

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT
Michael A. Morgan, Superintendent of Schools - SAU 16
MARCH 2017

Voting Day 2017 Results - Warrant Articles

Budgets

Brentwood – Proposed Budget \$5,450,822 -- PASSED
East Kingston - Proposed Budget \$2,849,601 -- PASSED
Exeter - Proposed Budget \$18,559,894 -- PASSED
Exeter Region Coop - Proposed Budget \$56,692,794 -- PASSED
Kensington – Proposed Budget \$2,628,903 -- PASSED
Newfields – Proposed Budget \$2,571,524 -- PASSED
Stratham – Proposed Budget \$10,723,635 -- PASSED

Trust Funds

Brentwood—Special Education - Add \$10,000 – PASSED
Brentwood—Maintenance - Add \$10,000 -- PASSED
Brentwood—Safety and Security - Add \$10,000 -- PASSED
Exeter Region Coop—Synthetic Field Replacement - Add \$50,000 -- PASSED
Newfields—Building Maintenance - Add \$10,000 -- PASSED
Newfields—Special Education - Add \$10,000 -- PASSED
Stratham—Special Education - Add 25,000 -- PASSED
Stratham—Maintenance - Add \$25,000 -- PASSED

Contracts

East Kingston Teachers (3 years) 2017-2020 -- PASSED
Exeter Teachers (3 years) 2017-2020--PASSED
Exeter Region Coop Administrators (5 years) 2017-2022--PASSED
Exeter Region Coop Teachers (4 years) 2017-2021--PASSED

Other

East Kingston—Add new lobby to school entrance - \$48,000 -- PASSED
Exeter Region Coop—CMS Renewal Building Project - (\$21.9M) – FAILED

Voting Day 2017 Results - School Board Members

Brentwood – Allison Higgins and Elza Silva
East Kingston – Melissa Lyons
Exeter – Dawn Bullens
Exeter Region Coop – Deb Hobson (East Kingston); David Slifka (Exeter);
Travis Thompson (Stratham)
Kensington – Jennifer Ramsey
Newfields – Tom Hayward
Stratham – Jillian Carter and Bob O’Sullivan (three-year terms);
Eric von der Linden (one-year term)

Coop Budget Advisory Committee Results

One current member of the Exeter Region Cooperative Budget Advisory Committee was re-elected to a three-year term on March 21, 2017 - that is Roy Morrisette of Exeter. There were some write-in candidates from other towns who are in the process of being contacted to finalize the Committee. Congratulations to each of them!

Thank You for Your Service

Serving on a school board today is no easy task. The commitment of time and energy is often more significant than one first imagines. SAU 16 has been fortunate over the years to have capable and dedicated individuals devote some of their community service efforts to help the students, families, and staff members of their respective communities. In March 2017, the following individuals left their school board seats to others. Their service is gratefully appreciated.

Brentwood—Liz Faria (served 7 years) and Amy Mitchell (served 6 years)
East Kingston—Korrine Bork (served 6 years)
Exeter Region Coop—Denny Grubbs (Exeter – served 3 years)
Kensington—Dennis Roffman (served 6 years)
Newfields—Kirstin Lord (served 6 years)

NH Teacher of the Year for 2017

A dedicated SAU 16 teacher has been nominated for the prestigious title of *NH Teacher of the Year* for 2018. **Mr. Eric Kobb**, a music teacher and the Band Director at the Cooperative Middle School (CMS), submitted the required documents that begin this intensive and detailed process. Through a series of interviews, public displays, and school visits over the next eight months, all nominees will be accorded several opportunities to display the quality of their individual professional work with students and colleagues. A final decision is expected at the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year.

National Merit Scholars for 2017

Five (5) Exeter High School (EHS) seniors have earned the impressive distinction of being named a “Finalist” in the National Merit Scholarship Program for 2017. This wonderful honor is extended to Michael Clements, Jeremie Dyes-Hopping, Kristen McLaughlin, Sydney Morris, and Christopher Sullivan. Essentially, this recognition designates each of them as having demonstrated exceptional high performance on the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT/PSAT) with excellent potential for future academic accomplishments. It also opens up the strong possibility of receiving academic scholarships for college or university study. The entire EHS community congratulates them! This is a proud personal accomplishment for each of them, their families, and for all of EHS.

Newfields Principal Selected

Mr. David Foster, currently the Principal of Horace Mitchell Elementary School (a K-3 building in Kittery, Maine) and a resident of York, Maine, has been chosen as the new principal of Newfields Elementary School (NES) beginning on July 1, 2017.

Mr. Foster earned his BA degree in Special Education and Elementary Education from Curry College in Milton, MA. He earned his M.Ed. degree in School Administration and

Special Education Administration from Lesley College in Cambridge, MA. In 2004, he earned his Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies (CAGS) in School Administration from the University of New Hampshire (UNH).

Mr. Foster has been a classroom teacher, special educator, and principal. He served as principal in K-6 schools in Belfast, Maine and for the past 28 years has been the principal of Horace Mitchell Elementary School in Kittery, Maine. Mr. Foster has been a presenter at the Maine Principal's Association Conference and also at the New England Kindergarten Conference. He has been published and is a contributor to "*New Beginnings*," the Maine State Guide to Kindergarten Screening and "*The Big Book for Educators*," a guide for implementing developmentally appropriate curriculum. Mr. Foster has also served as Chairman of the Early Elementary Education Advisory Committee for the Department of Educational and Cultural Services of Maine.

Mr. Foster succeeds current principal, Mrs. Kate Segal, who served NES for the past 3 years.

National Technical Honor Society for 2017

Fifty-eight students, representing all of the region's high schools, were recently inducted into the National Technical Honor Society at the Seacoast School of Technology (SST). This impressive ceremony recognizes the outstanding qualities that membership in this elite organization demands: Skill, Honesty, Service, Responsibility, Scholarship, Citizenship, and Leadership. Each student was vested with an Honor Sash that he/she is able to wear at graduation.

EHS Captures State Unified Basketball Championship

For the first time in its three-season history, the Exeter High School (EHS) Co-ed Unified Basketball Team won the NH State Championship with an impressive victory over Berlin High School at the University of New Hampshire recently. Buoyed by a 12-0 season, coached by Sharon Orchard and Bill Ball, the team captured the very essence of what unified sports is all about: "*making high school sports available to all students, including those with intellectual disabilities.*" This is the third time that an EHS unified sports team has taken a statewide title. The team was honored by the Exeter Region Cooperative School Board at its regular monthly meeting in March.

Health Insurance Rates for 2017-2018 Announced

Most SAU 16 employees who are eligible for and elect to carry health insurance through their respective employer do so through *Health Trust* which is a New Hampshire-wide consortium of public employers. *Health Trust* competitively bids for the best prices for health care services. Currently, SAU 16 has most of its coverages provided by Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield. Annual rates are heavily determined on "usage" of services in the previous 18-month period. During budget preparation season each fall, *Health Trust* provides school districts with a Guaranteed Maximum Rate (GMR) for the upcoming fiscal year (July 1 to June 30). The GMR is used to prepare budget figures that are presented to the voters. Final rates are provided to school districts usually in late March or early April after operating budgets are finalized.

The average GMR presented to SAU 16 school districts for 2017-2018 was approximately 10.5%. The final rate is 4.1%. This means that surplus funds will be returned to taxpayers in the next budget preparation cycle.

Since 1998-1999, average health insurance rates in SAU16 have had an annual rate increase of 8.67%. The average annual rate since 2006-2007 has been 4.62%. Employees are becoming more and more conscious of wellness programs and finding more efficient ways to decrease usage, such as using local “Walk-In Clinics” rather than hospital emergency rooms which are far more expensive. Efforts in this regard are continuing and help to keep health costs down.

SPOTLIGHT

Spotlight: Stratham Memorial 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.

Stratham Memorial School – Tom Fosher, Principal 39 Gifford Farm Road, Stratham – 772-5413

Stratham Memorial School (SMS), home to the Wolves in Preschool through 5th grade, has an enrollment of approximately 560 students for the 2016-2017 school year. The 125 staff members utilize a “student-centered-first” approach to learning in all three domains – academic, social, and emotional.

The current building, located at 39 Gifford Farm Road, opened in the fall of 1989. In the past 28 years, the building has had impeccable upkeep while adding a new playground area, as well as a student-centered garden station. Both initiatives came as the direct result of a close-knit relationship with the school’s Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO), the community, and volunteer partnerships.

This year, the school collaborated with the *Stratham Town 300 Commission* to create a school float in honor of Stratham’s 300 year anniversary. The celebration was held on Saturday, September 24, 2016 as part of the Town’s parade. Staff, students, and parents designed and built a float which showcased SMS and its changing buildings over the years. That float won first prize in the parade competition!

The formal educational program at SMS begins with a three-year-old preschool program and concludes as children depart 5th grade for their middle school education. The Cooperative Middle School (CMS) is the regional school for all of the public 6th through 8th grade students in the six towns of SAU 16.

The SMS Mission Statement, “*We exist to inspire every learner every day,*” was developed as a direct result of a team of school leaders, community members, Central Office personnel, and Stratham School Board Members meeting together as a part of the school’s leadership team. This leadership team met bi-weekly to make informed decisions; dialogue about current educational trends; and develop goals for the school to achieve.

The staff continues to provide a well-rounded education for all students. Utilizing the framework of *Responsive Classroom*, students are well-connected to the seven tenants of the social skills program. Classroom-based “Morning Meetings,” along with school-wide “Morning Meetings,” have provided all SMS students with a solid foundation into behavioral expectations.

The SMS academic program centers around a balanced literacy approach using the Lucy Calkins units of study in association with the Fountas and Pinnell philosophy. Implementing the workshop model across all aspects of the curriculum has enabled students to achieve at an individual rate while maintaining the rigor and challenge of the learning process. Students are active in the core subject areas, including the MakerSpace approach that engages all students in meaningful learning.

Each classroom is a dynamic learning space. Wall spaces are covered with student artifacts and anchors charts to support the retention of learning or motivational quotes/pictures. Students in Grades 3-5 have a dedicated Chromebook to assist in the learning process, while teachers utilize interactive whiteboards or assistive technology across all facets of a competency-based education.

The SMS educational community believes that a well-rounded education also includes field trips to a variety of local locations. Artist-in-residency programs allow grade levels to weave drama and music into their understanding of New Hampshire art, culture, and history. Author visits, guest educators, local historians, and even mystery readers make learning come alive for the SMS “wolf pack.” In addition, there are many after school enrichment offerings for students of all ages. Some of the offerings include water coloring, geocaching, robotics, foreign language, drama, technology, fine/gross motor skill building, pottery, guitar, fairy houses, and sports (soccer/flag football/golf /basketball).

SMS has been the recipient of *the New Hampshire Partners in Education Award* for the past 20 years. As a noted ‘*Blue Ribbon*’ designation, the school’s volunteers have provided support in multiple capacities. This includes many activities from organizing a grandparent lunch, to helping out at recess and to reading during *Read Across America Week*. They are always willing to lend a hand!

The entire school community actively displays its community service involvement through a wide variety of community endeavors. Whether a food drive is needed for the *End 68 Hours of Hunger* program or supporting the *American Heart Association* or local food pantries, SMS is always ready and willing to participate.

Did You Know?

The **Rockingham County Long Term Care Services Campus** is located on North Road in Brentwood and has been in existence since 1869, having begun as an almshouse for Rockingham County residents. The Campus is comprised of five interconnected buildings. Mitchell Memorial Hospital was built on that site in 1935 to serve as a general county hospital. The hospital was closed in 1944 when World War II caused staff shortages. The Mitchell Building which still has its name at the top of the building was

reopened in 1952, and as a result of renovations in early 1992, is now home to Administrative and County Offices.

Exeter High School (EHS) senior **Julia Burns** has won a National Gold Medal Award for two of her artworks at the Scholastic Art Awards. She first won two gold keys regionally and then her work went on to be judged at the national level. From approximately 100 entries statewide, about 15-20 pieces were awarded national awards. The ceremony will be held at Carnegie Hall in New York City on June 8, 2017. Julia will be attending Ringling College of Art and Design in Sarasota, FL this fall.

Tara Holmes Ball, a recent recipient of the Exeter Region Cooperative School District Champions for Children Award because of her outstanding work with suicide prevention, has been selected as the Southeast NH Champions for Children Award recipient given at the state level by the NH School Administrators Association. The statewide award winner will be announced in early May.

The Seacoast School of Technology (SST) will host its annual **Small Business Showcase** at the Talbot Gym on the Tuck Learning Center campus on Wednesday, April 5, 2017 from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm. Approximately 80 local businesses and organizations will display information about their company's activities and community involvement. The 2017 Showcase will have one of the largest numbers of companies and association participants and is a credit to the hard work and determination of SST's Marketing teacher, Sandy Flannigan, and her outstanding students who realize the importance of developing strong business and communication skills in today's world.

The **Seacoast Learning Collaborative (SLC)** is a K-12 approved non-public school which serves the special education and transportation needs of many southeast NH schools. SLC recently moved from its Brentwood location at "The Castles" to the Gonic Mills in Gonic, NH.

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.

Fourth grade students at **Kensington Elementary School (KES)** have submitted a video to the New Hampshire Division of Travel and Tourism and are eagerly awaiting news if they are the winners of the *Class Act Video Contest*. The Grand Prize is an all-expense paid field trip on the Mount Washington Cog Railway. Their sixty-second video shows why they think New Hampshire is a great place to visit. Students embarked on this Project Based Learning project with great enthusiasm as they prepared to be both in front of and behind the camera. They quickly realized that one minute is not a lot of time and students needed to organize their ideas and thinking to stay within the given time constraints. They eventually decided to divide into three groups - beginning, middle and end. Each group then had 20 seconds to convince viewers why they should visit New Hampshire. Students shared many of their own personal experiences, referenced maps

and books about our beautiful state and even filmed themselves playing in the snow. They brainstormed activities that would draw people to NH in the various seasons and highlighted significant historical sites around the state. Students worked collaboratively and had fun creating the video. They only wished they had more time!

At **Lincoln Street School** (LSS), Library Media Specialist Helen Burnham and Special Education paraprofessional Robin Vogt have been coordinating the second annual after school coding club for fifth grade students. They are using a program from Google called *CS First*. The goal of this program is to increase student access and exposure to computer science (CS) education. Over the course of eight weeks, the students will work on Game Designing modules using Scratch. Each module will provide opportunities for the students to design and program their own video games using code and computer science. More importantly, students' critical thinking, collaborative, and sharing skills will be reinforced as they complete each step in the program.

In spite of the many days off and delayed openings this year, the third graders at **Swasey Central School** (SCS) have managed to accomplish several things. In February the students enjoyed reading mysteries, looking for clues, and trying to figure out which suspects were guilty! Students finished writing their research reports on topics related to the solar system. They began by taking notes then sorted their information by topic and writing paragraphs that shared what they had learned in interesting ways. The Social Studies unit focused on slavery. This period of our country's history is a serious one, and students are usually surprised by what they learn. Within the unit, the students focus on heroes in the process of abolition and civil rights. These third graders completed a math unit on geometry, focusing on area and perimeter, and understanding quadrilaterals. They also participated in the STEM marble challenge, working in teams, attempting to create a marble run that would keep a marble running through it for the longest time. In February, the students made a special Valentine Week visit to *Senior Class Adult Day Services* where they completed a craft project and shared a song with the people in the program there.

The big news out of **East Kingston Elementary School** (EKES) this month is all about the school play. This year, teachers Lynne Walker, Chris Benson and Erin Murphy directed *The Jungle Book* (with support from Kim Kemp and Mary George as well as numerous parents), and performed by fourth and fifth graders. Play planning and preparation began in December with tryouts (students choose a song to perform in front of the third-fifth graders and staff) and culminated recently in three performances. The set, costumes, and makeup were very professional and added to the experience. The new lights purchased last summer (thanks to the school board's support) are wonderful. Principal Steve Tullar commented, "Students are just amazing as they sing and dance their way across the stage." What an amazing experience for the students and the community!

All of the SAU 16 elementary schools celebrated *Read Across America Week* at the end of February or the beginning of March. At **Stratham Memorial School** (SMS), highlights included a school-wide assembly as Principal Tom Fosher and teacher Mary Ann Hazeltine read *Hooray For Diffendoofer Day!* by Dr. Seuss. Students enjoyed this interactive opportunity and learned many interesting facts related to Dr. Seuss. Another

exciting day included dressing like a favorite book character. The school community saw Dr. Seuss, Thing 1 and Thing 2, Blue Fish, Red Fish, Pete the Cat, Ms. Frizzle, Fly Guy, Elephant and Piggie; Pippi Longstocking; Big Anthony; Harry Potter, Hermione Granger, Professor Dumbledore; and many more! Even a number of special guest readers visited SMS to join in the celebration!

In mid-March, the **Seacoast School of Technology** (SST) hosted the annual Skills USA Competition that brought together students from around the state to compete in a wide variety of career and technical education challenges: Architectural Drafting; Carpentry; Cabinet Making; Customer Service; Electrical Construction; Wiring; Esthetics; Extemporaneous Speaking; Industrial Motor Control; Mobile Robotics; Public Speaking; Technical Math; Power Equipment Technology; Technical Drafting; Welding—Art/Sculpture; and Welding Fabrication. SST students won the bronze medal in Technical Drafting, the bronze medal in Welding, and the silver medal in Power Equipment Technology.

Cooperative Middle School (CMS) art teacher Christine Hodsdon passionately organized the “Hearts for Hospitals” initiative this year. This was an idea that linked to Valentine’s Day and was inspired by the many people who showed kindness to her and her family two years ago as her husband worked through his chemotherapy at Massachusetts General Hospital. This year her students sewed and crafted stuffed hearts that included well wishes for patients. Just before Valentine’s Day, Mrs. Hodsdon delivered 38 hearts to the cancer floor where her husband was once a patient. Later she and her students delivered 55 hearts to Exeter Hospital’s Center for Cancer Care. The nurses distributed the hearts to patients who were undergoing chemotherapy and radiation to bring a smile to their face and to lift their spirits. The art students were very happy to participate in this community service initiative that extended happiness beyond the walls of CMS.

At **Newfields Elementary School** (NES), third grade students recently completed a Project-Based Biome project. Several different groups were assigned different biomes to research. Teachers Jodi Bennett and Tracy Hager selected two websites for the children and asked them to gather facts and information. As a way to teach research skills, the students learned to compare and contrast the two sources, cite which ones they were using and then develop paragraphs based on their notes. Students also cited their sources within their final draft paragraphs. These drafts are being put into “Lap Books,” using file folders which have been made into tri-folds. The children are now at the stage where they are presenting the information they gathered to their peers. This is a great way to practice communication and public speaking skills.

For the second consecutive year, students in **Exeter High School** (EHS) Senior English classes are working on a comprehensive Senior Project and Presentation. This project was piloted last year in Honors and College Prep (CP) English classes taught by Dan Violette and Kathleen Reardon. This year, students in all senior English classes are participating. The goal of the project is for students to research a topic related to the essential question: “What role do you hope to play in the world?” Students are choosing topics which incorporate a personal interest, passion, or career goal. The project consists of several elements including a researched essay, a process or product, and a final

presentation. Last year, students' projects ranged from learning basic woodworking to building a "Little Library" to teaching sign language to elementary school students. The possibilities are endless!

Life in the **Exeter Adult Education** world is becoming more complex as requirements from the federal Workforce and Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) have generated more rules and regulations on the state level. The legislation connects New Hampshire Department of Education programs with the Department of Labor requirements. New priorities, collaboration, and data collection are the foundations of the newly-released RFPs (Requests for Proposals) to fund adult education programs and is demanding significantly more documentation. Exeter Adult Education Director Leslie Haslam has spent considerable time monitoring and preparing for these changes while striving to maintain core academic programs to meet the needs of many seacoast area residents.

Second grade students at **Main Street School** (MSS) are participating in *Stop, Drop, and Read* which is an annual program sponsored by the Exeter Fire Department. Students read for four weeks during the month of March and log their minutes on a card that gets turned in weekly. This is a program designed to help build a "love" of reading and there are a number of incentives built into the program to keep them reading. The MSS community is looking forward to its final celebration in April when two students will earn a trip to school on an Exeter fire truck!

Reflection

Only 14.2% of the 27,223 registered voters in the six towns which comprise SAU 16 voted on the March 2017 Warrant Articles. Some people blamed that on the weather, especially because voting day was postponed from its original day. Surprisingly, that was not the lowest voter turnout since I started keeping annual records in March 2009. In 2013, only 13.67% of Coop voters went to the polls. The weather was fine that day. So let's not blame the weather.

Noted Harvard professor, Dr. Robert Putnam (once a student at Phillips Exeter and now a NH resident), details in his well-researched book, *Bowling Alone*, that political participation, especially with regard to voting has declined significantly since the 1960s. This phenomenon is not new, but it is a commentary on our democratic society—certainly at the local level. We have to find a way to teach and model civic engagement and political participation more. Our children's future depends on that!