

REPORT FROM SAU 16 ADMINISTRATION FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2007-2008

The SAU 16 School Districts are committed to working together to develop common standards and values that will result in graduates who are caring, productive and contributing members of society

In August of 2007, the schools opened their doors with the following enrollments: Swasey Central School in Brentwood – 411; East Kingston Elementary School – 193; Exeter Elementary (Main Street School and Lincoln Street School) – 1023; Kensington Elementary School – 215; Newfields Elementary School – 162; Stratham Memorial School – 611; Cooperative Middle School – 1,368; the Seacoast School of Technology – 630, Exeter High School - 1,668 and Great Bay eLearning Charter School –100.

Administration

Dr. Arthur Hanson is retiring at the conclusion of this school year, having served as superintendent of SAU 16 for eleven years. The SAU 16 Board has conducted a nation-wide search and anticipates having a successor named for Dr. Hanson by mid-February 2008. Additionally, Main Street School Principal Paul Ford will be retiring in June 2008 after 21 years of outstanding service to the Exeter School District. The Exeter School Board will be faced with the challenge of finding a successor to Principal Ford within the next couple of months.

Curriculum and Assessment

Curriculum

In October of 2007, we received approval of our Master Plan for Professional Development by the State for the next five years. This plan details our recertification process, professional development model, supervision and evaluation process and also outlines the curriculum review and assessment processes.

At the high school level, staff members are involved in identifying competencies for every course in compliance with a 2009 deadline as part of the school approval process. The area of focus of each of the SAU wide curriculum committees is described below.

Art

Revision of the SAU 16 Art Curriculum is scheduled for this year. Technology, as it integrates art with other subjects, will be one of the focal points of this revision and alignment to state and national standards. Opportunities to integrate art with other curriculum areas will be addressed. How to address copyright, fair use and other related policies that have unique applications to art instruction and student products are also being discussed.

Literacy

The work of the "NH Pre-K-12 Literacy Task Force" serves as the focus of discussions this year. The SAU 16 Website has been updated with the most current practices - NH Literacy Action Plan for 21st Century Literacy, links, and documents from the work of the SAU 16 Literacy Committee. Emphasis is placed on the consistent application of the writing rubric and continued professional development is provided to increase all teachers' capacity as literacy instructors.

Mentoring

Development, implementation and evaluation of the SAU 16 in-house mentoring program are nearly completed. A summer Mentor Training Institute was held and we currently have approximately 80 trained mentors in the SAU.

Math

The implementation of Everyday Math, third edition, is taking place during the year. Following the recommendation by the teachers who attended the presentation of these materials, we continue to offer training and professional development in this area as needed. The middle school and high school are continuing to provide a wide range of remediation and enrichment opportunities for all students in mathematics.

Science

K-8 curriculum realignment has taken place during the last two years, aligning the curriculum with the NH grade level and grade span expectations. Professional development activities focusing on the "Skills and Inquiry" strand for grades K-5 continue to be offered. Science topic study groups are available to interested staff members as part of the *NH-PALS Grant*.

Social Studies

All teachers have received hard copies of the *K-5 Social Studies Curriculum* that has correlated state curriculum frameworks, skill strands, grade level and grade span expectations. The committee is looking at the World History strand this year, as well as providing suggestions for assessment and integrating technology.

Professional Development

Supervision and Evaluation documents are being reviewed and revised this year and will comprise most of the work for this group.

School Nurses

The school nurses are reviewing the SAU 16 health websites, SAU health policies, standing nurses' orders, discussing common health related procedures (peanut allergies, etc.) and reviewing with building representatives the pandemic preparedness plan for their building. As with each year, nurses prepare health alert lists, health care plans, review universal precautions with staff, provide health supplies for classrooms and gather emergency information on staff members.

No Child Left Behind

With the reauthorization of NCLB on the horizon, discussions focus on the major components proposed in the reauthorization and the various statements made by professional organizations relative to the reauthorization.

Wellness

The SAU Wellness Advisory Committee will convene to share local practices, review the implementation of the policies SAU-wide and discuss strategies for communicating wellness practices, healthy foods and lifestyles throughout SAU 16.

Physical Education

The last formal review of the Physical Education Curriculum was completed in 2002. With the change of school approval standards, creation of extended learning opportunities, and the integration of Information, Communication and Technology Standards in all subjects, the revision will focus on these areas. Statements of how each of the performance indicators are assessed will be cited in the new document.

Technology Education/Family and Consumer Science

These areas were last formally reviewed during 2002-2003. Since that time, standards for school approval have changed and an alignment study, as well as the identification of the integration of ICT standards through these curriculum areas, is taking place.

We are very fortunate in SAU 16 to annually have over 200 teachers who volunteer service to a variety of curriculum committees and task forces. Most of these groups meet after school hours, are facilitated by district and building level administrators and meet occasionally during a full day session to conduct the ongoing analysis of curriculum for the 21st Century Learner.

Assessment

During the fall of 2007, all students in grades 3-8 and 11 participated in the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) exams in reading and mathematics. Fifth, eighth and eleventh graders participated in a writing component as well. Beginning in May 2008, the NECAP Science Test will be administered to all students in grades 4, 8 and 11. The results of these exams illustrate how our students perform on a standardized test that is based on Grade Level Expectations at the state level, and will be reported to students, parents and the community once they become available. When the 2006 results were released in August 2007, it was learned that all schools in SAU 16 made "Adequate Yearly Progress". In January 2008, the 2007 results will be released, but are not currently available.

Annually in May, most of the SAU 16 schools administer the Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA). This computer adaptive instrument gives us one indicator of each student's growth over a set period of time in language usage and mathematics. The NWEA program also provides valuable information that assists in grouping students and illustrating specific instructional suggestions for each student.

Our students are assessed in a variety of ways including teacher developed tests, projects, displays and presentations. It is important to remember that any standardized test is one indicator and one type of assessment. Our teachers encourage and provide forums for students to demonstrate what they "know and are able to do".

SAU 16 Office Renovation

The year the Exeter Region Cooperative School Board reviewed its financing options to fund the renovation of approximately 10,000 square feet at 30 Linden Street, the former location of Exeter High School, to provide rental space for the SAU 16 Central Offices. The Board approved the plan for renovation of the space and the project was completed in June 2007. The SAU vacated its rental space at 24 Front Street and relocated to 30 Linden Street in early July 2007. The 30 Linden Street campus was renamed *The Tuck Learning Campus*. This renovation project is eligible for 40 % State building aid over 5 years. The first installment was received by the ERCSD this fiscal year. The cost savings accruing to the taxpayers of the SAU/ERCSD due to the cessation of rental payments, combined with the building aid receipts, will enable the renovation cost to be recovered in less than three (3) years.

Seacoast School of Technology Renovation Project

On March 13, 2007, thanks to the voters of the Exeter Region Cooperative School District, the \$8,500,000 appropriation for the renovation and addition project of SST was approved by an overwhelming 78% majority vote. Students, staff, and Board members are grateful for your generous support. Equally important was the support of the Department of Education Career/Technical Leadership for their guidance, as well as the hard work of our local legislators in gaining the vote of approval of the State Legislature and Governor. Their efforts resulted in our receiving \$6,375,000 State Renovation Project funding.

Design of the project was completed in May 2007 and the bidding process was finalized in time for construction to begin in July. The first phase of construction was the completion of the site work, foundation for the Automotive Technologies building and the renovation of the Early Childhood Education/Wright Start pre-school program space. This phase was completed by the end of September.

The completion of the remaining program spaces and the new automotive building will occur in phases throughout the remainder of the 2008 school year and summer with final project completion anticipated for the fall of 2008.

Technology

The state minimum standards require that digital portfolios be implemented for all students in grades K-12. Teachers will be involved in training and pilot testing digital portfolios during the 2007-2008 school year with full implementation occurring by November 2008. An SAU 16 Portfolio Committee has been established and is comprised of approximately 30 members representing all SAU 16 schools. Members of this committee are currently working on a number of projects leading toward full implementation of the portfolio in 2008. Additionally, we were able to secure grant funds from the New Hampshire Department of Education to create a teacher technology and portfolio mentoring program. Eighteen teachers have been trained to provide training and support to our teachers in the use of technology and in the creation of digital portfolios. Since last spring, these mentors have provided over 450 hours of professional development opportunities to SAU 16 teachers.

Helping our students to understand how to safely use Internet technologies is of prime importance in today's connected society. Toward this end, SAU 16 has formed a district-wide Internet Safety Committee. The committee is comprised of representatives from Microsoft, BeNetSafe.org, the Granite State Distance Learning Network, along with SAU 16 guidance counselors, teachers and administrators. The committee will host an Internet safety night for all SAU 16 communities on Tuesday, February 5, 2008 at 7:00PM in the auditorium at Exeter High School. The committee is also establishing an Internet safety student mentoring program where middle and high school students will be trained to teach elementary students how to safely use Internet resources.

All schools continue to use PowerSchool to collect attendance data and student demographic information. Exeter High School and the Cooperative Middle School have fully implemented the system which includes online grade reporting, report card generation, and online student/parent access to grades and attendance data. All Lincoln Street School teachers have been trained to use the PowerSchool grade book and report card system. Stratham Memorial School teachers will be trained in January 2008 with the goal of creating report cards for quarter three. East Kingston teachers issued quarter one report cards using PowerSchool while our remaining elementary schools will be working toward full implementation of this system in the coming year.

Great Bay eLearning Charter School (GBeCS)

The Great Bay eLearning Charter School currently enrolls one-hundred and four students in grades nine, ten, eleven and twelve. The focus of the school is to foster student achievement through project-based learning in a technologically rich learning environment. Several GBeCS seniors have applied for early admission to their colleges of choice. As of December 11, 2007, we are proud to announce acceptances to Jacksonville University (FL), Johnson and Wales University (RI), Johnson State College (VT), New England College (NH) and the University of New Hampshire (Durham, NH). Students from any SAU 16 town can apply to attend the school free of charge. For more information about the school, please visit their website (<http://www.gbecs.org>) or call the school directly (775-8638).

Sincere appreciation is offered to all of the SAU 16 Joint School Board Members, the Board of Trustees for the Great Bay eLearning Charter School and the Seacoast School of Technology's Governing Board for their continued support and dedication to the students that attend SAU 16 Schools. The Boards' tireless efforts and dedication on behalf of collaborative educational and co-curricular excellence is often unrecognized. Their commitment to all students and to their communities allows SAU 16 to be recognized as a superior school system.