

# **East Kingston Elementary School**

## **2014 Strategic Plan**



**The 2013 New Hampshire Elementary School of Excellence**

## 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.

## EKES Mission Statement

Learning Empowers All People

## EKES Philosophy of Effective Instruction

East Kingston Elementary School's philosophy of instruction centers on the core value that, as a school community, we strive to make decisions based on what is in the best interest of our students. We believe that effective instruction begins with knowing our students as learners and respecting them as individuals. This central belief is sustained by our ability to make meaningful connections to students' lives, account for diverse learning styles and abilities, foster student independence, and actively listen to what each child has to say.

We build upon our knowledge of learners to create an instructional environment in which students have a shared understanding of expectations and a clear sense of purpose.

Purposeful instruction:

- is personally meaningful to students
- enables students to make connections across a range of experiences
- fosters productive activity and outcomes
- has aims that are readily apparent to students
- supports teachers in their design and assessment of instruction

We believe an effective instructional environment encourages questioning and supports thoughtful risk-taking. We respect what individuals bring to the learning process and celebrate their ability to freely share information, engage in productive give-and-take, and work collaboratively.

Effective instruction is built upon dedication, preparedness, and thorough knowledge of subject matter on the part of school staff. Dedication is fed by the ability to help students make personal connections to subject matter. Preparedness requires knowledgeable use of resources and the systematic use of data to support instructional decisions. Thorough knowledge incorporates awareness of the curriculum, its goals and standards, as well as opportunities to reflect upon and implement best practice.

We believe that ongoing dialogue about our practice is an essential component of effective instruction. Asking questions of each other and maintaining awareness of each other's teaching and learning activities facilitates our ability to implement appropriate instruction and sustain a supportive and connected community of learners.

### Guiding Principles

Provide a rigorous and comprehensive education that challenges all students  
Master core academic knowledge and skills to the best of each individual's ability

- Language arts
- Mathematics
- Science, technology, research, laboratory, and other functional academic skills
- Social Studies
- World languages
- Fine and performing arts
- Health, family/consumer science, physical education

Support a culture within our schools that builds strength of mind and character

- Critical thinking and analytical skills
- Self-discipline, self motivation, independence
- Effective communication and collaboration skills
- Personal responsibility and respect for others
- Ability to adapt and evolve with resiliency and creativity
- Passion for learning and challenge
- Physical and emotional well-being and safety

*Prepare students for active participation in community and civic affairs*

- *Appreciation of and experience with community service*
- *Opportunities for leadership and community / school involvement*
- *Understanding and appreciation of our democratic society and civil rights*

Obtain backing from SAU 16 central office operations to support our vision and achievement of these goals

- Provide high quality professional services to our member school districts at reasonable cost to taxpayers
- Build and maintain positive relationships among our communities, parents, schools, and other educational institutions
- Implement the strategic plan

## SAU 16 Communications Goals - EKES Action Plan

### GOAL:

To review the current communications systems in the SAU school community, assess their effectiveness and make recommendations for improvement in each of the following areas:

- School to Community
- SAU to Community
- School to School
- SAU to School

Ensure timely communication between schools and parents/community members:

- Establish a policy of keeping all school Internet communication up-to-date.
  - EKES Action- This is consistent with EKES practice.
- Establish a specific schedule for teachers to update their grades regularly on Powerschool.
  - EKES Action- The school is in the process of updating our report card on Power School and providing training for staff in using the Power School Grade Book to upload grades.
- Establish an expectation that all school personnel will return e-mail and/or telephone messages from parents in a timely fashion.
  - EKES Action- This is consistent with EKES practice.
- Ensure great care to the quality and accuracy of all electronic communications.

Improve communication regarding student expectations and progress:

- Ensure regular communication from each elementary school, and its teachers, to the parents.
  - EKES Action- Teachers communicate weekly with parents and students through weekly newsletters found on classroom websites/blogs. Photos, video and samples of student projects are often included. The school provides a weekly e-letter, The EKES Weekly, to all parents and makes it available in hard copy to those who request this.
- Strengthen communication between CMS and EHS teachers in terms of expectations for students.
  - EKES Action- Continue to work closely with CMS in our efforts to provide meaningful placement data and support transition programs for students and families.
- Review the procedures for parent-teacher conferences in all SAU16 schools.
  - EKES Action- EKES follows a trimester format for reporting student progress. As part of this process, the school established new criteria for sharing student progress with parents. Parent-teacher conferences along with a progress report are provided at the midpoint of the first and third trimester and a progress report is

provided at the midpoint of the second trimester. Report cards are issued at the conclusion of each trimester.

- Review the skills and knowledge being measured on report cards in all SAU 16 elementary schools.
  - EKES Action- In 2006, EKES developed a standards based reporting system. Over the course of several years, we have revised and updated our report cards to better communicate student progress to parents. With the adoption of the new common core curriculum, we have begun further revisions to our report card language. The updated report cards will be implemented in the 2014-2015 school year.

Improve communications involving administrators, paraprofessionals, and staff:

- Provide additional time/opportunity for faculty to meet with one another on professional matter, both formally and informally.
  - EKES Action- The professional staff meets two times a month to discuss and work on curriculum issues and engage in professional development. The use of this time is determined by our school's different curriculum committees and the school leadership team. The administration holds five business meetings a year that all staff is required to attend. Each grade level team meets weekly to discuss instruction, curriculum, and student progress. A professional development institute is organized each summer for staff. The 2014 Summer Institute will offer workshops on preparing students for the Smarter Balanced Assessment in literacy and mathematics, Performance Plus training for staff (A web-based data software system) and first aid/CPR.
- Administrators need to seek additional methods for enhancing communication with their staffs.
  - EKES Action- A daily e-notice is sent to staff with comprehensive informational updates and calendar. Minutes of all grade level team meetings and school wide committees are sent via email to all staff members.
  - EKES Action- The administration will attend grade level, school-wide committee and special education meetings.
- Improve the lines of communication with paraprofessionals to include information relative to the students with whom they work.
  - EKES Action- Paraprofessionals participate in two full day in-service days per year and are allotted \$125 each per year to attend a workshop(s) outside of the district. Paraprofessionals are also invited and paid to attend our annual Summer Institute offering two to three days of professional development. The special education teachers meet weekly with paraprofessionals to review student progress and to plan intervention strategies. The special education teachers also offer after school training sessions for paraprofessionals several times a year. Finally, paraprofessionals are included in IEP meetings whenever possible.
- Restore the middle management department positions, (i.e. Learning Area Leaders/Department Heads) at CMS and EHS.
  - EKES Action-EKES utilizes a coaching model to support ongoing professional development. A literacy coach and mathematics coach work in the building

for a combined 28 hours per week support and enhance the implementation of the curriculum and professional development. Support is provided by the coaches through resource enhancement, book study groups, instructional observation, model and co-teaching.

- SAU administrators need to work with all non-teaching personnel to pinpoint communication concerns and then work in unison to address the problems.
  - EKES Action- Because EKES is a small school, the administration is able to consult daily with the office manager, custodian, cafeteria employees, nurse and administrative assistants.

## SAU 16 Design and Philosophy Goals – EKES Action Plan

### GOAL:

The committee believes that 21st century literacy and knowledge of technology are core skills and should be considered an important part of the curriculum. The SAU should commit to developing paper-less practices that support collaboration, connectivity and the development of learning networks that will extend beyond the formal education SAU 16 provides.

- Provide more flexibility for students to move among levels, courses, and disciplinary tracks before and after courses have begun.
  - EKES Action- EKES has adopted instructional models such as the readers and writers workshop that support and enhance differentiated instruction in the regular classroom.
  - EKES Action- A team of special educators, tutors, coaches and teachers meet weekly to monitor student response to instruction (RTI), student progress, and classroom teacher concerns.
  - Beginning in 2014, EKES will be piloting a grade ½ multi-age classroom which is an early step toward initiating competency based learning models where students are able to move through the curriculum at their pace and skill level.
- Create a committee to explore the transitions between the elementary schools and the middle school, and between the middle school and the high school.
  - EKES Action- An SAU wide Transition Committee representing all schools met in early 2014 and will continue meet at a minimum on an annual basis.

## SAU 16 Community Involvement Goals –EKES Action Plan

## GOAL:

The entire SAU16, from students to administrators, will recognize and support the value of community service and look for ways to strengthen community involvement in our schools. This is the first step to encourage growth in the connectedness of all the SAU communities.

SAU16 shall establish a community service website, linked to each school's website, which enables individual districts to:

- Publicize student volunteer opportunities.
  - EKES Action- EKES utilizes the weekly e-letter, the EKES Weekly, to publicize student volunteer opportunities and happenings. The newsletter is sent to families and posted each week and is posted on our website. The PTO also maintains an active link to our web site where they list events and volunteer opportunities.
- Build a master list of community volunteers.
  - EKES Action- EKES PTO maintains an active list of volunteers with the help of a PTO volunteer coordinator.
- Encourage students to be active, caring members of the community.
  - EKES Action-EKES engages in constant reinforcement of "The Three B's + One: Be safe, Be responsible, Be respectful and Be Peaceful" through collaborative class meetings and whole school Friday morning meetings. Character education and development of our students is an important school wide goal at EKES.
- Provide opportunities for community service.
  - EKES Action- The EKES Community has supported many community service activities each year: Trick or Treat for UNICEF; Ongoing EK Food Pantry Collections; 68 Hours of Hunger, Halloween candy for the Troops; Peace Greeters; NHSPCA; Valentines for Veterans; Jump Rope for Heart; Senior and Grandparent Luncheon. The most exciting aspect of the community service taking place at EKES is that more than three quarters of the initiatives are organized and run by our students.

## SAU 16 Curriculum and Assessment Goals – EKES Action Plan

Improve the clarity and consistency of K-12 curricula:

- Establish a simplified one-page core curriculum for each class, with progressively increasing levels of depth and complexity through each grade level.
  - EKES Action- These documents are available for review on our school's website along with more comprehensive grade level curriculum guides.
  
- Enhance standard curricula by implementing consistent procedures and programs for remediation and extension in all SAU 16 schools.
  - EKES Action- The staff meets twice a month for what we refer to as "PD

Mornings". These meetings are dedicated strictly to professional development supporting the school-wide curricular goals set for the year. Professional goals for the year are established by the School Board and overseen by the school's leadership team- a committee of teachers representing each grade level, specialists and administration. Grade level teams meet each week to discuss student progress toward meeting school wide curricular goals. Meeting notes of all grade level teams are sent out to the entire staff for review. The school's literacy and math coaches provide on-going professional development through conducting regular book study groups, instructional observation and modeling in all classrooms. Every year, EKES hosts a Summer Institute for teachers. The Institute is typically two to three days in length and offers a wide variety of workshops that support school-wide professional development efforts.

- EKES Action- EKES maintains an active response to instruction team (RTI) that reviews the instructional needs of individual students, implements improvement plans and monitors student progress on an ongoing basis. Members of this RTI team meet bi-monthly with classroom teachers to insure transparency of current student reading skills, and brainstorm teaching practices to insure future development. Extra time will also be provided to allow members of the RTI Team to meet on a monthly basis- This includes special education teachers, instructional coaches and tutors. The purpose of these meetings is ongoing student review and service oversight.
- EKES Action- Addendum to this document (See attached) is the EKES Strategic Improvement Plan for Literacy and Mathematics that is designed to better align and deepen instruction to the common core curriculum.

Facilitate teacher development, coordination, and review of curricular changes to achieve a consistent and cohesive educational program:

- Create more time for common planning, curriculum development, and interdisciplinary collaboration.
  - EKES Action- Grade level teams have at least one common planning time weekly for instructional collaboration. Unified arts teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators and instructional coaches regularly participate in these meetings.
- Enhance professional development by improving on-site training opportunities and implementing a consistent teacher mentor program in all SAU 16 schools.
  - EKES Action-EKES engages in the SAU mentor program
  - EKES provides mandatory and voluntary training opportunities throughout the year, based on literacy, math, science and technology instruction through monthly professional development meetings, ongoing instructional coaching, and an annual summer institute.

Increase rigor throughout the curriculum and clarify, as well as promote, all possible learning opportunities:

- Address specific needs identified within each subject area.
  - EKES Action- See the attached 2014 EKES Strategic Improvement Plans for Literacy and Mathematics.
- Increase administrative support for teachers in their pursuit of higher standards.



- EKES Action- The administration, working in conjunction with the SAU is developing observational walk-through tools to provide useful feedback and instructional trends with teachers.

Improve the statistical validity and consistency of K-12 assessments:

- Evaluate student learning with teacher-developed annual exit assessments that are aligned to the curriculum.
  - EKES Action- Fall and spring benchmarks are currently in place in reading, writing. End of trimester mathematics assessments are in place grades K-5.
- Create a committee to study our standardized assessment program to make it more statistically relevant and useful.
  - EKES Action- Teachers will be trained in August 2014 to use Performance Plus, a web based data collection tool provided by the state that will enhance our ability to collect, analyze, interpret and share a broad and triangulated range of data.
- Improve communication among schools and parents by creating a system to capture and store assessment data on student skill levels that identifies those who have mastered the material and those who remain deficient.
  - EKES Action- As stated above, teachers will be trained to use Performance Plus to enhance their ability to collect, analyze, interpret a broad and triangulated range of data. This data will be shared with parents within all of our means of sharing student progress.

## SAU 16 Governance Goals –EKES Action Plan

- Continue the community-wide discussion to identify ways to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the SAU governing structure.
  - EKES Action- EKES works closely with the SAU Central Office, Technology Department and the Facilities and Maintenance Department.

## SAU 16 Lifestyles Goals – EKES Action Plan

- By 2015, SAU 16 schools will provide a healthy environment for our students, faculty, and staff with a yearly inspection of the physical plants for mold, mildew, ventilation, pests, and other environmental problems.
  - EKES Action- EKES conducts air quality and mold sampling annually. The local Fire Chief and Health inspector inspects the school annually as required by state law. Water testing is conducted four times per year. The school's maintenance coordinator inspects the playground and school grounds weekly.
- By 2015, all food offerings including vending machines in the SAU 16 schools will comply with the gold standard A list from the USDA and encourage a lifetime of healthy eating.
  - EKES Action- EKES has one vending machine for the purchase of bottled water and is housed in the school lobby.

- The School's Wellness Team meets quarterly to review and work to improve the quality of food offerings in our food service program.
- By December 2011, SAU 16 schools will continue to move forward in providing an environment and programs where students and staff can learn to care for each other and to appreciate individual differences. The entire school community will treat each other with respect and bullying and other degrading behaviors will not be tolerated.
  - EKES Action- EKES teachers have been trained in the Responsive Classroom approach and the school counselor uses the Open Circle model to teach social skills development. The entire school meets weekly to share successes, build community and strengthen relationships. The school adopts a school-wide theme each year that serves as common ground and learning for the school community. The 2014 theme is still to be determined. The 2013 theme has been, "Discover Your Imagination" and all school activities and enrichment have tied into the theme. The school is built on the principle of what we call the 3B's plus one: Be respectful, Be responsible, Be safe and Be Peaceful. This is an important element of our character education programming.
- SAU 16 shall continue to provide a breadth of offerings in the arts to address the whole student and their interests and talents. This shall include the opportunity for a minimum of weekly participation in music, art, or drama from grades K-12.-
  - EKES Action- Students at EKES attend art and music on a weekly basis. Art and song are also powerful learning tools that are used by teachers across all grade levels.
- By 2012, regular physical activity will be required of all students with an increased breadth of choices—team sports, club sports, individual sports, and life sports. The staff will be encouraged to model good exercise habits by participating when and where possible with the students.
  - EKES Action- Students at EKES enjoy recess twice a day and can participate in a wide range of after-school enrichment programs: zumba, karate, and basic training for kids as well as the cross country team for fourth and fifth graders.

- Work toward a common governance agreement among districts for a SAU-wide preschool program. (This would include the Exeter Region Cooperative District because it governs the Wright Start Pre-School program that is part of the Seacoast School of Technology.)
  - EKES Action-EKES will engage with the SAU in support of this much needed goal.
- Increase the graduation rate of students with disabilities to 90% by June 2015.
  - EKES Action-EKES will continue to engage in district and SAU-wide work toward this end.
- Further investigate special education across all districts for potential sharing of resources.
  - EKES Action-EKES will engage in SAU 16 work toward this end.

## EKES Action Plan - Mathematics

### YEAR 1 (2013-2014)

Improve the clarity and consistency of K-5 curricula:

- Establish resources for each grade-level with progressively increasing levels of depth and complexity through each grade level, aligned with the CCSS content and practices
  - Math education should begin in early childhood and progressively increase in level of depth and complexity. Mathematics curriculum resources will be collected and designed for each grade level that reflect not only the CCSS but also the CCSS practices. Additionally, curricula will be rigorous and reflect a high cognitive demand of DOK 2 or 3 in both classroom and at-home activities. Also, curricula will be integrated within the STEM disciplines as well as have a strong literacy component.

Facilitate teacher development, coordination, and review of curricular changes to achieve a consistent and cohesive educational program:

- Create more time for common planning, curriculum development, and interdisciplinary collaboration.
  - Each trimester will incorporate three morning professional developments, weekly meeting with teams and the EK STEM Specialist will lead at least one full day of specific mathematics teacher development in addition to district requirements. Interdisciplinary content will be incorporated into curriculum development during these times.
- Enhance professional development by improving on-site training opportunities.
  - Each trimester will include at least two formative observations by the EK STEM Specialist of each grade level teacher with feedback given within one day's time period. A formative observation tool will be used. Resulting data will be analyzed for the key aspects of quality mathematics instruction, including but not limited to the following: educator instructional choices, depth of mathematics, mathematical interactions with students, learner depth of mathematics. Data will be used to directly inform educator classroom practices.
  - Modeling of high quality mathematics instruction will occur at least twice in each trimester and grade level.
  - Professional development will include the integration of literacy in STEM and integration across the STEM disciplines. Specific technology resources will be included that are "trackable" (i.e. teachers can track student progress while the tool is used in the classroom and at home). Other topics will include Depth of Knowledge, Classroom Questioning and the building of Classroom Mathematics Community Practices.

Improve the statistical validity and consistency of K-12 assessments:

- Evaluate student learning through multiple assessment tools throughout the school year
  - Multiple forms of assessment will be used. Educators at each grade level will be required to complete a pre-assessment, administer district math

assessments. In each trimester, each grade level will be required to administer one performance task chosen by the EKES STEM Specialist

- Build and assess classroom assessments that are both reliable and valid and are of a variety of formats
  - Professional development time will be spent on creating student self-assessments, open-ended response questions and performance tasks that assess challenging classroom experiences but also take into account Universal Design issues and special needs. This includes anxiety towards mathematics.
- Analyze classroom assessments both at grade-level and at the whole-school level both qualitatively and quantitatively
  - Create a Performance Pathways-friendly structure for all assessment data collection
- Prepare for Smarter Balanced both in technology resources, student assessment and teacher preparation
  - Teachers will use part of their team meeting, along with the EKES STEM Specialist, to take the Smarter Balanced sample test and review grade-level released items for learner accessibility, representations and item analysis of content and DOK.
  - The EKES STEM Specialist will stay apprised of current research and both national and state initiatives involving Smarter Balanced and the Common Core State Standards. This includes state-wide trainings and announcements of district preparation efforts, participate in such trainings and communicate this information to EKES administration.

#### YEAR 2\* (2014-2015)

Facilitate teacher development, coordination, and review of curricular changes to achieve a consistent and cohesive educational program:

- Shift from a focus on resources review and accessibility to horizontal and vertical cohesion
- A full year live-binder of resources available
- A shift from focusing on finding new resources to improving current resources
- The STEM specialist will specifically focus on classroom observations and team planning with teachers, with team meetings and observations for each grade level once a month.
- The STEM Specialist will specifically focus on STEM integration by modeling 1-2 class sessions per trimester per grade level
- Enhance professional development by improving on-site training opportunities.
  - Begin to train teachers to use the classroom observation tool in teams
  - In trimester 1 and 2, a teacher grade level team visits at least one other teacher to observe , one at grade level and one above (on-site or at another SAU elementary school).

**\*Year 2 includes all year 1 activities but builds upon year 1 activities.**

### YEAR 3\*\* (2015-2016)

Facilitate teacher development, coordination, and review of curricular changes to achieve a consistent and cohesive educational program:

- Enhance professional development by improving on-site training opportunities.
  - Begin to train teachers to use the classroom observation tool in teams
  - In trimester 1 and 2, a teacher grade level team visits at least one other teacher to observe , one at grade level and one above (on-site or at another SAU elementary school).

**\*Year 2 includes all year 1 activities but builds upon year 1 activities.**

## EKES Action Plan-Literacy 2014-2015

### YEAR 1

Improve the clarity and consistency of K-5 curricula by taking these steps:

- Teachers will continue to be offered professional development mornings and meeting times with the Literacy Coach to deepen their ability to assess students, to reflect upon their instruction and imbed D.O.K. Level 2 & 3 vocabulary.
- Leadership Team will explore purchasing the Lucy Calkins' Units of Study in Reading, to further deepen our workshop model.
- Classroom teachers will be encouraged to observe another classroom at his/her own grade level, within the school, within the SAU, or within another SAU, to deepen his/her understanding of rigorous practice, as we teach the Common CORE curriculum.

Facilitate teacher development, coordination, and review of curricular changes to achieve a consistent and cohesive educational program:

- New classroom teachers will receive intensive support to insure best practice.
  - The Literacy Coach will push in, co-teach, observe, and/or model instruction, each week.
  - The Literacy Coach will have weekly planning meetings based on classroom observations.
  - The Literacy Coach will meet weekly with the two Literacy Tutors to insure strong communication, practice, and alignment to the CORE within the Response to Intervention format.
- The Literacy Coach will continue to co-chair the Common CORE Leadership Team, alongside Principal Eaves and the STEM Specialist. This cooperative team- comprised of classroom teachers, a special education teacher, and an United Arts teacher- is the avenue where state, district and CORE academic announcements are shared at EKES.

Improve the validity and use of formal and formative literacy assessments:

- Plan standards-based instruction, based on pretests, formal assessments and formative assessments.
  - Educators at each grade level will participate in RTI reflection meetings every other month with the Literacy Coach or a Literacy Tutor, to reflect upon current reading levels for all students in their grade, and to insure students are placed in appropriate tier of instruction. The goal of these conversations is to make the Response to Intervention model at EKES a dynamic and reflective one, where collaboration between teachers insures best practice for all students.
  - Educators at each grade level will be required to submit Reading and Writing benchmark levels based on formal assessments, such as the Developmental Reading Assessment, the Benchmark Reading Assessments and the Lucy Calkins writing rubrics once a semester, in order to insure adequate growth.
  - Teachers will be trained in using and interpreting the data stored in Performance Plus, during a summer institute.
- Prepare for Smarter Balanced both in technology resources, student assessment and teacher preparation
  - The Literacy Coach will stay apprised of current research and both national and state initiatives involving Smarter Balanced and the Common Core State

Standards. This includes state-wide trainings and announcements of district preparation efforts, participate in such trainings and communicate this information to EKES administration.

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### **YEAR 2\***

Facilitate teacher development, coordination, and review of curricular changes to achieve a consistent and cohesive educational program:

- A shift from focusing on finding new resources to improving current resources
- The Literacy Coach will specifically focus on working with beginning teachers and team planning with teachers, with team meetings and observations
- The Literacy Coach will continue to bring in new ideas through teacher book groups
- The Literacy Coach will continue to team with classroom teachers and special educators to revise our literacy Response to Intervention practices
- Enhance professional development by improving on-site training opportunities.
  - Continue to address the changes brought through the Smarter Balance assessment
  - In trimester 1 and 2, a teacher grade level team visits at least one other teacher to observe , one at grade level and one above (on-site or at another SAU elementary school).

**\*Year 2 includes all year 1 activities but builds upon year 1 activities.**

### **YEAR 3\*\***

Facilitate teacher development, coordination, and review of curricular changes to achieve a consistent and cohesive educational program:

- Enhance professional development by improving on-site training opportunities.
- Continue to revise Response to Intervention practices, to insure student success

**\*Year 2 includes all year 1 activities but builds upon year 1 activities.**

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**\*Literacy Coach will analyze the Smarter Balance test scores, and supply professional development to address skill gaps**