

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT
Christine Rath, Interim Superintendent of Schools—SAU 16
November 2017



Time for Thanksgiving...

November is a good time to stop and think about all we have reason to be thankful for. Personally, I am thankful for the support and guidance so many in SAU 16 have provided me as I began my service as your interim Superintendent this year. I have been so impressed with the active community involvement and the strong support shown for our schools and school staffs by the many School Board members, advisory committee members, parents and community members I have met in my short tenure. There are valued traditions and high expectations here in SAU 16. There is also a strong belief in the value of our children and of the place public education plays in our children becoming thoughtful and engaged citizens of the future.



Exeter Region Cooperative School Board Announces - EHS Principal

The Exeter Cooperative School Board is pleased to announce that Michael Monahan has accepted their offer to serve as the Principal at Exeter High School.

This fall the Board engaged in a lengthy and thoughtful process to build consensus around the qualities and characteristics that the next Principal at Exeter High School should possess. As part of this process, more than 40 faculty, staff and students met individually or in small groups and more than 500 individuals responded to the survey to share their hopes and expectations for the next principal at Exeter High School. The Board also engaged Mr. Monahan in an extended conversation about his vision for the future of Exeter High School.

The School Board reviewed the results of this process and concluded that they were seeking an individual who acts ethically, with honesty, transparency and trust; who ensures equitable access to effective teachers, opportunities and supports; who ensures a safe school where students are known, trusted and respected and who works collaboratively with staff, parents and community to achieve a shared vision for the high school.

After careful review of the many candidates who have applied for and been interviewed for this position in the past, the Cooperative School Board concluded that the person currently serving as the interim Principal at Exeter High School, Michael Monahan, best exhibits these qualities and characteristics.

Mr. Monahan has served as Assistant Principal at Exeter High School for the past 15 years, and since last spring, Mike has served as Interim Principal at the high school. Prior to coming to Exeter, Mike taught Science at Merrimack High School and coached cross-country, track and field. Mike earned his Bachelor's degree and a Master in Teaching degree from Boston College, with a concentration in Geology. Mike completed the Administration Certification Program at Rivier College.

The School Board was impressed with the strong support that Michael Monahan received during time he has served as Interim Principal, as well as the vision Mike has shared with the Board for the future of Exeter High School. The Board looks forward to Mike continuing the excellent work he has begun.

Superintendent Search Process

The Superintendent Search process is well underway. The position has been posted with a closing date of November 21, 2017.

The Superintendent Search Committee members have set as their first task to develop a Leadership Profile for the position. To do this, the committee is asking faculty, staff, students, parents and community members the question: "What are your hopes and expectations for the new SAU 16 Superintendent?"

Members of the search committee, along with the New Hampshire School Boards Association, have piloted a survey that seeks responses to this question. This survey has been sent out through email to all parents of students in SAU 16, as well as to all faculty and staff. The survey is also available to community members through a link on the SAU 16 web site.

The results will be compiled and shared with the SAU 16 Superintendent Search Committee and the profile will serve as a basis for the search and selection process.

The Superintendent Search Committee members include: Coop/SAU Joint Board **Travis Thompson** – Search Committee Chairperson and Chair of the SAU Joint Board and Coop Board member; Brentwood Board - **Jessie Hollister**; East Kingston Board - **Dave McBride**; Exeter Board - **John Maxwell**; Kensington Board - **Tina Favara**; Newfields Board - **Thomas Hayward**; Stratham Board - **Sarah Gallaher**; the following SAU school staff: **Katelyn Belanger** – Stratham Memorial School; **Cynthia Boyle** – the Cooperative Middle School; **Kristina Peterson** – Exeter High School; and community members: **Jenn Siegfried** and **Jamie Saucier**.

Exeter Regional Cooperative School Board Welcomes New Member

A life-long resident of SAU 16, **Robert "Bob" Hall**, was selected by the Kensington Selectmen to fill the vacant seat left by Jim Webber on the Exeter Region Coop School Board. Mr. Hall will replace Mr. Webber until the March 2018 elections when the seat will be open for a one year term. Mr. Hall graduated from Exeter High School in 1966 and was a teacher at EHS for 35 years prior to his retirement. He is also well known for his advocacy for rail passenger service and was instrumental in acquiring the Downeaster's rail stop in Exeter.

School Boards to Consider Policy Changes

As a result of recent legislation, the School Boards in SAU 16 will be considering a series of revisions to important policies in the coming weeks.

Parental Objections To Specific Course Material (Policy IGE)

This policy, in general, allows parents to review curriculum materials and to request alternative materials for their child. As a result of a change in state law this policy will now require schools to provide a two week notice to parents before the use of materials related to instruction of human sexuality.

Non Educational Surveys and Questionnaires (Policy ILD)

This policy ILD does not change the existing policy requirement that parents receive a ten (10) day notification prior to school personnel administering non-academic surveys to their children and that parents be permitted to inspect any non-educational survey. Parents may refuse for their child to participate.

The revision to this policy is a new requirement that a parent or legal guardian must give prior written consent for school personnel to administer a non-academic survey. In other words, parents must “opt in” for their child to be given the non-academic survey, not just opt out.

This new requirement does not apply to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Parents must be given the ten (10) day notice, opportunity to inspect and option to not have their child participate.

Hazing (Policy JICFA)

The revision to this policy requires the District to report promptly to law enforcement all hazing which is reported to the District or which District staff has knowledge. (According to a recent revision to state law, it is a misdemeanor for District to knowingly permit or condone student hazing, to fail to take measures to prevent, or fail to report hazing which has been reported or of which the District has knowledge.)

Reporting Child Abuse (Policy JLF)

The revision to this existing policy requires principals or administrators to post signs in public areas with clear instructions on how to report child abuse or neglect. Posting the sign is the new requirement; district staff are already required to report.

Sexual Harassment - Staff (Policy GBAA)

Currently SAU 16 districts have a policy that addresses sexual harassment for both staff and students. The administration is proposing to develop separate policies regarding sexual harassment - one for staff and one for students. The policy being considered in the coming weeks is the policy relating to staff.

The major changes in this policy are:

- Reports of sexual harassment are to be made to the principal of the school and upon receipt of report, the principal notifies the superintendent.
- If the “alleged perpetrator” is the principal, the alleged victim may report to any other district employee - who will then report directly to Superintendent or designee.
- The investigation is done at district level either by the SAU 16 Title IX Coordinator or by an outside investigator.
- The factual report with the recommended action resulting from the investigation is given to the superintendent who will decide on the appropriate discipline if the conduct is deemed to be sexual harassment. If the conduct was not deemed to be sexual harassment, but inappropriate conduct, the superintendent decides on the action on a case by case basis. There is an appeal process in the policy as well.

Tax Rates - 2017

Local tax rates for the six towns within SAU 16 have been set and fall tax bills have been processed by local town officials. The finalized 2017 rates (per \$1,000 of assessed property valuation) are as follows:

Brentwood – \$24.79 (Increase of \$0.54) - Increase of 2.23%
East Kingston - \$24.77 (Decrease of \$0.02) – Essentially Unchanged
Exeter - \$26.77 (Increase of \$0.53) – Increase of 2.02%
Kensington - \$22.39 (Decrease of \$1.12) –Decrease of 4.76%
Newfields – *has not been set*
Stratham - \$20.30 (Decrease of \$0.10) – 0.49%



SAU16 Strategic Plan News

The 2017-2022 Strategic Plan was approved by the SAU Joint Board on October 17, 2016. This plan was the culmination of two years of work by the Strategic Plan Steering Committee and their Focus Groups. The full set of recommendations from the plan can be viewed on the SAU 16 Website at <http://www.sau16.org/index.php/home/strategic-planning>

In this section of the Superintendent's Letter each month we will highlight efforts and activities underway in the districts that align with the goals of the strategic plan.

Social Emotional Learning Efforts Underway

This committee is working hard to research programs and practices to support adult and students in the area of social emotional learning.

SAU 16 is piloting the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA) for grade two students. This is a screening tool that supports further assessment if necessary. This program is web based and has numerous resources for classroom teachers to incorporate social emotional learning into the curriculum. Here is the link for those interested: <https://www.mhs.com/MHS-Assessment?prodname=dessa>

Late Start Committee Continues Work

The Late Start Task Force continues to meet and further investigate the potential impact of starting the Cooperative School District's Schools - the Cooperative Middle School (CMS), Exeter High School (EHS) and the Seacoast School of Technology (SST) - up to an hour later each day. The Committee is very committed to keeping cognizant of how this change could impact sports teams' participation; game start times; sending towns to SST and the enrollment in the SST programs; and bus routes and bus ridership. Additionally, the Committee has been tasked to explore the long term impact to students and communities of schools that have already made the shift to a later start time. Members of the committee are excited to continue the work of this worthy exploration.

1:1 Chromebook Initiative at Exeter High School

This fall, the Exeter Region Cooperative School District (ERCSD) has provided Chromebooks for

all 9th graders at Exeter High School in order to help extend their learning and better prepare them for college and career. Exeter High School is proud to support learning utilizing 21st century technology. By giving our students access to the 21st century learning tools, we hope to empower students to be better communicators, collaborators, contributors, and citizens. Our adoption of one-to-one Chromebooks will allow students to access digital content, conduct research, and share their creative and academic efforts. Students will be able to keep their device when they graduate from Exeter High School.

The early reports from faculty are very positive. One math teacher reports,
“The technology, along with a curriculum that is designed to be enhanced by consistent access to the internet, has transformed my classes. My classes are more dynamic and allow for me to both individualize and differentiate the students’ education. Moving my classroom to 1:1 has allowed me to spend more time working face to face with individual students. I utilize the Chromebooks to deliver practice that gives instant feedback, along with scaffolded help, to each student.”

Another teacher comments,
“I use Chromebooks in different ways in my math classes. In Algebra Foundations, students work at their own pace on their own individualized program. We have developed videos for instruction, which allows us to provide more individualized attention to students that need it. We also use the online program ASSISTments for student practice and assessment, which gives them timely feedback.”



New Hampshire Partners in Education Blue Ribbon Awards

On October 25, 2017, five SAU 16 schools received Blue Ribbon Awards at the annual ceremony hosted by the New Hampshire Partners in Education. Blue Ribbon awards recognize schools for the significant volunteer service that has taken place in these schools over the past year. Schools receiving the 2017 Blue Ribbon awards included Kensington Elementary School, Lincoln Street School, Main Street School, Newfields Elementary School and Stratham Memorial School.

Swasey Central School and Exeter High School Educators Named for *National LifeChanger of the Year Awards*

Swasey Central School para-educator, **Rosemary Babcock**, and Exeter High School Health teacher, **Karlynn Supple**, have both been nominated for the *2017-2018 National LifeChanger of the Year Award*. Sponsored by the National Life Group Foundation, LifeChanger of the Year recognizes and rewards the very best K-12 educators and school district employees across the United States who are making a difference in the lives of students by exemplifying excellence, positive influence, and leadership.

Each school year, LifeChanger of the Year receives hundreds of nominations from all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Seventeen individual LifeChanger of the Year awards will be given during the 2017-2018 school year.

SST Pre-Engineering Students Excel in Competition

Congratulations to SST Pre-Engineering students: Samara Holmes - Exeter; Jake Myers - Exeter; and Jordan Hunter - '17 Newmarket, for placing in the Top 40 of the nationwide Student Trophy

Competition of the ACTE - Association for Career and Technical Education. And congratulations to their teacher, Vaso Partinoudi. ACTE received *nearly 400 entries* for the 2017 Student Trophy Design Contest.

Exeter's DARE Officer Named Best in the State

In early October of this year, **Officer Steve Petroski**, a three year instructor in the DARE Program at Lincoln Street School, was recognized as the *NH DARE Officer of the Year* at the graduation ceremony for newly certified DARE officers in Concord. After beginning his police career in 1985, the East Kingston resident retired from the Exeter Police Department in 2008, but continued part-time with the department while also substituting part time at the Cooperative Middle School (CMS) before deciding to acquire his paraprofessional certification. His enjoyment in working with the students at CMS inspired him to get certified as a DARE officer at the state level and Lincoln Street School has been the proud beneficiary of Officer Petroski's involvement in the DARE Program. Congratulations to Officer Petroski!

Stratham Memorial School (SMS) Collects for Puerto Rico Fundraiser

The fourth and fifth graders in Stratham Memorial's "Pack of Kindness" raided more than \$1,500 through their *Pennies for Puerto Rico Drive*. For a two week period in October, collection bags were set up in all SMS classrooms for students to fill up with spare change. Then 28 fourth grade students and 30 fifth grade students who make up the "Pack of Kindness" periodically gathered the bags to compile the change and dedicated the collection to help those affected by the hurricanes in Puerto Rico. All the money raised was donated to the American Red Cross for hurricane relief!