

# **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

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

### **OCTOBER 2015**

#### **Enrollment Trends**

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

For the **eleven (11) school years** beginning on October 1, 2005 through October 1, 2015, the following changes are noted:

Brentwood-391 to 328-Decrease of 16.11%  
East Kingston-188 to 145-Decrease of 22.87%  
Exeter-1013 to 1014-No change  
Kensington-208 to 110-Decrease of 47.16%  
Newfields-165 to 138-Decrease of 16.36%  
Stratham-644 to 571-Decrease of 11.34%  
Cooperative Middle School-1326 to 1289-Decrease of 2.79%  
Exeter High School-1611 to 1741-Increase of 8.07%

The **one-year change** from October 1, 2014 to October 1, 2015 is as follows:

Brentwood-336 to 328-Decrease of 2.38%  
East Kingston-147 to 145-Decrease of 1.36%  
Exeter-1021 to 1014-Decrease of 0.69%  
Kensington-122 to 110-Decrease of 9.84%  
Newfields-135 to 138-Increase of 2.22%  
Stratham-595 to 571-Decrease of 4.03%  
Cooperative Middle School-1361 to 1289-Decrease of 5.30%  
Exeter High School-1715 to 1741-Increase of 1.52%

#### **New School Board Members**

Of the 33 members of the SAU Joint Board, three began serving at the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year due to the resignation of their predecessors. Lisa McConnell has replaced Kathy McNeill on the Exeter School Board; Tina Favara has replaced Heather Antal on the Kensington School Board; and Travis Thompson now holds seats on two different Boards since the Stratham Board of Selectmen chose him to replace Jim Firmin as one of two Stratham representatives to the Exeter Region Cooperative School Board. Mr. Thompson remains the Chair of the Stratham Board. Each of these positions will be available for election in March 2016.

#### **Health Insurance—Guaranteed Maximum Rate Increase**

After experiencing a 9.15% average annual increase in health insurance premiums for the past 18 years (1998-2015), 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 range between 7.6% and 8.1% for 2016-2017.** Although slightly higher than the average 2.9% rate experienced for 2015-2016, this new rate is still lower than the 18-year average. The final rate will be determined in late winter or early spring.

### **Average Teacher Salaries for 2011-2012; 2012-2013; 2013-2014; 2014-2015; and 2015-2016**

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; \$69,970  
East Kingston--\$58,669; \$60,643; \$58,743; \$60,394; \$61,996  
Exeter--\$68,760; \$69,864; \$70,971; \$72,610; \$73,544  
Exeter Region Cooperative--\$64,670; \$66,345; \$67,990; \$69,689; \$68,998  
Kensington--\$64,934; \$66,830; \$65,763; \$67,612; \$71,208  
Newfields--\$59,194; \$60,514; \$60,874; \$61,993; \$63,201  
Stratham--\$73,049; \$73,545; \$74,326; \$75,775; \$76,588

### **SAU 16 Safety and Security Committee**

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. Chiefs Craig Charest from East Kingston, Scott Sanders from Kensington, Wayne Robinson from Brentwood, and Art Reed from Newfields continue to add their expertise and support to this important work

A recent meeting was held on Wednesday, September 30, 2015 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. A report was given on the excellent Table Top exercise regarding an active shooter scenario at the Cooperative Middle School that was held in mid-August. This important drill was organized through the efforts of Chief Scippa in conjunction with officials from the NH Department of Safety, Office of Homeland Security.

Information was also shared about the professional safety and security audits of each school building that has been done by the Office of Homeland Security. Plans are also underway to have a "Reunification Drill" in the spring of 2016. Chief Kane praised the three-year work of this collaborative group because of the strengthening of relationships between SAU 16 school officials and local police. This SAU Safety and Security Committee will hold its regular winter meeting on January 20, 2016.

## **End 68 Hours of Hunger**

Approximately 100 children within SAU 16 are being provided with weekend backpacks of food to assist them and their families who struggle with food insecurity. 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 three 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. A major "Fill the Bus" fundraiser will be held at Wal-Mart in Epping on Saturday, October 31, 2015 to help support this major effort.

## **Meeting with Legislators—November 23, 2015**

The sixth annual meeting of local state legislators with the SAU Joint Board will be held on Monday, November 23, 2015 at 7:30 pm at Exeter High School. The primary purpose of this meeting is a discussion about how local school districts are impacted by legislative action with regard to new laws and the continuing trend of the state "downshifting" many of its costs to local towns and school districts. Personal invitations will be sent to over 70 local NH legislators, including Newfields residents Executive Councilor Chris Sununu and Governor Maggie Hassan. The meeting is open to the public.

## **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

The Brentwood School Board has chosen Mr. Eric Turer for this outstanding award. He was the inspiration and energy behind the community effort to use the "GoFundMe" method of raising monies to offset the \$211,000 shortfall in the 2015-2016 school district budget. Mr. Turer attended many school and budget meetings while also spending countless hours researching ways to help restore some of the money that was cut from the proposed School Board budget.

Even though Mr. Turer's own children had already left Swasey Central School (SCS,) he took it upon himself to engage the community so that he could "do the right thing for the children and families of the Brentwood Community." Through his efforts, he raised \$20,156 for SCS in a relatively short time. His tireless and selfless dedication to this effort easily earned him the title of "Champion for Children."

This Award will be presented to Mr. Turer during the regular Brentwood School District meeting in November.

## **Spotlight: Lincoln Street School, Exeter**

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. Each building principal was asked to provide information to be shared with new teachers joining the SAU this year.

**Lincoln Street School - J. Andrew Bairstow, Principal**  
25 Lincoln Street, Exeter – 775-8860

Lincoln Street School (LSS) is a grade three through five school built in 1955 with additions in 1960, 1978, and 1990. Currently, there are 510 students enrolled and 100 faculty/staff members serving their educational needs. Main Street School, (K-2 students) located behind Lincoln Street School, is our “sister school.” Together our schools coordinate services and programming to assure a unified experience throughout Exeter’s K-5 schools.

This year, each grade level at LSS has nine sections. Third grade is slated to be an 18 student to 1 teacher ratio; fourth grade is 21:1; and fifth grade is 21:1. The teaching staff is a balanced mixture of new, “seasoned,” and “well-seasoned” staff allowing fantastic opportunities for educators to learn from each other and grow professionally. The staff consists of 27 classroom teachers, one reading specialist, seven special education teachers, one ESL teacher, seven unified arts (specials) teachers, three Title I tutors, one guidance counselor, one school psychologist, one OT, one PT, and three SLP’s. We share some staff with Main Street School and are fortunate to have such a robust staff to support our students.

Students have access to numerous after school activities at LSS. For academic support, students can access our homework club, staffed by a LSS teacher. We have an after school enrichment program that runs for approximately six weeks, three times per year. The Drama Club, with approximately 100 participants, produces two shows each year, one fourth grade and one fifth grade. This fall’s production is *Mulan*. The Cross Country Club provides an opportunity for 60-70 students to exercise with their peers in a semi-competitive format each fall. Also, there are a variety of athletic clinics that occur throughout the year run by a group of our teachers. Our arts program is very strong with every fifth grade student participating in chorus (approximately 170), and almost 60 students in fourth and fifth grade participating in band. The school climate at LSS emphasizes student engagement, curiosity, and acceptance and is enhanced by involved parents. We encourage families to become involved in our school community through participation with our excellent PTO, volunteer program, and ongoing communication and interaction with their child’s teacher.

### **Did You Know?**

All seven (7) of SAU 16’s elementary schools recently received recognition from the *New Hampshire Partners in Education* because of their outstanding volunteer programs. Over 350 educators and parent volunteers from around the state were honored at the “2015 Celebration of Volunteers” reception breakfast in Manchester earlier this month. Guest speaker, Dr. Yvonne Spicer from the Boston Museum of Science spoke of the importance

of volunteerism from the community and the significant relationships that schools have with local businesses, especially those with a focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math). All of these efforts only serve to enhance the experience of student learning both in and outside of the classroom.

Approximately 90 students who live within SAU 16 are registered for “Home Schooling” as required by the NH Department of Education.

Exeter High School is hosting 18 students from France at the end of October. These visitors are ninth grade students from the *L’Institution Sainte Therese* located in Montegeron, a suburb of Paris. While at EHS, they will be staying with host families.

Exeter High School senior Justin Carbonne is the 2015 winner of the Harvard Book Club Award.

In its 37 year history, the Seacoast School of Technology (SST) currently boasts its largest enrollment ever with 727 students.

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

Every October, **Kensington Elementary School** (KES) celebrates **Fire Prevention Month**. On Friday, October 9th, the members of the Kensington Fire Department (KFD) graciously opened the doors of the Fire Station and welcomed the KES students for a grand tour! Children in Kindergarten, First Grade, and Second Grade walked over and learned about all the equipment found on the fire trucks and ambulance that the first responders in town use to help residents. They also reviewed important fire safety tips in the kitchen and practiced how to “Stop, Drop, and Roll.” Their homework that night was to ensure that their family had a fire evacuation plan and "meeting spot" at home. Students in Grades 4 and 5 watched a Fire Safety video at school and then engaged in a more in depth Question and Answer session with members of the KFD. The KES community extends its appreciation to the men and women of the KFD who volunteered their time that day to educate the students about the importance of fire safety.

Many classrooms at multiple grade levels at **Stratham Memorial School** (SMS) are participating in Global Read Aloud: *One Book to Connect the World*. This reading initiative is a six-week project where a book is chosen to read aloud to students and during that time the teachers try to make as many global connections as possible for their students. Each teacher decides how much time they would like to dedicate and how involved they would like to be. Some people have chosen to connect with just one class, while others are connecting with more. The scope and depth of the project is determined by individual teachers. Many teachers are connecting with other classes reading the same book through blogs, Skype, and some have even been communicating with the authors via Twitter. Teachers are always trying to find more and better ways to engage students in reading experiences.

A slide presentation about Full Day Kindergarten was shared at the Open House at **Main Street School** (MSS) recently. This included the School Board’s Vision Statement; a history of the Kindergarten Committee’s activities; some highlights of research about Full Day Kindergarten programs; results from the two MSS parent surveys; an outline of

benefits of Full Day Kindergarten; and architectural drawings of the addition that would be needed in order to implement Full Day Kindergarten within the Exeter School District. The goal is to present this addition to the voters as a separate Warrant Article in March 2016.

**Lincoln Street School (LSS)** held its first whole school assembly at the beginning of October. The goal of the event was to provide examples of the many ways that various individuals in the school contribute to the school community. Examples included: being kind, empathetic, and mindful of others' thoughts and feelings on a day-to-day basis; participating in Student Council and Drama Club; earning "Caught Ya' Cards;" and representing the school to others through competing on the cross country team. Students and staff were given a sticker designed by art teacher Deb Wheeler-Bean reminding them to use their eyes, ears, heart, and brain to make smart decisions all day long—a life-long skill that will endure.

**Exeter High School (EHS)** students in Dr. Angela Lennox's Biology class have been exploring the different ecosystems on school property and comparing the abiotic and biotic factors of the ecosystems. Environmental data included pH of soil and water, atmospheric pressure, soil moisture, air and soil temperature, carbon dioxide and oxygen levels, total light and UVA/B. Students analyzed the data, represented the data in different types of graphs to augment their graphic skills, and discussed the differences and similarities to hone their technical writing skills. Biology is supporting Career and College Ready Standards in math and English language arts.

At the **Cooperative Middle School (CMS)**, the fall is the perfect time for the challenge course and experiential education. Newly-hired Experiential Educator Josh Hughes has been working with a variety of CMS teams to help students learn and appreciate more of life in the outdoors. Combined with a social studies class, students were involved in class activities related to orienteering and mapping the ropes course. Some of the seventh grade students who were reading *The Outsiders* as part of their English class, dealt with the topics of privilege, class, and assumptions. Sixth grade students using the ropes course have participated in activities that help them learn more about each other and to assist them to become a strong team of students as they progress through the middle school.

**Exeter Adult Education's** programs are well known for the individual attention and guidance that is provided to each student, regardless of the program that he/she is considering. Adult High School, English as a Second or Other Language, and Academic Skills programs are each a significant part of the options available to adult learners. Every new student enrollment begins with an individual, face-to-face interview to create a personalized connection for each learner to a staff member. Results from these interviews lay the groundwork for each student's class assignment and educational plan.

The newest program innovation for individualized instruction is the Adult Learner Services (ALS) position or a Remote Learning Facilitator (RLF). The RLF will meet individually with students who cannot attend classes or tutoring sessions or who need additional resources for study to assist them in meeting their educational goals. They will look at online programs, apps, and websites that can be monitored by staff, determine which ones have appropriate level and content, and practice using them. When the student is confident and can demonstrate independent use, learning will take place independently and remotely

with access to the RLF as needed. The RLF and ALS Coordinator will monitor students' progress and use of this opportunity.

Art work adorns the halls of **East Kingston Elementary School (EKES)** for the viewing pleasure of students, staff, parents, and community members. These works include pieces that students selected from their portfolios last June. There is a great variety of styles, media, and subjects. Some are based on *Why is Blue Dog Blue?* by George Rodriguez, some are the "Found Word Poems" done in collaboration with Mrs. Foy. Several fifth grade students selected their names done in fabulous lettering. Others chose the ideas done prior to working on the school's outdoor "Imagination" installation. There are painted pieces, chalk, oil pastels and marker. Future plans include Art Work to go home with the first report card in December; the Square 1 Art fundraiser; and an all-school, STEAM-based (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) project with gears as our common shape. Kindergarten students bring a new level of learning and instruction to the Artists Workshop. Using a glue stick by turning its base is a challenge for some of those little fingers! Beeswax Crayons with their three-sided shape and fabulous colors make for a successful medium to start the year. Using leaves and texture plates for rubbings are a yearly favorite as students approach Halloween. Fifth graders looked at the great variety of still life subjects. Art is ever evolving at EKES.

**Newfields Elementary School (NES)** is pleased to report that all NES classrooms in third, fourth, and fifth grades have Chromebooks for each student. Chromebooks are small laptops that access Google accounts. SAU 16 is continuing to move forward, using Google as the learning platform for both students and faculty. The school's next building technology goal is to have an iPad for each student in kindergarten, first grade and second grade. Currently, NES has five or six iPads in each of these classrooms.

All students at **Swasey Central School (SCS)** are actively involved in creating their art portfolio this year. This has included designs with a wide variety of lettering styles, line patterns, color, and imagination. These will be kept in the Art Room all year long so that students may add various pieces of work to their individual portfolios which will go home with them at the end of the school year. First graders are creating their very own "Very Hungry Caterpillar" based on the book by Eric Carle. Second graders will use their scientific eyes to create a giant oil pastel monarch butterfly scene in support of the classroom science unit. Third graders are creating an amazing crayon resist line design that will either be a rippling pond or a night sky with fireworks. Fourth graders are learning about space and how to arrange it in an art composition using leave stencils. Fifth graders are solidifying their knowledge of line as an element of art through the creation of a Zentangle design. Art is ever emerging at SCS.

The October 2015 issue of *The Beacon*, published by the **Seacoast School of Technology (SST)**, is featuring stories from several students and staff members about some of their professional interests that they pursued throughout the summer. Here are a few excerpts:

EHS senior in Culinary Arts Christine Avery: *"Competing at the SkillsUSA National Conference in Louisville, Kentucky as an amazing experience. There were over 16,000 competitors from all over the country...I feel that my competition, more than anything, has prepared me for my transition to the Culinary Institute of America this fall."*

EHS junior in Biotechnology Erica Kneeland: This summer I worked with a graduate lab at the University of New Hampshire where *“I worked with a professor, graduate students, and pre-med students on various research projects involving the bacterial strain Frankia.”* This work allowed me to help research *“How the bacteria could “digest” environmental pollutants, therefor making our planet a clearer and safer place.”*

Welding Technologies Teacher Jonathan Theberge: I taught *“the second ever course in Welding Technologies for adults through Great Bay Community College...These adult learners are changing their current employment status from low paying, no benefits, and long hours to a career choice that can support themselves and their families. The students graduate with a certificate in Welding Technologies and also leave with life skills that cannot be taken away.”*

### **Reflection**

When I started my educational career as a high school social studies teacher 45 years ago, one of the popular books of the time that I used in class was *Future Shock* by Alvin Toffler. I took it off of my book shelf recently and noted some of the highlighted sections and topics that emphasized possible life changes in the future: The Throw-Away Society (planned obsolescence); The Fractured Family (increase number of divorces and different types of families); and “Overchoice” (too many things from which to choose). At the time, discussions among my Sociology students often challenged the author’s predictions. Today, I look all around us and see how accurate Alvin Toffler was. I wonder what our high school students today will think about life 45 years from now. That will be the year 2060, by the way!