

2015-2016 REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

For the second consecutive year our nation's economy has experienced a precipitous drop in oil and gas prices which now average below \$2.00 a gallon for the first time in eight years. Add to that the interesting phenomenon that property tax rates in all six SAU 16 communities declined in late 2015. The value of the US dollar is strong against both the Canadian dollar and the Euro which translates to a stronger economy for our country and our region. New Hampshire has the lowest rate of people living in poverty and our employment rate is 6th best in the country. In fact, the NH unemployment rate (3.2%) is the lowest it has been in 14 years. 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 and Mission Statement 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.

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). Efforts are underway to develop the next SAU Strategic Plan for 2016-2021. Approximately 40 interested members of the public have joined this collaborative effort and have identified three significant Focus Areas for future goals: 1) Teaching and Learning; 2) Design, Philosophy, and Governance; and 3) Health and Community. 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. *Individualized Innovative Instruction* 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.
3. The SAU administration and faculty are continuing the implementation of the NextGen Science standards to advance curriculum work throughout all of the schools in the SAU.
4. The College Board recognized Exeter High School in its 6th Annual AP District Honor Roll — a list of approximately 425 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.
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 consistently bridging the knowledge gap between educators and their practices. Each year these teams work with each other to visit classrooms and then engage in discussions of explicit practices that are directly tied into the process of school improvement.
6. The SAU Safety and Security Committee continued to strengthen collaboration among the 11 schools in the SAU and the six local police departments. This year’s work extended to involvement with the NH Department of Safety Office of Homeland Security which conducted a “School Security Assessment” for each facility. These “safety audits” are designed to improve all safety and security protocols and practices in our schools.
7. In conjunction with the Stratham Police Department and the NH Department of Safety, the Cooperative Middle School conducted a day-long “active shooter” training exercise in August 2015.
8. This school year brought the largest enrollment ever (737 students) to the Seacoast School of Technology (SST). SST began in 1980 and is currently in its 37th year of operation. It offers 12 programs in career and technical education fields. Currently 171 students are earning 462 college credits through “Dual Enrollment” programs offered in conjunction with various colleges and universities.
9. All seven of the SAU 16 elementary schools were recognized by New Hampshire Partners in Education for their outstanding parent and community volunteer programs.
10. Exeter Adult Education 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.
11. The Exeter School District welcomed Mr. Drew Bairstow as the new principal for Lincoln Street School (LSS).
12. Four members of the Exeter High School (EHS) Class of 2015 earned the prestigious distinction of being named *National Merit Scholars*: Guinevere Gilman, Meredith Gilman, Cameron Morris, and Caroline Ritter.
13. The National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Foundation named the SAU 16 schools as one of its 2015 “Best Communities for Music Education” in the US.
14. Exeter High School (EHS) teacher and coach Jim Tufts was inducted into the New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association (NHIAA) Hall of Fame. Coach Tufts teaches Physical Education at EHS and is the Varsity Boys Soccer and Ice Hockey Coach. He also initiated Special Olympics at EHS and still coordinates its events.
15. Cooperative Middle School (CMS) Physical Education teacher and EHS Varsity Girls Soccer Coach Megan Young was inducted into the New Hampshire Soccer Coaches Hall of Fame. She is the first woman to ever receive this honor since the program was established in 1994. She joins 30 men, including Coach Tufts, who have been lauded with this honor.
16. The New England League of Middle Schools (NELMS) honored Cooperative Middle School (CMS) teacher Pat Glennon as a “Master in the Middle” for her outstanding work and emphasis on community service by introducing, supporting, and continuing to nurture the widely-

implemented *Travis Manion Foundation* which honors fallen heroes with the motto of “If not me, then who....” throughout CMS.

17. SAU 16 saw the retirements of 16 SAU professional staff members who dedicated a combined total of 408 years of service to our children and their families. Couple this with the 16 professional staff members who retired a year ago. They had dedicated a total of 352 years of faithful service. This means that in two years, 32 staff members have retired from working in SAU 16. Given the demographics of current employees, this trend will continue for several more years.
18. SAU 16 presently has 20 students who are classified as “immigrants” according to criteria established by the NH Department of Education.
19. SAU 16 currently has 90 students who are registered for “Home School” programs.
20. The “Officer Stephen Arkell Community 5K” run/walk raised over \$71,000 through the efforts of over 1,800 participants and volunteers.
21. Thanks to the generous involvement of local individuals and organizations, 90 graduates in the Exeter High School Class of 2015 received over \$190,000 in scholarships and tuition aid for college.
22. Ms. Anne DeMarco, Animal and Plant Science teacher at the Seacoast School of Technology (SST) was one of only 42 nationwide teachers recognized at the 2015 National FFA Conference for having earned her Honorary American FFA Degree.
23. Ms. Cathy Clermont, Cooperative Middle School (CMS) Local Education Administrator and formerly a CMS physical education teacher, was recognized by the NH Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (NHAHPERD) as its “2015 Adapted Physical Education Teacher of the Year.”
24. The New Hampshire Football Officials Association presented one of its three 2015 Sportsmanship Awards to Exeter High School (EHS) and recognized Coach Bill Ball for the EHS football team’s collective efforts in the important area of sportsmanship.
25. The Exeter High School (EHS) Unified Soccer Team won its first state championship in the fall of 2015.
26. Mrs. Sue Noseworthy received the coveted 2015 *Eustis Award* at the formal opening of the SAU 16 school year. Mrs. Noseworthy has distinguished herself as someone who truly exemplifies the outstanding qualities characterized by an SAU 16 education. She has taught art at Lincoln Street School (LSS) for 32 years and joins 13 other SAU 16 professional staff members who have been recognized in this way since the *Eustis Award* began in 2004.
27. Ms. Helen Burnham, Library Media Specialist at Lincoln Street School (LSS) was selected as the “2015 School Librarian of the Year” by the New Hampshire School Library Media Association.
28. Ms. Lili Spinosa, Physical Education teacher at Kensington Elementary School (KES) received the 2015 Outstanding Achievement Award from the New Hampshire Governor’s Council on Physical Activity and Health.
29. Mr. Dan Provost, Exeter High School (EHS) English teacher and Advisor to the Student Senate, received the 2015 Warren E. Shull Advisor of the Year Award for his outstanding work with and dedication to the EHS Student Senate.
30. Mr. Josh Felch, Math teacher at the Cooperative Middle School (CMS) was honored by Phillips Exeter Academy (PEA) in the fall of 2015 with the *Honoring Early Education Award* which recognizes those teachers who have a profound impact on one or more PEA students.
31. Student enrollment continues to be monitored carefully in all schools. Among the schools in the SAU, East Kingston Elementary School, Kensington Elementary School, Newfields Elementary School, and Swasey Central School in Brentwood have experienced the most significant losses in student enrollment over the past 10 years.
32. In November, the SAU Joint Board hosted its 6th annual meeting with state legislators as they continue ways to discuss topics of mutual interest and to share ideas about what is happening politically and financially at the state and local levels.

33. Ms. Claire Bloom, the founder of the *End 68 Hours of Hunger* program, was presented with the statewide “Champions for Children Award” by the New Hampshire Association of School Administrators Association in May 2015. This successful weekend food backpack program now benefits approximately 85 students within the SAU and is coordinated locally by Ms. Kim Army from Newfields and Ms. Sue Abizaid from Stratham.
34. The SAU 16 Safety and Security Committee continues to meet at least three times each year to strengthen the collaboration and communication among school officials and local police departments. Over 40 individuals are directly involved in this important community work.
35. Schools continue to use a wide variety of media - including websites, newspapers, cable access television, and blogs - to communicate the schools’ mission and service to the community.
36. The Exeter Area Lions Club continues to work 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.
37. SAU 16 continues to support 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.
38. 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.
39. The community of educators remains diligent in supporting the needs of students entrusted to each of us.

This is my eighth year working with you in this important educational process. Please know that I am very grateful to the 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. Public education faces many challenges each day because of the changing needs of students and the expectations placed upon it. Nevertheless, SAU 16 remains committed to preparing all students to be good citizens who will emerge as responsible stewards, powerful leaders, and dedicated workers in our society.

Respectfully submitted,

MICHAEL A. MORGAN
Superintendent of Schools