

## Superintendent's Report

May 2022

Dr. Debra Taylor



### **The School Year in Perspective**

As your superintendent, I am especially proud of the progress we have made during the past school year. I invite you to look through the pages of this report and see for yourself all that is going on in our schools as we pursue our mission to ensure that all SAU 7 students find success - in whatever path they choose.

Our school boards have worked together over the past year to support the implementation of our SAU 7 Strategic Plan. I am happy to report the efforts were successful.

We have increased career and technical education opportunities with the final approval of the North Point Career and Technical Education Center which will be implemented in the fall of 2022. Approved North Point programs include:

1. Auto – including cars, powersports, and diesel mechanics
2. Hospitality/Culinary – in partnership with Pittsburg School District and local resorts
3. Education – focusing on multi-level education with a particular emphasis on secondary
4. 4. Health Science – Including LNA as well as a range of health care occupations
5. Information Technology – including a third-year cybersecurity track

We have met the goals of our strategic plan for this year through our focus on student growth and development. We have accomplished this by focusing on teaching and learning. Our teachers and administrators have worked together to continue the transition to competency-based education. Our teachers have participated in regular professional learning community meetings, district-wide professional development, CBE aligned curriculum including subject and grade/course level competencies and standards for students. In addition, we are implementing new instructional materials in reading K-8. We have a full schedule of summer professional development opportunities for teachers and paraeducators. In addition, 90% of our grant activities for the coming school year have been planned.

Our Student Services Department has been hard at work this year continuing the focus on student growth for students with disabilities. Parent communication has been enhanced. Staff have received professional development in the areas of reading intervention, social-emotional learning, and behavior support. The SAU 7 Special Education team is implementing our Extended School Year program which will take place for five weeks during the summer of 2022. This program is offered to special education students who are at risk of losing progress towards their goals without summer services. We offer Speech and Language, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Academic Support to students based on their individual needs. Each school has a program that is hosted in its building.

Our strategic plan also focused on supporting our teachers' implementation of technology in support of personalized teaching and learning. To that end, we have reinstated our technology committee, embedded professional development, and updated our network and wi-fi systems to increase security and improve our management of hardware and information technology systems. Improvements have been made in response time to staff technology support tickets. We have updated our technology plan and data governance plan.

We are also preparing for the transition of our Business Administrator. The School Board thanks Cheryl Covill for thirty-eight years of service and congratulates her on her upcoming retirement on June 30, 2022. Bridget Cross will begin in the position on July 1, and she has been meeting with the Superintendent, Business Administrator, and SAU 7 office staff periodically this spring.

Despite these many achievements, we are not without our challenges, but I can truly say that they pale when compared with our progress and accomplishments. Our schools are thriving and collaborating to prepare students for success. Our students are engaged with our communities on so many levels – from school-to-work programs to service-learning projects to internships.

With a 100% high school graduation rate, our graduates are gaining admission to competitive colleges and universities, stepping into career-track jobs that interest and excite them. Through professional development and collaboration, our teachers continue to enhance their ability to provide a safe, supportive, and academically-rigorous environment in which students can succeed.

This has been a challenging time in education. Our school staff is dedicated, and our students are resilient. As the school year draws to a close, we aim to continue to build and support a culture in which all stakeholders contribute individually and collectively to accomplish the district objectives of increasing student achievement by way of a systemic process grounded in collaboration.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to the many parents, volunteers, board members, business owners, and community members who have donated their time and expertise on behalf of our students and schools this past year. Parent and community involvement is vital to quality schools and school improvement, and to that end, I know our schools are on the right path. We truly are a community-centered and community-supported school system.

## **School Highlights**

### **Colebrook Academy and Elementary School**

The School Board is engaged in a building facilities expansion project. The Colebrook Academy building closed in 2019 and was recently sold. The Board recognizes that the current school building is not sufficient to serve our growing student population and is working with the community to design an addition and submit a building aid application prior to July 1. The proposal will be presented to the voters in March 2023.

CAES faculty and staff are preparing for the implementation of the North Point CTE Center and programs. They are working in conjunction with the Pittsburg School to implement the Hospitality and Culinary Program. Other programs will be integrated into the current school facility with automotive, woodworking, and welding will continue to be housed in the old Tech Building.

Other highlights of the school year in Colebrook include:

- Implementation of the Timbernook Outdoor Education Curriculum for students in grades K-8
- Increase in Title I teaching staff to support students increased achievement in reading
- Instruction of social-emotional learning and counseling supports for students
- Increase in parent and community involvement through school-wide events and continuation of regular positive parent contacts from teachers
- Regular educator meetings including professional learning communities, and student support meetings.
- Several student activities and clubs are thriving this year such as Key Club, World Language Club, and National Honor Society, to name a few.
- Continued partnerships with the Colebrook Recreation Department
- New partnerships with employers and expanded school-to-work and CTE opportunities which culminated in a regional College and Career Fair last month.
- Student field trips have increased, student dances occurred, and graduation plans are underway.

Please refer to the [CAES Facebook Page](#) for highlights of school activities.

### **Pittsburg School**

This year we welcomed our new principal, Debbie Lynch, who joined us upon the departure of Elaine Sherry in November.

Pittsburg school continues to innovate in response to the requirements of the CSI project. Working closely with the Department of Education and education consultants, the school has made great progress as measured by improved student achievement in reading and math, improved student and staff attendance, regular assessment data meetings, and a dynamic school-based teacher leadership team. A recent staff survey demonstrated positive growth toward school goals.

Other accomplishments this year include:

- Regular student participation in Siskin Activities which focus on outdoor experiences.
- Increased teacher collaboration through professional learning communities
- Social-emotional supports and bullying prevention education
- More project-based learning activities that engage students
- Team success in basketball advancing to the semis and finals.
- Building a culture of community has been a major focus this year with several school-wide activities and competitions.

- Offering several additional parent and community school-wide invitations to participate in school activities such as an Olympic Assembly and Celebration of Learning.

More information about school happenings may be found on the [Pittsburg Facebook page](#).

## **Stewartstown Community School**

This year we welcomed Stephanie Humphrey as Principal of Stewartstown Community School.

Stewartstown School faculty have deepened their learning and led the way in the implementation of competency-based learning. They are piloting a new report card that will link competencies that students have achieved to reports that parents will be receiving. Our 8th graders have continued their daily instruction in Woodworking and Family and Consumer Science at Pittsburg School. Next year, they will spend a portion of the year learning Spanish in Colebrook as well.

Other accomplishments in Stewartstown this year include:

- Leading an SAU 7 - wide effort to implement weekly skiing and snowboarding program at Burke Mountain
- Increasing Title I teacher support in reading and math
- Implementing enhanced technology instruction for K-8 students
- Participating in a student virtual partnership with another school district in Maine
- Engaging faculty in book studies concerning social-emotional support for students and staff and improving student discipline
- Providing school-wide events led by the 8<sup>th</sup>-grade students to increase cooperation, school spirit, and fun!
- Inviting parents and community members to the school to participate in educational activities including an open house, performances, and school-wide celebration of learning.

For more information on current happenings in Stewartstown Community School please visit the [SCS Facebook page](#).

## **Important Reminders**

### June School Year Schedule:

Last day of school for students: June 15 (half Day)

Professional Development Days for Teachers and Support Staff: June 16 and 17

### Student Graduation:

Colebrook HS Graduation: Thursday, June 9th at 6:00 pm.

Pittsburg HS Graduation: Friday, June 10th at 6:00 pm.

Stewartstown Eighth Grade Graduation: Wednesday, June 14th at 5:00 pm.

**Mark your calendars!**

**Remember - Together we are better in SAU 7!**

Respectfully submitted,  
Debra Taylor, PhD.  
Superintendent of Schools