

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT
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OCTOBER 2014

Enrollment Trends

Officially the New Hampshire Department of Education requires each school district to annually report its student enrollment on October 1st. Trends are determined from this consistent data point.

For the **ten school years** beginning on October 1, 2005 through October 1, 2014, the following changes are noted:

Brentwood-391 to 336-Decrease of 14.07%
East Kingston-188 to 147-Decrease of 21.81%
Exeter-1013 to 1021-Increase of 0.79%
Kensington-208 to 122-Decrease of 41.35%
Newfields-165 to 135-Decrease of 18.18%
Stratham-644 to 595-Decrease of 7.61%
Cooperative Middle School-1326 to 1361-Increase of 2.64%
Exeter High School-1611 to 1715-Increase of 6.46%

The **one-year change** from October 1, 2013 to October 1, 2014 is as follows:

Brentwood-346 to 336-Decrease of 2.89%
East Kingston-174 to 147-Decrease of 15.52%
Exeter-1023 to 1021-Decrease of 0.02%
Kensington-135 to 122-Decrease of 9.63%
Newfields-136 to 135-Decrease of 0.74%
Stratham-616 to 595-Decrease of 3.41%
Cooperative Middle School-1363 to 1361-Decrease of 0.15%
Exeter High School-1693 to 1715-Increase of 1.30%

Health Insurance—Guaranteed Maximum Rate Increase

After experiencing a 9.72% average annual increase in health insurance premiums for the past 17 years (1998-2014), the Guaranteed Maximum Rate (GMR) Increase for school districts who are part of the Local Government Center network (featuring Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield products), **will be an average of 2.9% for 2015-2016**. This will provide some relief for school districts and employees who have absorbed increase in health insurance premiums for many years. The final rate will be determined in late winter or early spring.

Average Teacher Salaries for 2011-2012; 2012-2013; 2013-2014; and 2014-2015

Each year NH School Districts are required to report average teacher salaries to the NH Department of Education. Please note that the following figures only include teachers. The professional educators who serve in such positions as administrators, guidance counselors, nurses, school psychologists, social workers, and other support positions are not included in these averages.

Brentwood--\$64,187; \$65,534; \$67,848; \$67,734
East Kingston--\$58,669; \$60,643; \$58,743; \$60,394
Exeter--\$68,760; \$69,864; \$70,971; \$72,610
Exeter Region Cooperative--\$64,670; \$66,345; \$67,990; \$69,689
Kensington--\$64,934; \$66,830; \$65,763; \$67,612
Newfields--\$59,194; \$60,514; \$60,874; \$61,993
Stratham--\$73,049; \$73,545; \$74,326; \$75,775

Meeting with Local Police

Efforts to collaborate with local police from the six towns in SAU 16 continue. The major focus of the work is to provide assistance to each other in the event of an emergency in one of the schools. School Board members and building principals have joined SAU administrators, school nurses, and SAU transportation officials to coordinate key services in the event of a lockdown or response to a critical incident. Exeter Chief Richard Kane and Stratham Chief John Scippa have played important roles in this process. New Chiefs, Craig Charest from East Kingston, and Scott Sanders from Kensington have joined the group and are adding their expertise and support to this important work

A recent meeting was held on Wednesday, September 24, 2014 at Exeter High School. Over 35 people attended, including police, school board members, administrators, school nurses, and support staff. The meeting highlighted many of the recently implemented recommendations to enhance safety and security, including the plans for “reunification” of students with their families in the event of a catastrophic incident in one of the schools. If an evacuation becomes necessary at Exeter High School, students and staff will be transported by bus to the Cooperative Middle School. If an evacuation of any school other than EHS becomes necessary, students and staff from that school would be transported by bus to EHS. In any such event, it is absolutely essential that parents do NOT attempt to reach the school where a critical incident has occurred. The extra traffic flow would only impede the work of first responders and police.

To enhance safety and security in each of the schools as well, a more detailed VISITOR SIGN-IN system has been developed. This will require that each school visitor secure a “one-day” pass that will be available by providing a photo ID (such as a driver’s license) to office personnel. Appropriate information will be quickly loaded into the “visitor system” and a photo of the person will be taken. A “Visitor Badge” will be created for the visitor to wear throughout the day. The “Visitor Badge” will be valid for one day

only. A person who subsequently visits the school will only have to show a photo ID to get another “Visitor Badge” because the system will record that person’s information. All of this is being done in collaboration with local police departments and follows “best practices protocols” to help school officials identify who may actually be in a school building in the event of a serious incident. This change may be difficult for some, but it is simply designed to add additional safety measures for students and staff.

Individual boards will continue to receive updates on this important work and collaboration. The next meeting of SAU Safety and Security Committee will take place on Wednesday, January 14, 2015.

End 68 Hours of Hunger

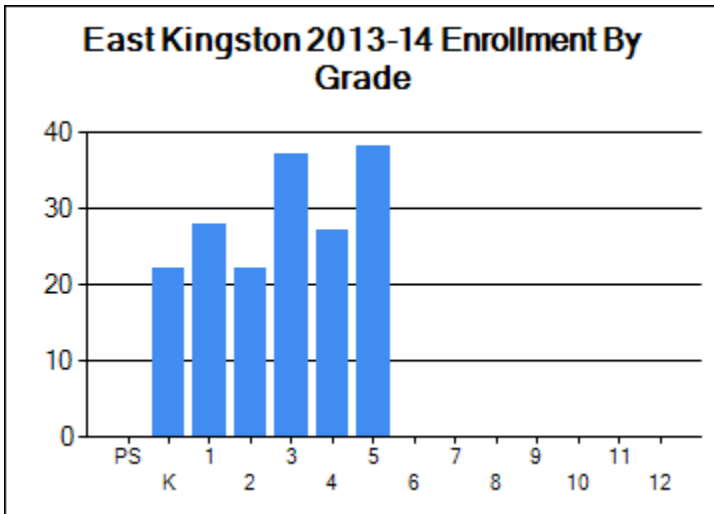
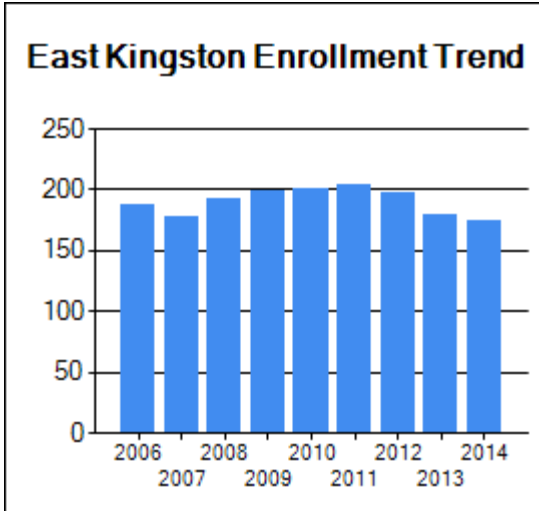
Approximately 80 children within SAU 16 are being provided with weekend backpacks of food to assist them and their families who are in serious need. Thanks to the generous donations of many local individuals and sponsors, program coordinators Kim Army of Newfields and Sue Abizaid of Stratham, are helping families in all seven elementary schools, the Cooperative Middle School, and Exeter High School. School principals, nurses, nutrition workers, and guidance counselors have been extremely helpful in identifying and working with families who are most in need. The program began in February 2013 with four backpacks provided to Exeter children. In less two years, the program has expanded to its current level. Food donations may be dropped off at the Tuck Learning Campus (Door B) or contributions may be made directly to End 68 Hours of Hunger, 7 Finn Avenue, Newfields NH 03856.

Meeting with Legislators—October 27, 2014

The fifth annual meeting of local state legislators with the SAU Joint Board will be held on Monday, October 27, 2014 at 7:00 pm at Exeter High School. The primary purpose of this meeting is a discussion about the continuing trend of the state “downshifting” many of its costs to local towns and school districts. Personal invitations have been sent to over 70 local NH legislators and those running for local legislative positions, Executive Councilor Chris Sununu, and Governor Maggie Hassan. The meeting is open to the public.

Spotlight: East Kingston Elementary School

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



2013 New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) Results

Student Assessment								
Achievement Level (%)	Reading		Mathematics		Writing		Science	
	District	State	District	State	District	State	District	State
Substantially Below Proficient (%)	2	7	8	17	5	8		
Partially Proficient (%)	17	16	8	18	32	34		
Proficient (%)	63	53	66	43	55	47		
Proficient with Distinction (%)	18	23	18	21	8	9		
Testing Participation (%)	99	99	99	99	100	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	%
3	Reading	37	89	24	83	37	70
	Mathematics	37	92	24	79	37	81
4	Reading	34	71	36	83	27	81
	Mathematics	34	74	36	86	27	78
5	Reading	43	79	36	78	38	89
	Mathematics	43	84	36	75	38	89
	Writing	43	67	36	56	38	63

Educational Attainment of Teachers in NH in 2013-2014:

- Bachelor's Degree: 42.2%
- Master's Degree: 56.5%
- Beyond Master's Degree: 1%

Educational Attainment of East Kingston Teachers in 2013-2014:

- Bachelor's Degree: 25.6%
- Master's Degree: 74.4%

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

Average East Kingston Teacher Salary in 2013-2014: \$58,743

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

Average East Kingston Student-to-Teacher Ratio in 2013-2014: 9.6

SAU 16 Square Miles: 81.66

East Kingston Square Miles: 9.96

East Kingston Population:

- 2,372 (2013 estimate from the New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning)
- 1,784 (2000 census)
- 2,357 (2010 census)

Registered Voters: 1,772 (March 2014)

Total Equalization Valuation of Property: \$279,199,156

Tax Rate per \$1,000 of assessed valuation: \$24.76

Town Rate: \$5.29

County Rate: \$1.06

State School Rate: \$2.45

Local School Rate: \$15.96

Did You Know?

Former Lincoln Street School Principal Dick Keays recently was recognized as the “2014 Educator of the Year” by the New Hampshire State Grange at its annual Awards Banquet in Nashua. Mr. Keays was nominated for this award by Gilman Grange in Exeter which was the first NH Grange and which continues to provide a dictionary for each third grader at the Lincoln Street School.

Approximately 80 students who live within SAU 16 are registered for “Home Schooling” as required by the NH Department of Education.

The Three C’s—Curriculum, Communication, Community Service

Kensington Elementary School (KES) was pleased to partner with Water Street Bookstore in mid-September by hosting a visit from nationally-known children’s author and illustrator, Mr. Loren Long. Students excitedly prepared for his first trip to NH by reading many of the books in the Otis series and practicing the famous Otis phrase “*puff, putt, puttedy, chuff.*” Students and teachers reenacted the story of *Otis and the Scarecrow* and then Mr. Long demonstrated the techniques he uses when illustrating his books. He left a beautiful drawing of Otis for the students and staff to enjoy which now proudly hangs in the KES Library. Principal Becky Ruel and the KES students and staff wish to thank Mrs. Eastwood for coordinating this event to make it so successful.

Fall Open House was very successful and well attended at **Main Street School (MSS)**. The teachers did a wonderful job creating an atmosphere that was inviting to parents and visitors. This year 73% of kindergarten parents attended; 75% of first grade parents; and 67% of second grade parents. Overall, attendance was down slightly than 2013, but some local conflicts meant that not every parent was able to attend. Principal Steve Adler requested feedback from parents as to how attendance might be increased next year.

Students at **East Kingston Elementary School (EKES)** were treated to a visit recently from members of the local volunteer Fire Department. The primary purpose of the visit was to teach and reinforce many issues regarding fire safety. Students toured fire trucks; tried on safety equipment; sprayed a real fire hose; and learned strategies for staying safe in a fire. Principal Jim Eaves and the EKES staff are very appreciative of the volunteers who took time out of their own busy schedules to help educate the students and emphasize the need to be safe.

All students in grades 3-5 at **Newfields Elementary School (NES)** have completed the Northwest Educational Assessment (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress in the areas of math and science. Principal Kate Segal and the teachers are using the results of this data to place students in groups for “targeted instruction” in reading, math, and/or communication and problem-solving skills, using every classroom, the library, the art room, the STEM lab, and the multi-purpose room. The students are divided into 23 groups with an average of one teacher for every six students. These groups will change each month when new data is collected and the results reviewed.

All students at **Lincoln Street School** (LSS) completed the STAR reading assessment during the first three weeks of school. The process went very well in terms of a positive student response to the test and positive teacher response to test accessibility and data usability. Results were reviewed in conjunction with information from previous teacher recommendations and current in-class work samples. Reading groups were adjusted as necessary, and are presently meeting daily in all three grade levels for 60-90 minutes. Teachers are utilizing a variety of resources for reading and language arts instruction, including Harcourt and Scott Foresman basal readers, high-quality chapter books, daily reading comprehension practice, daily language skills practice and writing in response to reading.

Students are writing throughout the day in the various curriculum areas. For example, some third grade students are working on expanding sentences, writing persuasive pumpkin essays, and non-fiction paragraphs about the Earth. Some of the fourth graders are honing their narrative writing skills by developing a character profile, including such details as name, occupation, personality traits, history, etc. The task concludes with a five-paragraph essay about their character. A number of the fifth graders are developing op/ed pieces supported by research.

The library at **Swasey Central School** (SCS) is overflowing with excitement because reading is more and more pronounced in the school. With even fewer students than last year, over 300 more books were checked out than last year during the month of September. That accounted for 2,477 books in September 2014. The first few weeks of library visits are always focused on making good book choices and introducing students to a wide variety of reaching choices that are available to them. Students in fourth and fifth grades are reading as many *Great Stone Face* books as they can before they vote on their favorite title at the end of April. First and second graders are reading the ten Ladybug Book Award books and reviewing each one. Third graders are participating in the "Battle of the Genres" where they will focus on a particular genre each month and then vote on their favorite at the end of the year.

Programs are being enhanced to include the Harry Potter Reading Club for third graders and the Library Advisory Club for fourth graders who will help to make library displays, book trailers, and who will even help to select new books to purchase for their library.

Choral Music at the **Cooperative Middle School** (CMS) continues to enlist strong student involvement. This year over 300 students are involved in ten different choruses. Preparations are underway for the annual December concerts and students are learning more and more about reading a vocal score. These holiday concerts will be performed at Exeter High School (EHS) and the middle school students will be performing with some of the high school students. To expand opportunities for the CMS choral students, some of them will also be singing with Mr. Livingston Taylor in November as part of the Arts Concert Series. The CMS Music program continues to be among the best in the state and owes that distinction to the dedication of its students, parents, and outstanding teachers Eric Kobb, Andy Inzenga, Jennifer Ramsay, and Catherine Hammon.

As an extension of the **Exeter High School** (EHS) Science Department, the 2014 EHS garden had a very successful growing season thanks in large part to good weather and to all of the volunteers who helped plant, weed, water and harvest the crops. The **Seacoast School of Technology** (SST) Animal and Plant Science students grew tomatoes and peppers for the garden while the Environmental Science class planted carrots, garlic, onions, Swiss chard, and cucumbers. During the spring, several students from the Life Skills classes helped with the important task of watering the garden while the summer Life Skills classes worked to maintain this important, collaborative project. Much of the summer produce was donated to the local St. Vincent DePaul Food Pantry and an abundant amount of the fall produce is being harvested for the EHS lunch program. All of the teachers, students, and volunteers who assisted with this project contributed to making it so successful.

Several grade level teachers at **Stratham Memorial School** (SMS) are working to incorporate more inquiry into their science lessons by focusing on the scientific practices of the *Next Generation Science Standards*. This work includes more direct involvement with:

1. Asking questions
2. Developing and using models
3. Planning and carrying out investigations
4. Analyzing and interpreting data
5. Using mathematical thinking
6. Constructing explanations and designing solutions
7. Engaging in argument from evidence
8. Obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information

Recently, Grade 3 students and teachers took a half day to incorporate more inquiry into the animal unit. Grade 3 is using a new Foss Delta module called “Structures of Life.” A crayfish specimen arrived in early October for students in all of those classrooms. Each classroom has had children excited about observing this animal and making inferences based on these observations. The *Science Through Literacy* teacher cohort meets regularly to stress the connections between science and literacy skills and how students are better able to utilize both in their learning experiences.

The October issue of *The Beacon*, published by the **Seacoast School of Technology** (SST), is featuring stories from several students who first became involved with SST through Technology Fun Nights and/or SST Summer Camps. Here are a few excerpts: “The Tech Fun Nights are great—they allow kids to learn about a vast range of different computer programs ranging from 3D modeling to photo editing to games about physics, along with many others. Now, being an SST student, I go to Tech Fun Nights to help out.” “ I attended the SST Culinary Arts summer program for two weeks in seventh grade because I had a passion for cooking at home. Not only did I have a great time, but this experience rally helped me decide that Culinary Arts is the path I want to take in my future. I have toured The Culinary Institute of America twice already and I think it’s the place for me. Thanks to SST’s many educational programs in Culinary Arts I have found my passion.”