

# SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

## Michael A. Morgan, Superintendent of Schools—SAU 16

### DECEMBER 2014

#### **Champions for Children**

Community members and school staffs continue to recognize and celebrate the dedication of local individuals by nominating them for a 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

Earlier this fall, the SAU Joint Board recognized the outstanding efforts of Kim Army of Newfields and Sue Abezaid of Stratham. Ms. Army and Ms. Abezaid have been leading a group of over 100 volunteers in the *End 68 Hours of Hunger* program. This program gives food on a weekly basis to children from SAU16 who are food insecure. Food is provided for the 68 hour time frame between Friday's lunch at school and breakfast Monday morning at school. When receiving the Champions for Children Award, Ms. Army spoke about how *End 68 Hours of Hunger* packs and delivers bags to all schools in SAU 16, including the recently added high school. She also stated that 100% of the money donated toward *End 68 Hours of Hunger* is used to purchase food. Ms. Army also stressed that when she and Ms. Abezaid implemented the program, they were delivering 20 bags a week, and are now serving 100 children. Ms. Abezaid talked about how when children are fed, their reading and math scores improve. She also thanked the 100 plus volunteers involved in the program, and appreciated having a space at the Tuck Learning Center as a place to store food. Ms. Abezaid stated that students have approached the nurses at CMS and asked to continue receiving food, and how there has never been one *End 68 Hours of Hunger* backpack left behind at school. Ms. Army and Ms. Abezaid are true Champions for Children throughout all of SAU 16!

The Newfields School Board recently recognized Mr. Ray Buxton for his outstanding service to the children and community. For over 30 years, Mr. Buxton has been volunteering in various aspects of student life and Newfields Elementary School (NES). In his role as a volunteer firefighter, he worked with other community service vendors and installed a freeze-less water hydrant for school safety and for the community garden. He has helped to streamline school fire drills and evacuation procedures and has built school and classroom furniture. Mr. Buxton even provides regular tours of the Newfields Fire House for the children and chaperones field trips. The NES community applauds his many years of service and is proud to recognize him for this important honor.

#### **Free and Reduced Lunch Eligibility**

Each year the NH Department of Education collects data relative to the number of students in each school who are eligible to receive free/reduced lunch. The most recent statistics available are for the 2013-2014 school year and are available on the Department's website at [www.education.nh.gov](http://www.education.nh.gov).

The NH average for all students in grades K-12 is 28.27%

The NH average for all students in grades 1-8 is 30.42%

The NH average for all students in grades 9-12 is 24.18%

Within SAU 16:

- Brentwood—6.31%
- East Kingston—13.16%
- Lincoln Street School, Exeter—17.71%
- Main Street School, Exeter—15.61%
- Kensington—8.87%
- Stratham—8.13%
- Cooperative Middle School—11.59%
- Exeter High School—9.70%

Note: Newfields does not participate in this program.

**Contract Negotiations Update**

This school year four (4) 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 all four (4) of the groups and their respective School Boards. These include the teachers association in Brentwood and Stratham, as well as the paraprofessionals in the Exeter Region Cooperative and Newfields. The settled contracts will be presented to the voters in March 2015 for action at the annual School District Meeting of their respective districts.

**Summary of 2014 Collective Bargaining**

|   | 2014-2015  | 2015-2016  | 2016-2017  | 2017-2018  | 2018-2019 |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| <b>Brentwood Teachers</b>                 |            |            |            |            |           |
| Salary                                    | 0.00%      | 2.25%      | 2.25%      | 2.00%      |           |
| BC POS-Single-move to \$20 c/p&10/20/45Rx | 95%/5%     | 90%/10%    | 90%/10%    | 90%/10%    |           |
| BC POS-2P-move to \$20 c/p&10/20/45Rx     | 85%/15%    | 84%/16%    | 83%/17%    | 83%/17%    |           |
| BC POS-Family-move to \$20 c/p&10/20/45Rx | 75%/25%    | 74%/26%    | 73%/27%    | 73%/27%    |           |
| MT HMO-Single-move to \$10 c/p&10/20/45Rx | 100%/0%    | 95%/5%     | 95%/5%     | 95%/5%     |           |
| MT HMO-2P-move to \$10 c/p&10/20/45Rx     | 95%/5%     | 94%/6%     | 93%/7%     | 93%/7%     |           |
| MT HMO-Family-move to \$10 c/p&10/20/45Rx | 80%/20%    | 79%/21%    | 78%/22%    | 78%/22%    |           |
| Note: No new subscribers for POS          |            |            |            |            |           |
| <b>Coop Paraprofessionals</b>             |            |            |            |            |           |
| Salary                                    | 1.00%      | 2.75%      | 2.75%      | 2.75%      |           |
| MTB151PDED & 10/20/45 Rx                  | 70%-Single | 70%-Single | 70%-Single | 70%-Single |           |
| <b>Newfields Paraprofessionals</b>        | 2.00%      | 2.00%      | 2.00%      | 2.00%      | 2.00%     |
| Salary                                    |            |            |            |            |           |
| Mo health insurance benefit               |            |            |            |            |           |

|                              |          |            |            |            |  |
|------------------------------|----------|------------|------------|------------|--|
|                              |          |            |            |            |  |
| <b>Stratham Teachers</b>     |          |            |            |            |  |
| Salary                       | 2.5% cap | 2.5% cap   | 2.5% cap   | 2.5% cap   |  |
| Comp 200MC & 5/15/30 Rx      | 65%/35%  | Eliminated | Eliminated | Eliminated |  |
| POS BCT5RDR & 5/15/30 Rx     | 79%/21%  | 79%/21%    | Eliminated | Eliminated |  |
| HMO MTB15IPDED & 10/20/30 Rx | 90%/10%  | 90%/10%    | 90%/10%    | 90%/10%    |  |
| HMO MTB5 & 5/15/30 Rx        |          | 85%/15%    | 85%/15%    | 85%/15%    |  |
|                              |          |            |            |            |  |

**School Board Seats Available in March 2015**

Terms of office for some current school board members expire in March 2015. 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 Jessie Hollister and Dianne Vosgien in Brentwood; Christina Cassano-Pelletier in East Kingston; Kathy McNeill and John Maxwell in Exeter; Barbara Darby in Kensington; James McIlroy in Newfields; Heidi Hanson and Travis Thompson in Stratham; and on the Coop Board, Maggie Bishop (Exeter); Denny Grubbs (Exeter—two-year term); Paul Staller (Kensington—two-year term); Alicia Heslop (Newfields); and Helen Joyce (Stratham). Of the thirty-three total School Board seats in SAU 16, these fourteen 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 2015, must declare their candidacy in writing to the current school district clerk for their respective district **between January 21 and January 30, 2015.**

**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 2015. Any resident of East Kingston (current member Dave Pendell), Exeter (current member Carl Robertson) or Stratham (current member Susan Canada) will be able to be a candidate for this important position. Each term is for three (3) 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 21 and January 30, 2015.** Anyone interested in serving the community in this capacity may contact SAU Business Administrator Amy Ransom at [aransom@sau16.org](mailto:aransom@sau16.org) or 775-8671 for additional information.

**Social Media Awareness Program**

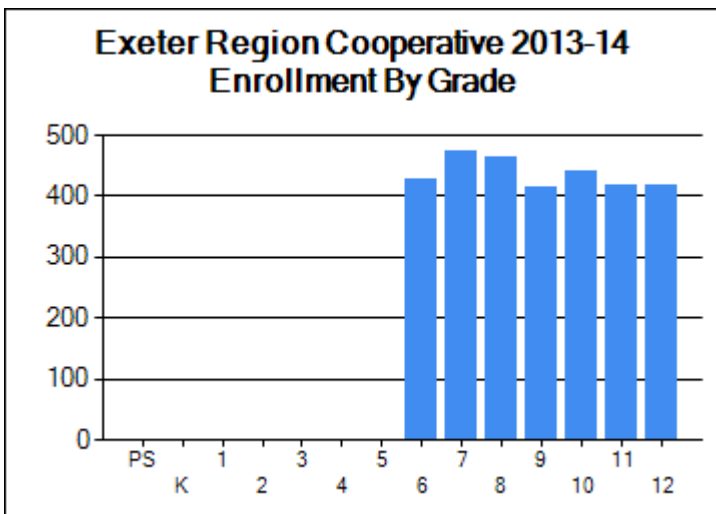
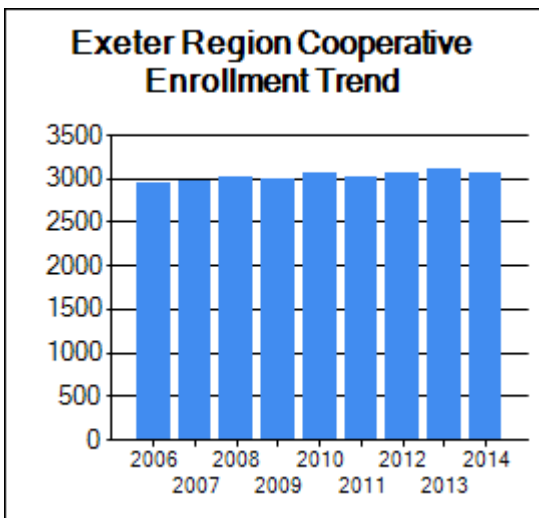
On Tuesday evening, January 20, 2015, from 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm, Exeter High School will feature an important program for students, parents, and community members dealing with

the critical topic of Social Media Awareness. Given the ever-changing landscape and proliferation of various social media tools—and inappropriate incidents and uses of social media in schools and communities nationwide—this informational program will provide current and helpful information. Det. Matt Fleming and Sgt. Tom Grella from the NH Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force will be the presenters.

**SPOTLIGHT**

**Exeter Regional Cooperative School District: Cooperative Middle School, Exeter High School, Seacoast School of Technology**

Given the fact that SAU 16 has an excellent reputation for its local schools, each month a different school district will be highlighted here as a way of sharing more specific information with the wider SAU and community audience.



### Student Assessment

| Achievement Level (%)              | Reading  |       | Mathematics |       | Writing  |       | Science  |       |
|------------------------------------|----------|-------|-------------|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|
|                                    | District | State | District    | State | District | State | District | State |
| Substantially Below Proficient (%) | 3        | 7     | 10          | 17    | 3        | 8     |          |       |
| Partially Proficient (%)           | 10       | 16    | 15          | 18    | 29       | 34    |          |       |
| Proficient (%)                     | 49       | 53    | 46          | 43    | 55       | 47    |          |       |
| Proficient with Distinction (%)    | 37       | 23    | 28          | 21    | 12       | 9     |          |       |
| Testing Participation (%)          | 99       | 99    | 99          | 99    | 99       | 98    |          |       |

### Student Achievement Trends

Number and Percent of Students Scoring Proficient or Above  
N is the number of students enrolled during testing minus the number of state-approved nonparticipants

| Grade | Content Area | 2011-2012 |    | 2012-2013 |    | 2013-2014 |    |
|-------|--------------|-----------|----|-----------|----|-----------|----|
|       |              | N         | %  | N         | %  | N         | %  |
| 6     | Reading      | 459       | 86 | 467       | 90 | 429       | 83 |
|       | Mathematics  | 460       | 84 | 467       | 88 | 429       | 81 |
| 7     | Reading      | 435       | 89 | 466       | 90 | 474       | 85 |
|       | Mathematics  | 435       | 86 | 466       | 80 | 474       | 83 |
| 8     | Reading      | 469       | 93 | 423       | 95 | 462       | 86 |
|       | Mathematics  | 469       | 81 | 423       | 83 | 462       | 75 |
|       | Writing      | 469       | 85 | 423       | 90 | 462       | 67 |
| 11    | Reading      | 426       | 87 | 433       | 88 | 407       | 89 |
|       | Mathematics  | 426       | 50 | 433       | 50 | 407       | 55 |
|       | Writing      | 426       | 63 | 433       | 57 | 407       | 67 |

**Educational Attainment of Teachers in NH in 2013-2014:**

- Bachelor's Degree: 42.2%
- Master's Degree: 56.5%
- Beyond Master's Degree: 1.0%

**Educational Attainment of Exeter Teachers in 2013-2014:**

- Bachelor's Degree: 18.6%
- Master's Degree: 78.3%
- Beyond Master's Degree: 3.1%

Average NH Teacher Salary in 2013-2014: \$54,712

Average Exeter Cooperative Teacher Salary in 2013-2014: \$67,990

Average NH Student-to-Teacher Ratio in 2013-2014: 12.1

Average Exeter Cooperative Student-to-Teacher Ratio in 2013-2014: 13.9 to 1

SAU 16 Square Miles: 81.66

Exeter Cooperative Square Miles: 81.66 (Note: SAU 16 and the Cooperative District cover the same six communities.)

Exeter Cooperative Population:

32,568 (2013 estimate from the New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning)

28,838 (2000 census)

32,505 (2010 census)

Registered Voters: 23,877 (March 2014)

Total Equalization Valuation of Property: \$4,092,935,160

Tax Rate per \$1,000 of assessed valuation: Varies by Town

### **Did You Know?**

Exeter High School (EHS) senior **Shannon Murdock** recently signed a National Letter of Intent to attend the University of New Hampshire and be a member of the Women's Cross Country team. Shannon is an outstanding student-athlete at EHS and has achieved several impressive honors, including being the overall state champion in the mile. She is the daughter of Amy and Steve Murdock of East Kingston.

**Robinson Female Seminary** provided education for all Exeter girls in grades 6-12 from 1867 to 1955. Only boys attended Exeter High School during that 88-year period.

Over the past 10 years, the percentage of identified special education students in the SAU has dropped steadily when considering the official October first recording date. During the 2005-2006 school year, there were 5,482 students enrolled; 942 (17.18%) of them were identified as special education students. During this school year, there are 5,927 students enrolled; 795 (13.41%) are identified as special education students.

**Helen Joyce**, Chairperson of the Coop School Board, and her husband, **Kevin Joyce**, a retired Exeter High School guidance counselor, recently received the 2014 Volunteers of the Year Award from the Southern District YMCA. Mr. and Mrs. Joyce spent the last 25 years working with the highly-recognized Youth and Government Program which is sponsored by the YMCA and involves high school students from all over the state.

Approximately 85% of the employees of the New Hampshire Department of Education are funded by federal dollars as a result of federal grant funds that funnel through the state.

During 2014, approximately 2,372 NH school-aged children have been designated as "homeless" through local school districts.

Various social media forms are used by students and teachers today. These include: Twitter; Facebook; YouTube; Pinterest; Snapchat; Vine; Flickr; Foursquare; Tumbler; and Instagram.

Approximately 110 students throughout the SAU are now receiving weekend backpacks of food as a result of the significant work of teams of volunteers involved in the *End 68 Hours of Hunger* program.

Approximately 100 Exeter High School juniors and seniors were recently inducted into the prestigious National Honor Society during a well-attended evening Induction Ceremony.

### **The Three C's—Curriculum, Communication, Community Service**

As part of its effort to continually improve instruction and address the implementation of the Common Core, the Leadership Team at **East Kingston Elementary School (EKES)** has begun exploring the adoption of Words Their Way (WTW), a developmental spelling, phonics, and vocabulary program. WTW emphasizes an individual approach to daily word work where students are placed in developmentally appropriate levels and study word patterns and features through a wide variety of word study and sorting activities. The goal is to have students thinking more critically about words and to transfer these understandings to reading and writing. The teachers are presently participating in online training and once completed in mid-January, the Leadership Team will develop an implementation plan.

In the area of community service, three recent activities at **Stratham Memorial School (SMS)** were highlighted. First, eight SMS families were the recipients of Thanksgiving Baskets courtesy of the staff and community. Nurse Lilly Lacasse spearheaded the drive and delivered the food to the families. Among the items delivered were gift cards to local stores to assist the families. Second, in connection with the Stratham Teachers Association (STA) Book Fair, students were able to donate to the “All 4 Books” program. Many donations were provided and were used to purchase books for those in need in various community locations. Third, in lieu of teacher holiday gifts, once again the staff is asking for food contributions or gift cards to support the St. Vincent de Paul food pantry in Exeter.

During November, the fifth graders at **Swasey Central School (SCS)** enjoyed two wonderful field trips. The first one was the visit to Spencer Peirce Little Farm in Newbury, Massachusetts. The students participated in an archaeological dig; toured a 17<sup>th</sup> Century farmhouse; identified historical artifacts; and pieced together broken artifact shards. The second field trip was to visit **Exeter High School (EHS)** to see the play *Percy, Us, and the Raft of Medusa* that was written by an EHS graduate. The play gave the fifth graders a sense of mythological storytelling, humorous writing, and sparked discussions about a possible career as an actor or actress.

Among many other recently curriculum-related projects at **Exeter High School (EHS)**, two are particularly worthy of note. First, just before Thanksgiving, several members of the EHS math Club, under the direction of math teacher Michelle Morton-Curitt, volunteered to assist with **Main Street School's (MSS)** *Family Math Night* coordinated by Karla Putney, Director of Instruction at MSS. Mrs. Putney noted that “I had many staff members comment on how polite, helpful, and friendly they were with the students, staff, and families. I greatly appreciate their flexibility and willingness to jump in wherever needed. They are to be commended for giving of their time after a long school day and evening of homework and other responsibilities.” Second, EHS recently hosted an interscholastic *Constitutionally Speaking* conference that was attended by approximately 200 students from Berlin, Gorham, Kearsarge, Sanborn Regional, Newmarket, and Exeter. Students had the opportunity to hear thought-provoking presentations from two UNH professors on the topic of “Democracy, Money, and Corruption.” Participants interacted with each other in small groups and participated in engaging discourse with the large group as they delved deeper into the key aspects of the role of money in politics.

Students in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade English at the **Cooperative Middle School (CMS)** have been very much engaged in grammar activities including a grammar WebQuest to introduce them to gerunds, participles, and infinitives. The students compiled their findings in a *Prezi* presentation and taught the class what they learned. Pleasantly surprised (participle), the students found that inquiring (gerund) on their own to discover (infinitive) something new is an effective learning (participle) strategy. Following the WebQuest, students enjoyed illustrating sentences with dangling participles and misplaced modifiers. Two favorite “wrong” sentences were: “He made a table for his aunt with wooden legs;” and “Walking past the cemetery, an open coffin frightened me.” Learning grammar is always so much fun!

Subscribing to a philosophy that children often learn best by doing, second graders at **Main Street School (MSS)** participated in different field trips to expand their experiences recently. Some children had a walking field trip to the American Independence Museum in downtown Exeter to learn what school was like during the colonial days in America. Other children traveled to Exeter High School (EHS) to watch a school play and many brought a can good to support a local food bank. A third group went to the NH Audubon Society to learn more about science in their study of the life cycle.

In the event of an actual emergency at **Kensington Elementary School (KES)**, direct communication with local responders has increased with the installation of the COPsync program on all classroom laptops. All staff and teachers now have the ability to send an emergency alert directly to local law enforcement officers in Kensington, as well as surrounding towns. The COPsync program provides law enforcement and schools with real-time information, direct communication and a reduced response time to emergency situations. Beginning in January, Kensington Police Chief Scott Sanders and KES Principal Becky Ruel will be hosting a School Safety and Drug Awareness Night at KES. They will be available to answer questions about the new COPsync system, our new visitor check-in system in the main office, and discuss changes to KES Emergency Procedures including the Reunification Plan at EHS in the event that students need to be relocated to another facility during an emergency. Chief Sanders will also provide information regarding current drug trends that are tragically affecting adolescents and young adults in our local communities.

**Lincoln Street School (LSS)** has been selected to participate with schools from across the nation in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). First administered in 1969, NAEP is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what students know and can do in various subject areas. The results of NAEP are released as the Nation’s Report Card, which provides information about student achievement to educators, parents, policymakers, and the public. From the 187 fourth graders at LSS, 97 students have been randomly selected and invited to participate in the 90-minute assessment which is given in February. Letters were recently sent to the parents of those selected children, seeking their permission to participate in the NAEP testing.

The **Seacoast School of Technology (SST)** has long provided area high school students with an experience in Early Childhood Education. Their "learning lab" has been the Wright Start Preschool, located on-site at SST. Beginning this year, the program has been expanded from Early Childhood to Careers in Education, seeking to prepare students with a desire to work in a school—any subject, any grade level. Instructor Dawn Russell has



reached out to several schools in hopes of providing a one-hour job shadow for first year (grade 11) students. Each student has expressed his/her preferred assignment as a classroom or special education teacher or guidance counselor, and elementary schools are working with their staff members to arrange these job-shadows in January.

At **Newfields Elementary School** (NES), health and wellness activities continue to be integrated into the school day and across various curricula. School Nurse Kathy Bird's health classes are exploring such areas as food and nutrition, bones, and the cardiovascular system. In addition, two coaches from Seacoast United joined a recent NES "community meeting" and reminded all of the students and staff about the importance of staying healthy. Some of the students even displayed their soccer skills by juggling, dribbling, and shooting balls.

### **Reflection**

During this wonderful holiday season, the giving of gifts—large and small—captures our imagination and often demands creativity, resourcefulness, and wisdom. The key element in this entire process, however, is thoughtfulness. Sometimes our best gifts are noted in the expression of loving or caring for one another. After all, "it is in giving that we receive!"