

School Administrative Unit #7							
Fall Meeting Minutes							
<b>Date</b>		November 9, 2023					
<b>Time</b>		6:00 p.m.					
<b>Location</b>		Clarksville Town Hall					
Attendance							
School Board Members							
Clarksville		Colebrook		Columbia		Pittsburg	
P	Michel Dionne	P	Nate Lebel	P	Kristin Brooks	P	Lindsey Gray
P	Linda White	P	Deb Greene	P	Stacey Campbell	P	Jamie Gray
E	Erin Blanchard	P	Rhonda Lyons	E	Eric Brungot	P	Willard Ormsbee
		P	Robert Murphy			P	Hannah Kingsbury
		P	Joey Sweatt			E	Reggie Parker
		P	Tim Stevens				
		P	Tanya Young				
Stewartstown		SAU #7				Public	
P	Courtney Sierad	P	Debra Taylor, Superintendent			None	
P	Betsy Gray	P	Bridget Cross, Business Administrator				
E	Philip Pariseau	P	Jennifer Noyes, Special Services Coordinator				
		P	Jennifer Mathieu, Curriculum Coordinator				
		P	Shane Cloutier, IT Coordinator				

**Roll Call:**

- The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Chairman Nate Lebel.

**Hearing of the Public:**

None

**Reading of the Minutes:**

- **R.Murphy/B.Gray:** Motion to approve the SAU #7 Meeting Minutes of August 10, 2023, as amended.  
**VOTE: MOTION CARRIES**

**Special Reports:**

- None

**School Administrative Unit #7 Strategic Plan Report:**

- Debra reviewed a slide presentation highlighting how each school and the SAU have contributed to progress toward the SAU-wide strategic plan. Individual school needs and strategies were demonstrated. We are on track in all areas.
- She announced that Pittsburg School has succeeded in being removed from the school improvement list due to growth in student achievement. All congratulated the school staff and students for their accomplishments.

**Break and Light Refreshments**

## Unfinished Business:

None

## School Administrative Unit #7 Reports:

- **Curriculum** – Jennifer Mathieu

The kick-off to the 23-24 school year has proven to be as busy as ever, but great things are happening! - Jenn met with all PLC teams (teams that meet by grade- or subject-level) during quarter one and is

currently meeting with the teams for our quarter 2 session. Each team has determined a plan of action for the year with goals they hope to meet. Some teams are working on performance assessments & rubrics, others on assessment or curriculum mapping, and others are collecting student data and determining next instructional steps. This has also been a great time for teams to revisit competencies, standards, and learning targets, adjusting them accordingly now that they're using and applying them in Alma. - The annual Grant Stakeholder Meeting was held on October 3rd. We had a great turnout from each school, including students, staff, administration, and parents. Lots of ideas were shared, providing us with some good leads for grants and professional development days. - The NH Department of Education has a new requirement that all grant activities are fully written by December 31st. I've met with all principals and brainstormed so funds are fully accounted for. We will have to revise accordingly after the events occur and may need to write new activities, depending on what the final costs end up being. - Our Professional Development days have focused on our Competency Based Education transition, Alma, and helping to ensure teachers are understanding all the pieces involved in both of these initiatives. - Students in grades 4-8 in each school were able to participate in the NH SAS Writing Pilot early in October. The NH Department of Education has been working on rewriting the writing prompts for the yearly assessment and was looking for participants to assist with data which they will then use to create the rubrics and scoring guides. - We have several mentors and mentees (new teachers) that are working together in each building. We meet quarterly to go over strategies, address concerns, and problem solve. Our focus is classroom management. Each mentor and mentee leave our meetings with applicable resources as well. So far, things are going very well. We are fortunate to have such great mentors—and great new educators—on our team!

- **Technology** – Shane Cloutier

Throughout the fall, the IT department has been occupied with distributing new devices to both students and staff. This process involved creating user accounts and setting up the new hardware, which has been our primary focus over the past few months. We have specifically provided devices to incoming 9th graders, incoming 4th graders, and Kindergarteners. As a result, we now have a spare pile of devices that can be utilized in case a student forgets their own device or experiences damage to it, allowing them to continue with their classwork seamlessly. In addition, we have recently learned that we have qualified for the Emergency Connectivity Funding (ECF) program offered by the FCC. This program will provide us with the opportunity to obtain up to 100 new chromebooks. To ensure success with our application, we have been coordinating with our E-Rate consultant who assists in completing and submitting the necessary government forms. Once approved, we intend to replace the oldest devices within the fleet that have experienced considerable levels of failure due to the ongoing challenges posed by COVID-19. By doing so, we aim to alleviate some of the pressure on the IT department, who would otherwise be responsible for repairing or replacing these outdated devices. Consequently, this will enable us to invest our time and resources in other critical projects. Our implementation of Alma, an educational management system, has been progressing smoothly. We kickstarted the process by offering a summer training program and an online training platform that allowed users to learn at their own pace. Additionally, at the beginning of the school year, we conducted sessions to adequately train the staff on the functionality and features of the system. As the academic year unfolded, we continued to provide task-specific training sessions tailored to

the needs of each user. Our most recent training session specifically catered to the administration, teaching them how to effectively manage the report card generation process. Likewise, we also conducted sessions at each school to familiarize teachers with the report card process and their expectations. Currently, we are in the process of mastering the state reporting aspect of Alma as the shift from NH i4SEE to iNHDEX is taking place. Excitingly, the arrival and installation of the new server and storage unit represents a major upgrade for our entire SAU system. We are presently working in collaboration with our vendor to swiftly set up and configure the new server, preparing it to host our current systems and data. Upon completion of this task, a migration process will be carried out to transfer our existing systems and data onto the new server. You know you're not going to get a report from me without hearing about security. We have replaced the firewall and overall, it seems to be running without any issues. We are still refining the content filters and will be monitoring the logs for events. We will be adding in a phishing training program. Phishing has been one of the leading causes of data breaches and system compromises. We can put a great firewall on the front door of our network but if users inside the network click links or download malicious attachments all our security is wasted. So training the users. We will be sending out a variety of phishing emails in order to train users on what to look for. This can be anything from the email address not matching the listed sender's name, or the link in the email directing to some other place then it alludes to or gross spelling and grammar issues caused by being converted from one language to another poorly. In conjunction with this phishing simulator, we have added security specific training that can be assigned to users above and beyond the GCN training at the start of the year. This training is relatively short and geared towards education. We will be sharing this training opportunity with the board as well. You play a vital role in the education ecosystem and need to be aware of the dangers and equipped to protect the critical information entrusted to you. Phishing is the fraudulent practice of sending emails or other messages purporting to be from reputable companies in order to induce individuals to reveal personal information, such as passwords and credit card numbers. We are taking a closer look at the Multifactor Authentication used throughout the SAU. We are looking for ways we can increase security for critical areas while not hindering productivity. The work needs to be done but we want to make sure we are making every effort to protect the data of our students, staff and organization.

- **Business Manager – Bridget Cross**

Our office staff is complete again with the return of our bookkeeper. Thank you to Billie, Brenda P., Casey, Donna, Gaetane, and Jen M for all of their assistance these last 12 weeks. We all came together and were able to take on more than our current workload and for that I am grateful. We are a great team! Budgets were due from staff to their Principals the week of October 16-20. We have met with all of the Admin team to discuss each school's budget needs so budget preparation can begin. We reviewed staffing needs, facility needs, programs or support services, and any grant activities that will require to be moved to the local budget. Colebrook support staff is in negotiations for a CBA that will be effective the next school year. This will prove challenging if it's not finalized prior to the first draft budget. We will also try to align the other districts support staff salary schedules to be comparable. ESSER 2 grant ended on 9/30/23 and ESSER 3 grant will end on 9/30/24. HVAC repairs will expend the remaining ESSER 3 funds. Health Insurance Increase – Due to extensive claims to contribution loss which is 134% (medical claims trend is 7-8%). In part this is due to people scheduling routine or care that was unable to occur during the COVID pandemic. We also had several employees with costs above \$150,000. Healthtrust has quoted a 25% increase for 24-25. 5% of this increase is to add funds to their reserve account which was exhausted last year due to high claims from all their subscribers. We have contacted School Care who couldn't provide a quote due to our risk rating and if they did it would be at least 35% increase compared to current plans. We have contacted NH Interlocal Trust who will look at our information and provide us with a quote once their actuary's review. They can only offer medical plans therefore we would need to use another party for life insurance and dental insurance (Colebrook teachers only). All budget documents are in the packet and will be reviewed at the meeting. We appreciate your support!

- **Special Services** – Jennifer Noyes

We have started the new school year, and we are in full swing. It has been a very busy start, with lots of new students and referrals already starting. In Colebrook we hired a new special education teacher, Molly Boire, who works with a variety of grade levels. We have also contracted for a new remote school psychologist (Dr. Daniela Labarre with E Therapies) and hired a new paraprofessional, Brenda Thatcher, to support that position. We have a few new paras and current openings that include: a special educator in Colebrook, a speech para in Colebrook, a para in Stewartstown, and a para in Pittsburg. Our new school psychology program has been going well so far. We have put together a process and systems that have worked. It took some time to work out the kinks with scheduling and the sharing of needed paperwork, but that has been worked through. We have already fully evaluated a handful of students and we are in the process of evaluating more. The reports are thorough just as they were with our in-house psychologist and the involvement of the psychologist in meetings has worked well. We are planning to continue this for next year if all goes well.

Behavior needs continue to be our biggest struggle. Each school has its challenges in this area. Our BCBA (board certified behavior analyst) has worked collaboratively with our teachers, counselors, special educators, and admins to develop plans for some of these students. Federal IDEA grants have supported Polly Bath training for a group from each school. These teams are developing school wide programs to improve climate and therefore behaviors. We also had training that our paras are participating in this school year, Conscious Discipline. This is an approach to discipline that the paras can use to support students in the classroom. Three counselors in the district have also joined these initial trainings.

Kim Wheelock and I have renewed our certification to teach CPI (Crisis Prevention and Intervention). We will continue to train staff in the buildings in order to prevent incidences of physical aggression and then how to respond if this occurs. New laws have changed our reporting requirements on this and we are waiting for a reporting form the state is developing. Each year we have to report to the DOE how many restraints and seclusions we have completed. This new tracking sheet will support us in doing this.

This year the Special Education team continues to work towards improved parental involvement/engagement. The state has hired (due to a new state law) a Special Education Advocate. This law also requires us to survey families after every IEP meeting on their level of engagement/involvement. The advocate is currently working on finalizing this survey which we will implement when received. This data will be used to evaluate ourselves and make changes to how we work with families as needed. We are also being evaluated on our transition portions of IEPs. This involved an audit of one student file in each district. The audit will occur during the month of November. Additionally, after the new year, we will be involved in an overall audit of student files. This is a change in the state's evaluation process and each district will be participating yearly. The results of both audits will be ready in late spring. I will share these results and any plan we have developed based on the results during our August meeting.

- **Superintendent** – Debra Taylor

As October comes to a close, I reflect on the fall season, the sense of renewal and the way our students, families and staff have come together with a strong sense of community. We have hosted open houses for families, participated in fall athletic events, hosted fall festivities; and saw firsthand the warmth and unity that clearly exists in our community. We are well poised for events to come as the fall season paves the way for winter!

SCHOOL NEWS

We recently learned that the Spring 2023 NHSAS assessment results will soon be made publicly available

to our administration, teachers, and families. State-level assessments are one of many tools that our schools use to look at student progress. It allows us to look at the overall achievement of our students in comparison to grade-level standards and the results help us determine where we need to adjust our curriculum and instructional practices both as a school and a district. The NHSAS is one of many ways that our teachers assess student learning. Our schools work hard to ensure continuous improvement. Thank you for your support of our students, faculty, staff, and administration.

Parent Conferences are held on November 8 from 3:00 to 7:00 pm. On November 9, we had an early release day to provide comp time to teachers for the parent conference day.

#### ATHLETICS

In other news, our fall athletic season has wrapped up! The 2023 Fall Sports season is winding down quickly. The Cross-Country teams and the JV and Varsity soccer regular season and postseason have wrapped up. Congratulations to all the Colebrook and Pittsburg/Canaan student athletes, coaches and families for their effort, dedication, commitment and support this season.

For your planning purposes, the 2023-2024 Winter Sports season officially begins on Monday, 11/27/23. Thank you for your continued support for our student athletes, school athletics and our school community.

Go Mohawks and Go Yellow Jackets!

#### COMMUNITY NEWS

Our schools are all hosting harvest and Thanksgiving events this month, please visit our website for more information! Thanksgiving is a time of celebration, gratitude and wonder for all that we have and can share with others!

#### STORYTIME

I am planning to start an evening “storytime” to begin the third Wednesday in November. Each Wednesday evening, I will read a children’s book to anyone who might be interested in listening to a story before bedtime. The recording of this will begin at 7:00 pm and a link to the recording will be posted. Stories will be geared toward our youngest children, but are available for anyone who would like to listen to the reading of the stories. The first session will be on Wednesday, November 15th at 7:00 pm. Stay tuned for information on how to listen!

#### SAU 7 STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

At this meeting we will analyze our schools’ progress toward the SAU 7 strategic plan. A presentation summarizing our work will be provided at the November board meeting. We look forward to sharing our progress!

Mission: To prepare every SAU7 student for success in whatever path they choose

Vision: We believe in a future where our entire school community - in commitment to the success of every student - will leverage the power of collaborative relationships to advance our education system and will serve as vital and supportive advocates for educational equity and opportunity.

Strategic Initiatives (Values)

- **LEARNING:** We are passionate about learning and seek to constantly improve and innovate.
- **COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP:** Together we are stronger, and we lead through collaborative relationships.
- **HIGHLY EFFECTIVE STAFF:** We are growing our learning organization and are committed to excellence in all aspects of our human resource processes.
- **STEWARDSHIP:** We are careful and responsible stewards in our leadership and management of the school districts

Goals:

1. All students reach maximum potential
2. Employ, retain, support highly effective staff
3. Establish community relationships and partnerships

**Unfinished Business:**

- Transportation  
Bridget reported that a survey of families indicated that there were none who expressed interest in transportation to NH from NEK choice schools in VT.

**New Business:**

None

**Policies -**

**S.Campbell/L.Gray**: Motion to approve the policies as presented and recommended by the SAU #7 Board Policy Committee

**VOTE: Motion Carries**

**Board Member Audit Questionnaire –**

**D.Greene/J.Sweatt**: Motion to approve the SAU audit questionnaire and authorize the board chair to sign the document.

**Budget -**

Bridget presented the 2024-25 Budget. She reviewed the estimated revenue, the budget summary, district assessment and equalized valuation, the state statute that determines district share, the budget comparison detail and a narrative highlighting changes. Our budget includes no increases in staff. The major cost driver is anticipated health insurance increases of up to 25% percent.

**Superintendent Search Update:**

An update was provided by the search committee.

**Other Business:**

None

**Information:**

None

**Hearing of the Public:**

None

**Non-Public Session:**

- RSA 91-A: 3, II(a) –
- **S.Campbell/J.Sweatt**: Motion to enter non-public session at 7:15 pm. The Superintendent and Business Manager joined the board.
- **L.Gray/T.Stevens**: Motion to leave non-public session and return to public session at 8:03 pm.

D.Greene/S.Campbell: Motion to approve the proposed 24/25 budget as amended.

**VOTE: Motion Carries**

A public hearing for the SAU budget will be scheduled on December 14<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm in the Colebrook School Library. Following the public hearing the board will approve the proposed budget so that district appropriations may be included in local budgets. In addition, a non-public session concerning school safety will be held at this meeting.

**Meeting Dates:**

- SAU #7 Winter School Board Meeting December 14, 2023, 5:00 pm Colebrook School

**Adjournment:**

**T.Stevens/S.Campbell:** Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:14 pm.

**VOTE:** MOTION CARRIES

Respectfully Submitted,  
Debra Taylor, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

Minutes Adopted: December 14, 2023