

2016-2017 REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

November 2016 saw one of the most contentious and negative presidential campaigns in US history. Strong feelings of discontent with both major political party candidates set a tone that will be studied for many years. In the end, Donald Trump won the Electoral College vote while Hillary Clinton captured the total popular vote confirming Mr. Trump's place as the 45th President of the United States.

In the New Hampshire political arena, two Newfields residents attained distinction: Two-term Governor Maggie Hassan was elected to the US Senate and Executive Councilor Chris Sununu was elected Governor. Congratulations to each of them!

For the third year in a row, the US and NH economies continue to show solid growth and recovery since the major recession of 2008-2010. The housing market in southeastern NH is booming as many real estate brokers and agents report a shortage of properties for sale. Oil and gasoline prices continue to show minimal increases as gas prices now average about \$2.20 a gallon. The value of the US dollar is very strong against the Canadian dollar (\$0.75), the British Pound (\$1.25), and the Euro (\$1.06). The unemployment rate in NH has improved once again to 2.7% in 2016, down from 3.2 in 2015. This makes NH's rate the second lowest in the country with only South Dakota being slightly better.

It is among these economic factors that School Administrative Unit (SAU) 16 schools continue to work hard to provide the best possible education that serves the students and families in our communities, while respecting the heavy burden that local property taxes have on residents. School Board Members and Administrators are very sensitive to the fact that approximately 80% of SAU 16 households do not have school age children residing in them, while also being very aware that New Hampshire is second only to Florida in its aging average population.

Continuing to understand the relevancy of economic trends in an SAU school system that is the third largest in the State of New Hampshire is a marvelous educational endeavor. Professional educators here are strongly committed to developing good citizens who will learn extensively and work hard to contribute to a culture and a society that values honesty, integrity, hard work, and high ethical and moral standards. That is part of the reason that our Vision Statement, Mission Statement, and Vision for Our Graduates help to drive the services that our six communities provide to students and families.

SAU 16 VISION STATEMENT

To provide a rigorous and comprehensive education that will prepare our students for diverse post-secondary educational opportunities, a competitive workplace, and active civic participation.

SAU 16 MISSION STATEMENT

To help students gain knowledge and skills that build intellect, character, and a lifelong thirst for learning.

SAU 16 VISION FOR OUR GRADUATES....A Compass to Guide Our Work

Each graduate demonstrates engaged learning and citizenship through the ability to solve problems independently and collaboratively with perseverance and resilience, and communicates solutions with confidence and empathy.

HIGHLIGHTS

Curriculum, Communication, Community Service, and Transitions continue to be the focus of student-centered initiatives, personalized instruction, and work within the six communities of SAU 16. The successful implementation of the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan has been a cooperative effort of students, staff, administrators, and School Board Members. Monthly Superintendent Reports to the community are

published and available at the SAU website (www.sau16.org). In October 2016, the SAU Joint Board approved the next SAU Strategic Plan that will guide our collective work for 2017-2022. Approximately 40 interested Board Members, administrators, teachers, students, and members of the public joined this collaborative effort and identified three significant Focus Areas for the next five years: 1) Teaching and Learning; 2) Health and Community; and 3) Philosophy and Governance.

Highlights of the past year include:

1. The SAU is committed to achieve high academic standards and to provide the best possible selection of courses and educational opportunities to students from pre-school to high school graduation. The SAU goal is to have every student career and college ready and to become actively involved as a contributing member in society.
2. *Competency-Based Education* is the overarching theme of the school year as teachers and administrators strive to make education “personalized” so that each student may achieve his/her highest potential while being able to take ownership of his/her learning and demonstrate that learning to others.
3. The College Board recognized Exeter High School (EHS) in its 7th Annual AP District Honor Roll. This is a list of approximately 433 districts across the U.S. and Canada being honored for increasing access to AP[®] course work, while simultaneously maintaining or increasing the percentage of students earning scores of three (3) or higher on Advanced Placement exams. Reaching these goals shows that EHS “*is successfully identifying motivated, academically prepared students who are ready*” for Advanced Placement in colleges and universities.
4. The SAU administration and faculty are implementing the NextGen Science standards to advance curriculum work throughout all of the schools in the SAU.
5. The SAU 16 professional staff is strongly committed to improving its art and its method of teaching. Using the “instructional rounds process,” teams of staff members are looking at classroom instruction in a focused, systematic, purposeful and collective way. Are classrooms sharing school based common themes and are students understanding the purpose of their instruction – ways we want to bridge the knowledge gap between educators and their practices. During the 2016-2017 school year, each SAU 16 school will host at least one “instructional rounds” visit as a demonstration of the collective commitment to improve instruction.
6. The SAU Safety and Security Committee strengthened collaboration among the eleven schools in the SAU and the six local police departments. This year’s work extended beyond on-going work and involvement with the NH Department of Safety - Office of Homeland Security to the Rockingham County Sherriff’s Office. Recently completed safety audits of each school have led to building improvements with regard to more safe and secure entrances and the practical implementation of “reunification strategies.” Retired Exeter Police Chief Rich Kane joined the SAU as its “Safety and Security Coordinator” to enhance and stress the importance of this work.
7. Student enrollment at the Seacoast School of Technology (SST) continues to be very strong. SST began in 1980 and is currently in its 38th year of operation. It offers 12 programs in career and technical education fields. Currently 248 students are earning 696 college credits through “Dual Enrollment” programs offered in conjunction with various colleges and universities.
8. Six of the seven SAU 16 elementary schools were recognized by the New Hampshire Partners in Education for their outstanding parent and community volunteer programs.
9. Exeter Adult Education celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the “birth” of Adult Education programs in the United States and has completed 30 years of successful programming for those students seeking to earn their high school diploma or a diploma equivalency. It also offers a wide variety of “enrichment programs” for adults.
10. The Exeter School District welcomed Mr. Steve Tullar as the new principal for East Kingston Elementary School (EKES) and Ms. Patty Wons as the new principal for the Cooperative Middle School (CMS). Mr. Jim Eaves retired from EKES after serving the school faithfully for 13 years.

Former CMS Principal Bill Furbush moved to the SAU 16 Central Office to serve as Assistant Superintendent to replace Ms. Sandra MacDonald who began working for the NH Department of Education in March 2016.

11. Five members of the Exeter High School (EHS) Class of 2016 earned the prestigious distinction of being named *National Merit Scholars*: Michael Clements, Kristen McLaughlin, Sydney Morris, Christopher Sullivan, and Jeremie Dyes-Hopping
12. Former Exeter High School (EHS) football coach, Charlie Burch who passed away in 1978 at the age of 47, was inducted into the NHIAA Hall of Fame in November 2016. Coach Burch led EHS to three state championships (1963-1965) and amassed a 23-game winning streak in the 1960's. He was also named *Division III Coach of the Year* three times in a row.
13. The Exeter School District passed a \$5.4M bond in March 2016 so that additional classrooms could be added to Main Street School (MSS). This will allow Exeter to begin offering full-day kindergarten to all interested families in the fall of 2018.
14. The Brentwood School District voted to approve the addition of full-day kindergarten in March 2016. That program became available to all interested Brentwood families in August 2016.
15. SAU 16 saw the retirements of 17 SAU professional staff members who dedicated a combined total of 348.5 years of service to our children and their families. Join this with the 32 professional staff members who have retired over the past two years. They had dedicated a total of 760 years of faithful service. This means that in three years, 49 staff members, with a combined total of 1108.5 years of service, have retired from working in SAU 16. Given the demographics of current employees, this trend will unfold for several more years.
16. In March 2016, Mrs. Jean Tucker retired from her lengthy service as a member of the Exeter School Board. Mrs. Tucker faithfully served that Board for 30 years as she was devoted to providing the best possible education and services to the children and families of her community.
17. SAU 16 currently has 94 students who are registered for "Home School" programs.
18. *Connor's Climb Foundation*, named in honor of Brentwood resident Connor Ball who died in October 2011, is committed to the mission of suicide prevention and has gained regional and national accolades for its important work which is led by Connor's mother, Tara Holmes Ball.
19. The Exeter High School (EHS) Unified Soccer Team won its second consecutive state championship in the fall of 2016.
20. The Exeter High School (EHS) Boys Soccer Team won the *Division I State Championship* in the fall of 2016.
21. Stratham Memorial School (SMS) won the Grand Prize for "Best Float" in the Stratham 300th Anniversary Parade that was held at the end of September.
22. The Seacoast School of Technology (SST) hosted the October 2016 meeting of the Governor and Executive Council. Several students presented to the Council during its breakfast meeting. Governor Maggie Hassan presented Certificates of Commendation to SST Administrative Assistants Laurie Eldridge and Brenda Schrempf and Teaching Assistant James Walsh.
23. Exeter High School (EHS) physical education teacher, Jim Tufts, is coaching EHS Soccer and Boys' Ice Hockey for the 40th consecutive year. What an accomplishment!
24. Mrs. Lynne Walker received the coveted 2016 *Eustis Award* at the formal opening of the SAU 16 school year. She currently serves as the third grade teacher at East Kingston Elementary School (EKES). In addition to that important role, she has been the Director of the annual musical productions at EKES for at least thirteen years and has been instrumental in coaching girls lacrosse at a variety of levels, including the Cooperative Middle School (CMS). This year Lynne is beginning her 20th year of service to EKES. Ms. Walker joins 14 other SAU 16 professional staff members who have been recognized in this way since the *Eustis Award* began in 2004.
25. SAU 16 Business Administrator Amy Ransom was selected by her statewide colleagues as the *2016 Business Administrator of the Year*.

26. Ms. Trish Raymond, School Psychologist at Lincoln Street School (LSS), was selected as the President of her professional organization, the New Hampshire Association of School Psychologists.
27. In November, the SAU Joint Board hosted its 7th annual meeting with state legislators as they discuss topics of mutual interest and to share ideas about what is happening politically and financially at the state and local levels.
28. The *End 68 Hours of Hunger* program, coordinated locally by Ms. Kim Army from Newfields and Ms. Sue Abizaid from Stratham, has a profound positive effect on SAU 16 families that show signs of “food insecurity.” Approximately 75-100 backpacks of food are provided to children anonymously each week, thanks to the generous donations of many community businesses and individuals.
29. The Exeter Region Cooperative School Board voted to pursue a \$21.9M “renewal” to the Cooperative Middle School that opened in 1998. This proposed renovation includes adding 10 classrooms, expanding the cafeteria, expanding music and office spaces, and a new gymnasium will be presented to the voters in March 2017.
30. Schools are using a wide variety of media - including websites, newspapers, cable access television, and blogs - to communicate the schools’ mission and service to the community.
31. The Exeter Area Lions Club works with SAU 16 schools through *Operation KidSight*, its vision screening program. Its mission is “to prevent blindness through early detection and treatment of the most common vision disorders in children.” Each year many children benefit from this free screening provided to students and this often leads to children receiving important eye care as soon as possible.
32. SAU 16 supports the work of the Exeter Adult Education Program, the Great Bay eLearning Charter School (GBeCS) and the Virtual Learning Academy Charter School (VLACS) as each embraces non-traditional ways of student learning.
33. Channel 13, the SAU 16 Educational Channel that is provided to all Comcast subscribers within the six towns of the SAU, continues to expand its program offerings to keep the public informed about school events, activities, and meetings.
34. Yours truly was recognized by both Plymouth State University and New England College for “Distinguished Graduate School Teaching” in 2016.

This is my ninth year working with you in this important educational process. Please know that I remain firmly committed to providing the leadership that is necessary to maintain and expand the breadth and depth of educational services that are needed and expected in today’s public schools. SAU 16 has the gift of many outstanding teachers, support staff members, administrators, and school board members who share our common goal of providing the best possible education for our students and their families at a reasonable cost to taxpayers. Our students and families are the real beneficiaries of this effort.

Respectfully submitted,

MICHAEL A. MORGAN
Superintendent of Schools