is located at the Tuck Learning Campus. Over 35 people attended, including police, school board members, administrators, school nurses, and support staff. The meeting highlighted many of the recently implemented recommendations to enhance safety and security in the schools and participants shared suggestions for more improvements. It also included a review of some of the Key Findings from the report from the NH Department of Safety that deals with school issues. Individual boards will receive an update on this meeting at their next regularly scheduled meeting. The next meeting of this group will take place on Wednesday, February 19, 2013.

End 68 Hours of Hunger

Approximately 70 children within SAU 16 are being provided with weekend backpacks of food to assist them and their families who are in serious need. Thanks to the generous donations of many local individuals and sponsors, program coordinators Kim Army of Newfields and Sue Abizaid of Stratham, are helping families in all seven elementary schools and the Cooperative Middle School. School principals, nurses, nutrition workers, and guidance counselors have been extremely helpful in identifying and working with families who are most in need. The program began in February 2013 with four backpacks provided to Exeter children. In less than nine months, the program has expanded to its current level. Food donations may be dropped off at the Tuck Learning Campus (Door B) or contributions may be made directly to End 68 Hours of Hunger, 7 Finn Avenue, Newfields NH 03856.

Meeting with Legislators—October 28, 2013

The fourth annual meeting of local state legislators with the SAU Joint Board will be held on Monday, October 28, 2013 at 7:00 pm at Exeter High School. The primary purpose of this meeting is a discussion about the continuing trend of the state “downshifting” many of its costs to local towns and school districts. Personal invitations have been sent to over 70 local NH legislators, Executive Councilor Chris Sununu, and Governor Maggie Hassan. The meeting is open to the public.

Enrollment Trends

Officially the New Hampshire Department of Education requires each school district to annually report its student enrollment on October 1st. Trends are determined from this consistent data point.

For the **nine school years** beginning on October 1, 2005 through October 1, 2013, the following changes are noted:

Brentwood-391 to 346-Decrease of 11.5%%
East Kingston-188 to 174-Decrease of 7.78%

Exeter-1013 to 1023-Increase of 0.98%
Kensington-208 to 135-Decrease of 35.10%
Newfields-165 to 136-Decrease of 17.58%
Stratham-644 to 616-Decrease of 4.34%
Cooperative Middle School-1326 to 1363-Increase of 2.79%
Exeter High School-1611 to 1693-Increase of 5.09%

The **one-year change** from October 1, 2012 to October 1, 2013 is as follows:

Brentwood-367 to 346-Decrease of 5.72%
East Kingston-179 to 174-Decrease of 2.79%
Exeter-1029 to 1023-Decrease of 0.58%
Kensington-165 to 135-Decrease of 18.18%
Newfields-125 to 136-Increase of 8.80% %
Stratham-632 to 616-Decrease of 2.53%
Cooperative Middle School-1356 to 1363-Increase of 0.52%
Exeter High School-1752 to 1693-Decrease of 3.37%

Did You Know?

Lincoln Street School (LSS) and Stratham Memorial School (SMS) have added guitar classes to their music program this year.

The Exeter High School (EHS) Girls Soccer Team is rated “Number One” in the United States by the National Soccer Coaches Association of American because of its impressive streak of 37 consecutive victories, dating back to 2011. Sincere congratulations are extended to Coach Megan Young and the outstanding student athletes who have helped to achieve this record!

East Kingston Board Member Christina Cassano Pelletier recently earned her Ed.D. degree (Doctor of Education) from the Boston University School of Education. She completed her dissertation on “An Examination of Growth in Vocabulary and Phonological Awareness in Early Childhood.”

From the Rules for Teachers in Saline County, Kansas in 1872: “The teacher who performs his labor faithfully and without fault for five years will be given an increase of twenty-five cents per week in his pay providing that Board of Education approves.”

Concussions among students continue to be monitored very carefully throughout the SAU. The Centers for Disease Control provides valuable information to those who are looking for specific research and advice about protecting young people in this way.

Health Insurance—Guaranteed Maximum Rate Increase

After experiencing a 10.37% average annual increase in health insurance premiums for the past 16 years (1998-2013), the Guaranteed Maximum Rate (GMR) Increase for school districts who are part of the Local Government Center network (featuring Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield

products), **will be an average of 4.4% for 2014-2015.** This will provide some relief for school districts and employees who last year absorbed a 13.5% one-year increase in the cost of health insurance.

Contract Negotiations

This school year has six (6) collective bargaining groups within SAU 16 involved in contract negotiations with their respective school boards. These include the teachers associations in Brentwood, East Kingston, Exeter, the Exeter Region Cooperative, and Newfields, as well as the administrators in the Exeter Region Cooperative. If settlements are reached between the respective collective bargaining group and its appropriate school board, the proposed contract will be presented to the voters in March 2014 for action at the annual School District Meeting.

Average Teacher Salaries for 2011-2012; 2012-2013; and 2013-2014

Each year NH School Districts are required to report average teacher salaries to the NH Department of Education. Please note that the following figures only include teachers. The professional educators who serve in such positions as administrators, guidance counselors, nurses, school psychologists, social workers, and other support positions are not included in these averages.

Brentwood--\$64,187; \$65,534; \$67,848
East Kingston--\$58,669; \$60,643; \$58,743
Exeter--\$68,760; \$69,864; \$70,971
Exeter Region Cooperative--\$64,670; \$66,345; \$67,990
Kensington--\$64,934; \$66,830; \$65,763
Newfields--\$59,194; \$60,514; \$60,874
Stratham--\$73,049; \$73,545; \$74,326

The 2013 Christa McAuliffe Technology Conference

The 27th annual Christa McAuliffe Technology Conference will be held in Manchester from December 3-5, 2013 to explore the role of technology in 21st Century Teaching and Learning. This outstanding conference brings together well-respected national, regional, and local educators to share and learn more about ways that students may be engaged more fully in the technology that continues to shape our world. Over 2,000 participants are expected to attend. Some current SAU 16 educators will lend their expertise and knowledge by presenting sessions at the conference. This includes Sandra MacDonald, Assistant Superintendent; Andy Littlefield, Technology Administrator at the Cooperative Middle School; Richard Pratt, Technology Administrator at Exeter High School; Amy Cantone, Swasey Central School teacher; Steve Gagnon and Jessica Valenti, Stratham Memorial School teachers; JR Jones, SAU 16 Network Manager; Jennifer Middaugh, Technology teacher at the Cooperative Middle School; Rich Descoteaux, Technology Integrator at the Cooperative Middle School; and Travis Thompson, Stratham School Board Member and Chair of the SAU 16 Joint Boards. It is clear that SAU 16 teachers and administrators play a key role in this important conference and learning opportunity in the state.

Coop Budget Advisory Committee

The nine-member Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) that serves the Exeter Region Cooperative School District will have three seats available for election in March 2014. Any resident of Brentwood, Exeter or Kensington will be able to be a candidate for this important position. Each term is for three-years. Board Membership is similar to the distribution of members on the School Board with three representatives from Exeter, two from Stratham, and one from Brentwood, East Kingston, Kensington, and Newfields. The filing period for interested candidates is at the end of January 2014. Anyone interested in serving the community in this capacity may contact SAU Business Administrator Amy Ransom at aransom@sau16.org or 775-8671 for additional information.

The Three C's—Curriculum, Communication, Community Service + Transitions

Fifth graders at **Swasey Central School** (SCS) are focused on building classroom and grade level communities as they prepare to transition to the Cooperative Middle School (CMS) next year. Through individual goal setting, classroom challenge activities, and the recent successful field trip to the Browne Center at the University of New Hampshire, these students are encouraged to connect serious learning in fun and dynamic ways. Their work with the US Constitution helps them to understand the national government process while their exposure to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) is expanding their learning in a wide variety of ways. In preparation for the holidays, these fifth graders are already planning a food drive to help the Pilgrim United Church in Brentwood.

The first Social Studies Career Day was held recently at **Exeter High School** (EHS). During the day, 31 volunteers presented to students who had registered to learn more about a particular profession. Among the presenters were state government representatives; a local government selectwoman; a high school principal; a town manager; an estate broker; an economic consultant; a police chief; a Marine Corps sergeant; a real estate broker; a gymnastic school owner; newspaper community reporters; a drug counselor; a psychology professor; an art therapist; and a FAA inspector. Over 30 students served as liaisons to the professionals during the day. Social Studies Learning Area Leader Molly Stevenson coordinated the event.

Every five years, the NH Department of Education (DOE) conducts a Monitoring Visit to each Career and Technical Center in the state. The **Seacoast School of Technology** (SST) will be monitored during the 2014-2015 school year. Principal Margaret Callahan and the SST staff have already begun to prepare for this important professional visit and are currently working on a self-evaluation for individual programs, as well as an evaluation of the entire center. A review of the curriculum and the role of the Advisory Committees is an integral part of this process. Course competencies and third-party assessments of the programs continue to play a key role in the monitoring process. SST personnel will submit its self-evaluations to the DOE by June 2014 so that the materials may be reviewed prior to the Visiting Team's arrival in the fall of 2014.

The HEART philosophy is in place at **Stratham Memorial School** (SMS). At lunch time, HEART means: Have a seat; Eat your food; Always use your inside voice; Recess is outside;

Trays are neatly stacked. At recess time, HEART means: Have fun; Everyone can play; Always be safe; Return equipment; Time to line up. Teaching and modeling good citizenship is very important for students. This philosophy is stressed to children throughout the day.

The 375th Anniversary of the Town of Exeter was celebrated recently at **Lincoln Street School (LSS)** with a wide variety of local exhibitors on the front lawn of the school. Featured presentations included a potter, a woodworker, a weaver, and a butter maker. Other exhibits included a cider press; an 1873 Fire Steamer from the Exeter Fire Department; the Newmarket Militia; and a horse and buggy display. LSS Music teacher, Mrs. Sue Noseworthy and her local band played a variety of songs from the past to the delightful enjoyment of the children and community guests. All of the students circulated among the various displays and learned more about Exeter's rich and inspiring history. The children ate lunch on the front lawn of the school and were treated to a special assembly with historical author and illustrator Michael Dooling.

Four students from the fifth grade at **East Kingston Elementary School (EKES)** collaborated recently to collect books for needy children in the seacoast area. Working with the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) during their annual Scholastic Book Fair, the students raised funds for books by collecting donations at the Book Fair and by selling popcorn during snack time. Through their efforts and the generosity of various donations, the students raised \$170. The Scholastic company doubled the number of books that the students were able to purchase and then the students donated those books to Seacoast Family Promise, a non-profit organization that provides a safe place for families who need immediate food, shelter, and social services.

Kensington Elementary School (KES) is working closely with Police Chief Michael Sielicki to review, update, and implement its Emergency Response Plan. Specific steps have been taken to provide new security windows for some of the offices and consideration is being given to reinforce the main entrance. The KES Emergency Response Team has coordinated several security and safety measures to address protocols and procedures that will help the students and staff in a crisis situation.

The professional staff at **Newfields Elementary School (NES)** is very much engaged in the process of finding more and better ways to implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in Reading/Language Arts and Math. Teachers are activity involved in seeking out resources and materials that will enhance this important transition for students. They are working actively with other teachers from throughout this SAU and are committed to making this a positive learning experience for themselves and for their students.

The **Cooperative Middle School (CMS)** now has a new key card door system in place to allow the staff better and easier access into the building while also controlling access for visitors during the school day. This enhancement of the security system is directly linked to the SAU's efforts to provide additional safety measures for students and staff. However, parents and students should not notice any change in this procedure at CMS because the sign-in and pick-up of students will remain the same. CMS is also in the process of having internal and external security cameras installed this fall. This will aid in monitoring the building at all times of the day and night. A similar system is already in place at Exeter High School (EHS).

The Unified Arts Team at **Main Street School** (MSS) recently organized and hosted a “Barn Dance and Arts Celebration Night” to stress the importance of art, music, health and wellness, and library work in the school and at home. The event was extremely well attended and offered parents and children an opportunity for a “family night out” together in a creative way that incorporated learning in a wide variety of fashions.

Reflection

With Thanksgiving quickly approaching, this is a wonderful time of the year for each of us to stop and reflect on all of the blessings in our own lives! Trying to find one way to reach out now to someone else that may not be as fortunate will lay the foundation for our traditional late fall celebration.