

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Michael A. Morgan, Superintendent of Schools—SAU 16

November 2013

Tax Rates—2013

Local tax rates for the six towns within SAU 16 have been set and fall tax bills will soon be processed by local town officials. The finalized 2013 rates (per \$1,000 of assessed property valuation) are as follows:

Brentwood--\$23.88 (Increase of \$0.56)—Increase of 2.41%
East Kingston—\$24.76 (Increase of \$1.20)—Increase of 5.09%
Exeter--\$26.03 (Increase of \$0.11)—Increase of 0.01%
Kensington--\$24.55 (Increase of \$4.42)—Increase of 22.01%
Newfields—\$24.28 (Increase of \$1.26)—Increase of 5.47%
Stratham--\$19.65 (Increase of \$0.34)—Increase of 1.76%

School Board Seats Available in March 2014

Terms of office for some current school board members expire in March 2014. Now is the time for interested citizens to consider serving in these capacities. Board Members whose terms, three (3) years unless otherwise noted, expire include Charles Gargaly and Amy Mitchell in Brentwood; Korrine Bork in East Kingston; Tracy Jeffers in Exeter; Gary Bonitatibus in Kensington; Kirsten Lord in Newfields; Bob O'Sullivan and Eric von der Linden in Stratham; and Kate Segal (Exeter), Dave Miller (East Kingston), Kate Clark (Kensington – 2 year term), and Mark Portu (Stratham) for the Coop. Of the thirty-three total School Board seats in SAU 16, these twelve positions will be available for (re)election. Now is the time for interested individuals to gather information about the duties and responsibilities associated with serving as a School Board member. This is a wonderful opportunity for community service!

Filing Period

Any resident over 18 years old may be a candidate for any school district office, including school board member, school district clerk, or school district moderator. Terms of office vary depending on the position. Those interested in having their names on the ballot in March 2014, must declare their candidacy in writing to the current school district clerk for their respective district **between January 22 and January 31, 2014.**

NECAP Science Results

The results of the spring 2013 New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) science tests were released recently. This test was administered to students in grades 4, 8, and 11 in New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont as part of each state's required assessment program. NECAP results are used primarily for program evaluation, school improvement and public reporting. Achievement level results are used in the state accountability system required by the

federal mandate entitled No Child Left Behind (NCLB). More detailed results are used by schools to help improve curriculum and instruction. Individual student results are used to support information gathered through classroom instruction and assessment.

Assessment results are reported in degrees of proficiency. Each school is provided its results along with a statewide summary.

Grade 4 Results:

State of New Hampshire: 51% Proficient (13,728 students tested)

Swasey Central School, Brentwood: 76% Proficient (66 students tested)

East Kingston Elementary School: 65% Proficient (37 students tested)

Kensington Elementary School: 78% Proficient (28 students tested)

Lincoln Street School, Exeter: 77% Proficient (181 students tested)

Newfields Elementary School: 77% Proficient (34 students tested)

Stratham Memorial School: 56% Proficient (121 students tested)

Grade 8 Results:

State of New Hampshire: 32% Proficient (14,506 students tested)

Cooperative Middle School, Stratham: 42% Proficient (425 students tested)

Grade 11 Results:

State of New Hampshire: 30% Proficient (13,928 students tested)

Exeter High School: 50% Proficient (419 students tested)

Additional information is available at the New Hampshire Department of Education website:
http://www.education.nh.gov/instruction/assessment/necap/results/science_results13.htm

Free and Reduced School Meals

Each year families may apply for consideration to receive free or reduced breakfast and lunch. Local officials use federal financial guidelines to determine a family's eligibility for this benefit. Application information is extremely confidential. Over the past five years, there has been a steady increase in the number of students who are eligible to receive school meals that are either free or are offered at a reduced cost.

For 2013-2014, the following percentages of students have been determined to be eligible:

Swasey Central School, Brentwood—5.44%

East Kingston Elementary School—12.20%

Main Street School, Exeter—14.54%

Lincoln Street School, Exeter—17.46%

Cooperative Middle School, Stratham—11.67%

Exeter High School—9.63%

Tuck Learning Campus, Exeter—26.14%

Kensington Elementary School—9.02%
Stratham Memorial School—7.77%
Newfields Elementary School did not participate in this federal program

Total Lunches By Schools in SAU 16

Recent information provided by the New Hampshire Department of Education regarding schools' participation in the National School Lunch Program indicated the total number of lunches served during the 2012-2013 school year. This clearly demonstrates the success of this important nutritional program and is a credit to the hard working and dedicated women and men who strive hard each day to serve our students well-balanced, healthy, and nutritional meals.

Cooperative Middle School—76,449 lunches
East Kingston Elementary School—13,716 lunches
Exeter High School—79,724 lunches
Tuck Learning Campus—11,140 lunches
Kensington Elementary School—17,763 lunches
Lincoln Street School, Exeter—38,974 lunches
Main Street School, Exeter—30,461 lunches
Stratham Memorial School—54,741 lunches
Swasey Central School, Brentwood—25,834 lunches
Newfields Elementary School did not participate in this federal program

Champions for Children

Community members and school staffs continue to recognize and celebrate the dedication of local individuals by nominating them for a local Champion for Children award. This award is given to those individuals who have distinguished themselves by demonstrating significant involvement in programs and/or services that directly benefit the students and families of School Administrative Unit 16.

The Exeter Region Cooperative School District recently presented this award to **Josh Murphy** of Exeter Lumber. Josh has been a very strong supporter of the Seacoast School of Technology (SST) for the past five years. He serves on the Advisory Board for the Building Construction Technologies program and always provides the best possible costs for wood, tools, and supplies used in this program. Exeter Lumber also offers a discount on materials and supplies to any student who is involved in this program and makes donations in support of the SST food drive in the form of prizes to students who donate the most food. Josh Murphy is a true friend and partner to SST and is strongly committed to helping students. His efforts are sincerely noted and appreciated.

Technology Educator of the Year—2014

Ms. Amy Cantone of Swasey Central School has been selected to receive the 2014 *Pat Keyes Technology-Using Educator Award* from the New Hampshire Society of Technology Educators. This prestigious honor is given annually to a teacher who provides direct instruction to students

and who integrates technology in a regular classroom setting. Ms. Cantone is well-known in SAU 16 for her leadership in professional development for other educators and for applying various types of learning experiences for her students. She will be presented with this award during the upcoming Christa McAuliffe Technology Conference in Manchester at the beginning of December.

State Champions—EHS Field Hockey

For the first time ever in its history, the Exeter High School (EHS) Girls Field Hockey team recently captured the Division I State Championship at Bedford High School by defeating defending champion Pinkerton Academy, 2-1. Guided by their outstanding leader and coach, Deb Grott, the 2013 girls' team ended the season in fourth place with a record of 13-3-1. Co-Captain seniors Lexi Grott and Erin McKenna each scored a goal in the final game and goaltender Lauren MacDonald continued her marvelous defensive work. Congratulations, Coach Grott and all of the members of your team!

Did You Know?

Exeter High School senior and field hockey standout, Erin McKenna, was recently selected as the Division I Player of the Year in that sport. This is truly an outstanding honor and accomplishment for Erin and for her amazing team of student athletes!

The annual “Can-struction” program at Stratham Memorial School (SMS), under the direction of Art teacher June August, created a giant Godzilla with a backdrop of the Tokyo skyline this year. Using donated canned goods and food staples for this creation, students and teachers collected almost 2,000 items that were donated to the St. Vincent de Paul food pantry in Exeter.

For all Comcast subscribers within any of the six SAU 16 towns, the Educational Channel is available for programming twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The specific schedule of broadcasts is available at the top of the SAU website at www.sau16.org.

Exeter High School senior and outstanding soccer player, Austin Kimball, recently earned All-New England honors as part of the New Hampshire Soccer Coaches Association's Division I post season awards. Along with Owen Palmer and Graham Peterson, Austin also earned a spot on New Hampshire's 2014 Lions Cup Team which leads to an All-Star game played annually against Vermont each summer.

Dr. Angela Lennox, renowned Exeter High School Science teacher, will be honored by the NH Department of Education in December at its “Celebrating Leadership in Education” dinner. She is the 2013 NH recipient of the *Presidential Award for Excellent in Mathematics and Science Teaching*.

Celebrated Music Educator at Lincoln Street School, Ms. Sue Noseworthy, also teaches Methods in Music Education at the University of New Hampshire.

Exeter Adult Education continues to stress that anyone who has started the GED has until the end of December 2013 to complete this test. Otherwise, individuals will need to start the entire process over with a new high school equivalency test in 2014.

Exeter High School sophomore Will Faria was recently named the Portsmouth Herald's high school division finalist for the New Hampshire Supreme Court's statewide annual Constitution Day Essay Contest. Cooperative Middle School student Aisline Murdock was named as the grade 5-8 recipient.

Governor Maggie Hassan, Executive Councilor Chris Sununu and Commissioner of Education Virginia Barry recently shared in the community celebration honoring Newfields Elementary School in being selected as a 2013 National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence. Newfields Elementary was one of only three elementary schools in the state of New Hampshire to receive this distinction.

In recognition of the EHS Swim and Dive Team's volunteer commitment to the Newfields 5K Road Race that was held in June, Race Director Larry Arend recently donated \$1250 to the team's Booster Club.

Well-known local retired firefighter Bill Toland was the featured speaker at the Veterans Day Assembly at the Cooperative Middle School this year. Mr. Toland served as a medic with the Army National Guard during the Vietnam War. More than 20 local veterans attended the event.

Injured Newfields bicyclist Steve Shope continues to benefit from local community service efforts. As part of the Trail to Recovery Fund, Newfields Elementary School students raised \$2,000 in a penny drive in the spring and recently helped to publicize a silent auction that was held in Portsmouth. More information may be found at www.traitorecovery.com.

Contract Negotiations Update

This school year six (6) collective bargaining groups within SAU 16 are involved in contract negotiations with their respective school boards. Recent hard work has led to tentative settlements between five of the groups and their respective School Boards. These include the teachers associations in Brentwood, East Kingston, Exeter, and Newfields, as well as the administrators in the Exeter Region Cooperative. Ongoing work is continuing between the Exeter Education Association with the Exeter Region Cooperative School Board. The settled contracts will be presented to the voters in March 2014 for action at the annual School District Meeting of their respective districts.

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 (current member Elyse Gallo Seeley), Exeter (current member Roy Morrisette) or Kensington (current member Cheryl McDonough) will be able to be a candidate for this important position. Each term is for three-years. Budget Advisory 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 **between January 22 and January 31, 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

“Fall in love with books at the library” is a major autumn theme at **Swasey Central School** (SCS) this month. Enthusiasm for reading is growing in the library because of the various book award programs in which SCS is participating. First and second graders have almost completed experiencing this year’s ten “Ladybug Book Award” nominations. Third grade students are participating in the school’s own “Battle of the Books.” Fourth and fifth grade students are focusing on the “Great Stone Face Award” books. For more information, reach out to the library blog at *SCS Connections*.

The **Kensington Elementary School** (KES) PTO will not be sponsoring the annual Scholastic Book Fair at the school this year. Instead, the group is having a “book event” at the Barnes and Noble Bookstore in Newington on Saturday, November 23rd from 12:00 pm to 5:00 pm. These parent volunteers plan to have a clown asking people to wear a red dot which will give KES 15% of everyone’s purchases that day. The KES 4th and 5th grade band and chorus will be performing. Students in grades K-3 will be reading from books or their own writings. There will be free face painting for everyone. The Student Council sponsored a contest for naming a special hot drink and the students voted for “Mr. Popper’s Peppermint Hot Chocolate,” which the children hope everyone will buy during their visit to the store that day. Shopping on line for one week after the event will continue to raise money for the school. The funds raised will be given to the KES Library for purchasing books and to help support the PTO budget.

Newfields Elementary School (NES) was surprised when ten new students enrolled in the SAU’s smallest school at the beginning of the year. A few more students are also expected to enroll after the winter holidays. Introducing new community members to the school and the town has been the focus for the principal and the PTO this year because they share the belief that successful transitions to a new community—especially a small community—is so important. Getting to know others happens most easily at school events and functions because the school is seen as the center of community life in many ways. Reaching out to new families and orienting them to the practices and policies of the school is a key role that Principal Helen Rist and the leaders of the PTO are assuming. Their collective goal is to make wonderful memories for those who are new among them.

The **Main Street School** (MSS) Kindergarten Committee continues to explore the possibility of a full-day kindergarten program. This would involve a building expansion project to create more space since the current building is in use. This expansion section would be attached to the current MSS building and would reduce some of the playground area on the pavement in the school yard. Current estimates for this expanded program would require the addition of three (3) teachers and three (3) paraprofessionals. Funds for extra curriculum materials would also be needed. The estimated total for personnel and supplies would fall in the \$350,000 to \$400,000 range. The Exeter voters would have to consider this plan at its annual School District Meeting in March 2014. The Exeter School Board has not yet voted on this matter.

This past Halloween marked the 63rd year that *Trick or Treat for UNICEF*, a United Nations fundraiser, has helped support needy children in under developed parts of the world. As has been its longstanding tradition, **East Kingston Elementary School** (EKES) students collected coins for UNICEF while trick or treating in the traditional way. The money is used to support children who struggle to have their basic needs for food and clean water met and to provide them the opportunity to go to school. EKES takes pride in the fact that over the past ten years, their students have raised over \$7,500 in support of this important program. The school staff believes that it is vital that children recognize just how fortunate they are and learn the value of sharing resources with others in need. Principal Jim Eaves recognized Ms. Cheryl Titone's fourth grade class for coordinating this effort for the entire school.

Health Science Technologies students at the **Seacoast School of Technology** (SST) are experiencing the benefits of the grant that the program received last year. The Seacoast Public Health Region was awarded a grant which included resources for this program at SST. Students in their first year have already started training which will conclude in the second year prior to internships. The trainings include Medical Reserve Corps Core Competencies and cover topics such as disaster psychology, search and rescue, fire safety, First Aid and CPR. Topics covered by professional guest speakers so far have included disaster preparedness, incident command systems, and terrorism. This is an incredible opportunity for the students and a great asset to the Seacoast.

The Stratham Active Leadership Team (S.A.L.T.) at **Stratham Memorial School** (SMS) continues to craft the Vision Statement for the school. The most current version appears as follows: "*Stratham Memorial School is a welcoming and caring learning environment where we are safe to take risks, build a sense of community to appreciate and foster individual differences. We are innovative problem-solvers who collaborate, achieve academic success and build independence.*" The group is also reviewing the SAU Strategic Plan and how it relates to and is being implemented at SMS.

The November In-Service Day for staff at **Lincoln Street School** (LSS) provided excellent training opportunities for both the professional staff and the paraprofessionals. The professional staff chose between the STAR Assessment workshop to deal more with reading issues and a math workshop that focused on ways to enhance overall math instruction at the elementary level. Paraprofessionals attended two different workshops. The first dealt with "Autism and Applied Behavior Analysis" and the second involved a viewing and discussion about the educational video entitled, "*Who Cares About Kelsey?*" This is a story about a young girl who had to deal with homelessness, self-mutilation, abuse, and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). These engaging professional development opportunities allowed staff members to talk with and learn from each other in a positive setting.

Recently the students in Mr. Mark Foley's Advanced Placement Chemistry class at **Exeter High School** (EHS) were treated to a presentation from Dr. John Kelso who works as a researcher for Osram Sylvania. The topic was spectroscopy, the study of light. These AP students have studied some of the important applications of light as an evaluative tool and used some applications in the lab. Dr. Kelso spoke with the students about the applications of spectroscopy in the field of lighting. He also spent time reviewing the integration of chemistry, physics, and solid state materials science to his job in developing new light fixtures such as the Light Emitting

Diode (LED). This entire presentation provided the students with valuable insight into the integration of various science disciplines in the working world.

The **Cooperative Middle School (CMS)** has a new program this year called “Global Skills Development Toward Independence.” Fourteen students access this class during the day to receive instruction and support for their specific learning needs. A person walking into the room could see some students receiving language arts and math instruction while other students may be using iPad applications to communicate work on motor skills or to track their schedules. Specific therapists may also be providing services to cater to the individual learning needs of particular students. The class is entirely student-centered and works to meet the needs of its unique learners in a safe and orderly environment. The program is staffed by two teachers and several paraprofessionals.

A little known facet of the **Exeter Adult Education Program** is its Adult Career Pathways (ACP) program. This work incorporates, but is not limited to, career and college advising and search, and specific course work as needed. It is an ongoing process (as careers usually are). The many facets of this program are happening locally, regionally, state-wide, and nationally. Because of a new grant, Exeter Adult Education counselors have been able to increase their contact time advising adult high school and GED graduates, as well as advanced level English language learners, regarding their career pathways which often involve post-secondary education. In 2013 the Exeter Adult Education Director, Leslie Haslam, has had the privilege of collaborating on ACP at many levels. She first attended a national conference that had a strand focused entirely on ACP. Upon return, she was involved in a series of meetings with the NH Governor, Community College System of NH (CCSNH) Chancellor, CCSNH Presidents and Vice-Presidents. The practical outcome of these meetings is a closer partnership with Great Bay Community College (GBCC) to ensure students needing developmental courses in college are taking those classes at locations which can best meet those needs, including financials, support services and advising. The Exeter Adult High School Diploma program offers math courses that are aligned to GBCC Developmental Math 070, 080, and 084 and has piloted English classes aligned to GBCC English 097 and 098. Referrals between adult education and GBCC have happened for years. This current partnership is taking collaboration, referrals, and program development to new levels which will benefit both adult education graduates and community members as they move forward in their personal career pathways.

Reflection

Life is full of surprises and it is important that each of us remains open to them. Sometimes even the most unexpected happens! Just in my adult life, I have celebrated the joys of the Boston Red Sox winning three World Series Championships; I was very saddened to hear—and then go to see—that the face of the Old Man of the Mountain had fallen off; and I was stunned to see that a Pope resigned! I wonder what will be next!