

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

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APRIL 2017

Exeter High School Honored by the College Board

The College Board recently announced its [7th Annual AP District Honor Roll](#) — a list of 433 districts across the U.S. and Canada being honored for increasing access to Advance Placement AP[®] course work while simultaneously maintaining or increasing the percentage of students earning scores of 3 or higher on AP Exams. Reaching these goals indicates that these districts are successfully identifying motivated, academically prepared students who are likely to benefit from rigorous AP course work.

National data from 2016 shows that among Black/African American, Hispanic, and Native American students with a high degree of readiness for AP, only about half of students are participating. The first step to delivering the opportunity of AP to students is providing access by ensuring courses are available, that gatekeeping stops, and that the doors are equitably opened so these students can participate. AP Honor Roll Districts are committed to expanding the availability of AP courses among prepared and motivated students of all backgrounds.

Helping more students learn at a higher level *and* earn higher AP scores is an objective of all members of the AP community, from AP teachers to district and school administrators to college professors. Many districts are experimenting with a variety of initiatives and strategies to determine how to simultaneously expand access and improve student performance.

Inclusion on the 7th Annual AP District Honor Roll is based on the examination of three years of AP data, from 2014 to 2016, for the following criteria:

- Increased participation/access to AP by at least 4 percent in large districts, at least 6 percent in medium districts, and at least 11 percent in small districts;
- Increased or maintained the percentage of African American, Hispanic/Latino, and American Indian/Alaska Native students taking exams and increased or maintained the percentage of African American, Hispanic/Latino, and American Indian/Alaska Native students scoring 3+ on at least one AP Exam; and
- Improved performance levels when comparing the percentage of students in 2016 scoring a 3 or higher to those in 2014, unless the district has already attained a performance level at which more than 70 percent of its AP students are scoring a 3 or higher.

When these outcomes have been achieved among an AP student population in which 30 percent or more are underrepresented minority students (Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian/Alaska Native) and/or 30 percent or more are low-income students (students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch), a symbol has been affixed to the district name to highlight this work. Exeter High School (EHS) is so indicated.

Only eight other New Hampshire high schools were recognized for this 2016 honor. (Last year only three NH high schools received this honor!) EHS achieved this distinction for the third year in a row and is proud to have earned and been recognized with this outstanding national recognition!

Source: <https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/digitalServices/pdf/ap/ap-district-honor-roll-7th-annual.pdf>

Board Chairs Selected

Each year after the March election, each School Board chooses a chairperson to assist in conducting its regular business. Chairpersons selected for the 2017-2018 term include:

SAU Joint Board—Travis Thompson (Stratham)
Brentwood—Melissa Litchfield
East Kingston—David McBride
Exeter—Patrick O’Day
Exeter Region Cooperative—Helen Joyce
Kensington—Tina Favara
Newfields—Dan Connor
Stratham—Eric von der Linden

Best Communities for Music Education

The National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Foundation—for the third consecutive year—has designated the SAU 16 school districts as one of its 2017 “Best Communities for Music Education” in the United States. This outstanding recognition acknowledges the “example that you set in providing quality school-based music education programs to young people in your community.” This designation is a testament to the music teachers, parent supporters, and our communities-at-large for realizing the key role that music plays in our schools and in the current and future lives of our K-12 students. Much has been written about the intrinsic value of music and how it impacts other important areas of learning while also transmitting artistic culture to our students and communities. Congratulations and many thanks to everyone who has been inspirational and dedicated to enhancing SAU 16 in this manner!

End 68 Hours of Hunger

Approximately 65 children within SAU 16 are being provided with weekend backpacks of food to assist them and their families who are food insecure. 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.

This outstanding community service program began in February 2013 with four backpacks provided to Exeter children. Over the past four years, it has expanded to its current level and includes 100 volunteers. Kim and Sue would like to thank the schools and families who have organized food drives throughout the school year. For the second year in a row at Halloween time, the Exeter High School “Trick-or-Canning” event was a marvelous idea that resulted in a large number of donated non-perishable foods. Recently four troops of Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts helped to organize food drives, donated

money, and helped to sort and shelve food at the Tuck Learning Campus where the program originates each week. One Girl Scout troop even donated enough boxes of cookies so that every student receiving a backpack had his/her own special box of Girl Scout cookies! There is even a group of “Fruit Ladies” who provide two pieces of fresh fruit each week for every backpack. The current food supply will fill backpacks for the remainder of this school year. However, financial contributions for the summer and fall programs may still be made directly to End 68 Hours of Hunger, 7 Finn Avenue, Newfields NH 03856.

SPOTLIGHT

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

Swasey Central School – *Ron Kew, Principal*
355 Middle Road, Brentwood – 642-3487

Swasey Central School (SCS) is Brentwood’s public Pre K-Grade 5 elementary school. The enrollment of SCS is 320 students, with an average of three classrooms per grade level, K-5. The staff includes classroom teachers, support staff, special education staff and administrative staff.

Swasey provides a quality educational experiences for all students. Our students are provided instruction and activities that help them to meet the educational standards set forth by the State of NH. Our goal is to provide the foundation for our students’ journey in school.

In addition to academic activities, SCS students participate in community and social education including *Responsive Classroom* and *Open Circle*, to help them interact with each other and the world around them. We are a community of learners, and our school-wide dedication to our community will continue to grow as we provide more attention to our social needs with increased training in supporting our students.

Our monthly “Swasey Shindigs” provide us with a forum to be together as a school and we look forward to our gatherings. Students are provided with enrichment activities before and after school, chorus and band instruction, foreign language exposure, cross-country and jump rope clubs, and a variety of experiences beyond the classroom.

The 2016-2017 school year brings the exciting addition of a full-day kindergarten program to Swasey. We have three classrooms of kindergarten, and we have developed an outstanding full-day program for these students.

Swasey consistently develops goals as a staff to continue growing as educators. This year, SCS staff members are working on building upon our literacy instruction and increasing our effectiveness by developing our understanding and implementation of

competency-based learning ideas and practices. We do believe in the need to provide individualized, innovative instruction for all.

Swasey Central School (SCS) Principals

1980-1982—Harry Mangel

1982—M.L. Haney (Interim)

1982-1989—Margaret Griffin

1989-1991—Jay Cullen

September-December 1991—Robert Sinibaldi (Interim)

January 1992-1997—Diane Nockles

1997-2000—Nick Hardy

2000-2012—Joan Ostrowski

2012-Present—Ronald Kew

Did You Know?

Seacoast School of Technology (SST) Pre-Engineering teacher, **Vaso Partinoudi**, presented at the New England Education Research Organization (NEERO) conference in Portsmouth. Her paper was on middle school students' perception of engineering. Her studies are part of her Ph.D. program in Educational Leadership and Policy at the University of New Hampshire. Her degree is quite unique in that it combines K-12 *and* higher education, since the subject of engineering is currently impacting education at all levels. She was also asked to chair a paper session called: *Student Voices in Environments of Transformation*. Students from Harvard, Boston College, the University of Maine and other schools around New England also presented their research at the conference.

Cooperative Middle School (CMS) seventh grader **Sean Cheng** captured second place in the NH State Geography Bee held recently in Keene. It took 28 intense tie-breaker rounds of questions in which Sean and his closest competitor challenged each other before Sean incorrectly responded to a question about the river boundary between Croatia and Hungary. Congratulations, Sean!

Natalie Zucco, a first year Seacoast School of Technology (SST) Computer Science student from Exeter High School (EHS) has earned an internship at the Interoperability Lab (IOL) at the University of New Hampshire (UNH). From over hundreds of applicants each year, only eight (8) students are typically chosen for this highly competitive honor. Congratulations, Natalie!

The World Wonders, one of the three *Destination Imagination* (DI) teams from Lincoln Street School (LSS) has been invited to attend the World Tournament in Knoxville, TN this summer. DI is a wonderful program that challenges students to collaborate and communicate while solving interesting problems in a creative way. It integrates 21st Century skills with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) principles.

Ms. Jill Lizier, Curriculum Coordinator at Swasey Central School, recently traveled to Sao Paolo, Brazil to make a presentation at the Transformer 2017 Conference. This conference focused on innovative pedagogical practices that schools are achieving and included educators, investors, entrepreneurs, representatives of public organizations, and

teachers of non-governmental organizations from around the world. Her presentation centered on building teacher strength in creating assessments that measure student learning through solving real world problems while connecting to the units taught in the classroom.

Free and Reduced Meal Statistics

| School | Enrollment FY 2016 | Enrollment FY 2017 | Change | F/R Elig# FY 2016 | F/R Elig# FY 2017 | Change | F/R % FY 2016 | F/R % FY 2017 | Change |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------|------------------|------------------|--------|
| East Kingston Elementary | 124 | 123 | -1 | 12 | 9 | -3 | 14.84 | 7.32 | -7.52 |
| Lincoln Street | 510 | 510 | 0 | 92 | 76 | -16 | 18.04 | 14.9 | -3.14 |
| Main Street | 339 | 311 | -28 | 70 | 57 | -13 | 20.65 | 18.33 | -2.32 |
| Kensington Elementary | 98 | 85 | -13 | 10 | 8 | -2 | 10.2 | 9.41 | -0.79 |
| Newfields Elementary | 119 | 106 | -13 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 2.52 | 2.83 | 0.31 |
| Stratham Memorial | 493 | 472 | -21 | 33 | 29 | -4 | 6.69 | 6.14 | -0.55 |
| Swasey Central | 284 | 258 | -26 | 15 | 18 | 3 | 5.28 | 6.98 | 1.7 |
| Cooperative Middle School | 1284 | 1312 | 28 | 125 | 131 | 6 | 9.74 | 9.98 | 0.24 |
| Exeter High School | 1734 | 1685 | -49 | 169 | 156 | -13 | 9.75 | 9.26 | -0.49 |

Strategic Initiatives in Our Schools

SAU 16 *Vision For Our Graduates....A Compass to Guide Our Work*

Each graduate demonstrates engaged learning and citizenship through the ability to solve problems independently and collaboratively with perseverance and resilience, and communicates solutions with confidence and empathy.

Recently, **Seacoast School of Technology** (SST) Welding Technologies teacher, Jonathan Theberge, took several students on a field trip of sorts, to remove and replace a structural beam support system to hold a cooling tower for the Exeter Inn. The cooling tower provides the entire building with cooling. The structure was made from 8" beam which is 11 feet long by 8 feet wide. The students had to remove the old beams with torches, clean the mounting surfaces, and weld in new beams with our portable welding generator. The project took exactly two hours from set-up to drive-away! The students

were very professional, demonstrated great work ethic, especially to compete this community service after school.

The Culture and Climate Committee at the **Cooperative Middle School (CMS)** is planning its annual Health and Wellness Day for Wednesday, May 10, 2017. The goal of the day is to introduce students to different ways to be healthy. Topics offered during the day include “wellness” in each of the following areas: Physical; Emotional; Spiritual; Financial; Social; Intellectual; and Environmental. Interested parents and community members who would like to help and could volunteer their skills, experiences, or hobbies to the students are encouraged to call the CMS Office at 775-8700.

The **Exeter High School (EHS)** Spanish IV Honors class under the direction of teacher, Señora Nicole Vernon, recently concluded their unit on Spain and the Spanish Civil War. The students studied *Guernica*, a masterpiece painting by Pablo Picasso and then concluded their work by creating a piece of their own art that expressed a personal conflict. They presented their work to the class in Spanish, explaining what the art symbolized, and how they made their own “masterpiece.”

Planning for the creation of an alternative recess program that would include yoga and mindfulness for students has begun at **Lincoln Street School (LSS)**. Students will sign up to attend on the days it will be offered. Additionally, representatives from the Wellness Committee are organizing opportunities for the LSS staff to practice yoga and mindfulness both before and after school in the coming weeks. Strategies used will be transferable to the classroom to help children. The sessions will be run by parent Leigh Sloss, a local yoga instructor and former teacher.

To enhance professional development opportunities for paraprofessionals at **Main Street School (MSS)**, a variety of programs were offered on Early Release Days recently. These included “Addressing Anxiety with Art,” CPR and First Aid Training, Library-Shaped Learning, viewing of Temple Grandin’s movie, and Chromebook Sites for students. This dynamic menu of options was designed to continue to develop the skills and experiences of the dedicated support staff at MSS.

Each year, the Exeter Area *Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR)* sponsor an essay contest for 5th graders through 12th graders. This year’s focus was a personal narrative describing a visit to one of America’s National Parks. This topic was chosen to help celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National Park System being established in 1916. Many **Swasey Central School (SCS)** students entered their very best writing samples and the SCS community was thrilled to learn that the winner of the 5th Grade Prize was SCS student Lauren Henderson. Congratulations to Lauren and her family!

East Kingston Elementary School (EKES) teachers continue to implement Competency-Based Education in various ways. In the Grades 1-2 multiage class, taught by Ms. Katie Young, students are pursuing “passions” during “Genius Hour.” During this time, students work on self-selected research projects that lead to community action. A couple of examples: 1) one student is learning about inspiration - what it is and how to do it; every week she reads a quote to the school over the intercom; and 2) another student is learning about rescue dogs and their need for homes; she is designing and building a dog house that she hopes will encourage a family to rescue a pup! The buzz in

the classroom during “Genius Hour” is really quite contagious. Students are taking more and more ownership of their learning throughout EKES.

Newfields Elementary School (NES) has been involved in some wonderful experiences recently. Fourth graders in Ms. Sarah Rosenbleeth’s class enjoyed reenacting the lives of important historical figures for two days earlier this month. This interdisciplinary unit included grade level curriculum objectives in English/Language Arts, Social Studies, and Technology. Kindergarten, first, and second grade students have been working on creating “care packages” for servicemen and women as part of a project-based unit. They raised \$213.00 by collecting change at home as they completed chores around the house. Hudson the Railroad Dog and his owner/trainer, Richard Nash, visited the second and third grade classes with a dual message of animal safety and celebrating differences. They shared their love for animals, learning about kindness, and safety around animals with the children. The students were engaged and enamored with Hudson!

Kensington Elementary School (KES) recently participated in its first “Instructional Rounds” which is based upon the work of Dr. Richard Elmore who adapted the idea from the professional practice of medical rounds used by doctors. During “Instructional Rounds” at KES, a team of 12 colleagues from other SAU 16 schools visited each of the classrooms to observe and collect data focused around essential questions of practice which were predetermined by the KES leadership team. The “Problems of Practice” for the day were:

#1 - Is the classroom task requiring higher level thinking for our students?

#2 - Are the teachers’ questions and prompting extending our students’ learning?

Classroom observations occurred in the morning and later the visiting team discussed their findings, organized their 395 data points, identified patterns of practice and offered recommendations to the staff. This kind of collegial accountability and data analysis helps teachers and administrators to better understand current teaching methods and helps to improve professional practices in order to support student achievement. The KES staff reflected on the results of “Instructional Rounds” and has identified the next steps in making sure opportunities are provided for students to extend their thinking to higher levels.

“Instructional Rounds” have taken place in each SAU 16 school this year.

Professional development for teachers continues to be very important at **Stratham Memorial School** (SMS). Grade level “Professional Learning Communities” (PLCs) are focusing on various units of study, instructional methods, and assessments. Curriculum Coordinator Kathryn Bates has facilitated work around performance tasks and assessments in math. Groups have reviewed simple tasks, determined depth of knowledge levels, and reflected on rubrics. In doing this work, teachers recognize the importance of what students are expected to know and be able to do and how this is connected directly to instructional practices and assessments used. The goal is to always improve ways to teach and to help students to learn.

Reflection

A friend shared the following story with me recently. (I like stories!) It really made me think about how we interact with each other.

When Mahatma Gandhi was studying law in London (1888-1891), a professor whose last name was Peters, disliked him intensely and always displayed animosity towards him. Also, because Gandhi never lowered his head when addressing him as he expected, there were always "arguments" and confrontations.

One day, Mr. Peters was having lunch at the dining room of the University, and Gandhi came along with his tray and sat next to the professor. The professor said, "Mr. Gandhi, you do not understand. A pig and a bird do not sit together to eat." Gandhi looked at him as a parent would a rude child and calmly replied, "You do not have to worry professor. I'll fly away," and he went and sat at another table.

Mr. Peters, reddened with rage, decided to take revenge on the next test paper, but Gandhi responded brilliantly to all questions. Mr. Peters, unhappy and frustrated, asked him the following question: "Mr. Gandhi, if you were walking down the street and found a package, and within was a bag of wisdom and another bag with a lot of money, which one would you take?" Without hesitating, Gandhi responded, "The one with the money, of course." Mr. Peters, smiling sarcastically said, "I, in your place, would have taken the wisdom." Gandhi shrugged indifferently and responded, "Each one takes what he doesn't have."

Mr. Peters, by this time was fit to be tied. So great was his anger that he wrote on Gandhi's exam sheet the word "idiot" and gave it to Gandhi. Gandhi took the exam sheet and sat down at his desk, trying very hard to remain calm while he contemplated his next move. A few minutes later, Gandhi got up, went to the professor and said to him in a dignified, but sarcastically polite tone, "Mr. Peters, you autographed the sheet, but you did not give me a grade."