



*Superintendent Report to the
School Boards
School Administrative Unit 7
January 1, 2024*

Superintendent's New Year Message

As we return to school from a well deserved Winter Break for our students and many of our staff, I wanted to personally wish everyone a Happy New Year. The New Year is a time to reflect on the past year, commit to our goals for the future - in service to our students and community.

At the start of the 2024 New Year, we have so much to celebrate! We are updating our curriculum, enhancing instruction and assessment for students and supporting the social emotional needs of staff and students. As you begin the new year, begin it with kindness and gratitude. Offer support to those who are struggling. Remember, together, we are stronger.

Happy New Year!

School Budget Information

School budget development is well underway in our communities. The SAU 7 budget was approved by the school board at the SAU Board Public Hearing on December 14. Much time was devoted to budget preparation and discussion with each school board. School district budgets have been presented to the school boards and will be finalized later in January. We have scheduled district budget public hearings and annual school meetings in February and March.

Community school budget information sharing will ensue after budgets are approved. This year, I have invited our principals to provide a school update during the Annual Meetings. We are also in the process of preparing school district publications for our Annual Reports.

School Board Elections

7 of our twenty-one collective school board positions are up for election this spring. Below is our list of open positions and terms:

Town	Position	Future Term
Clarksville	One School Board Member	3 Year Term - Expires 2027
Colebrook	One School Board Member	3 Year Term - Expires 2027
	One School Board Member	3 Year Term - Expires 2027
Columbia	One School Board Member	3 Year Term - Expires 2027
Pittsburg	One School Board Member	3 Year Term - Expires 2027
	One School Board Member	3 Year Term - Expires 2027
Stewartstown	One School Board Member	3 Year Term - Expires 2027

The following board members' terms will expire in March 2024:

- Michel Dionne, Clarksville
- Deborah Green, Colebrook
- Tanya Young, Colebrook
- Eric Brungot, Columbia
- Willard Ormsbee, Pittsburg
- Reginald Parker, Pittsburg
- Courtney Sierad, Stewartstown

Filings begin on January 24, 2024. February 2, 2024, is the last day for candidates to file a declaration to appear on the ballot as school board candidates for Town Meeting. Filing declarations are available at each Town Clerk's office, with the exception of Stewartstown. The declarations can be filed for Stewartstown with Patricia Grover, School District Clerk, at 10 White Birch Drive, Stewartstown.

The following statement will be included in our school newsletters:

Join the School Board!

YOU have an opportunity to make a difference in our schools and in our community. You do not have to be a teacher, a parent, or an expert to join a school board. All you need is an open mind, good will, and an interest in supporting the education and development of our children and students, who are the most important resource any community has.

If you have the desire to make a positive impact on the lives of the next generation, visit your Town Clerk's office between January 24 and February 2 and complete the required paperwork. That will place your name on the Town Meeting Day ballot as a candidate for the School Board. If you have any questions, please contact Superintendent Dr. Debra Taylor (dtaylor@sau7.org) or your school board chair. (School board information is located on the SAU 7 website (www.sau7.org))

School Board 2023 Review

We held Board Policy Committee meetings in October, and another is scheduled on January 11. Fall policies were adopted by all districts at the SAU 7 Board meeting on November 9.

By way of review, the SAU 7 Strategic Plan was updated in November 2021 and extended in the August, 2022, SAU 7 School Board meeting, the board endorsed the updated [SAU 7 Strategic Plan](#). On November 9, I presented a report highlighting each school's contribution to the success of the SAU 7 strategic plan.

Our mission is to prepare all SAU #7 students for success in whatever path they choose.

Goal 1: All students reach maximum potential.

- a. Continue school improvement
- b. Broaden student voice
- c. Expand vocational offerings

Goal 2: Employ, retain, support highly effective staff.

- a. Strengthen recruitment, retention of staff
- b. Challenge all learners
- c. Experiences are engaging and motivating

Goal 3: Establish community relationships and partnerships.

- a. Collaborate with community partners to expand vocational course offerings
- b. Provide more school to work
- c. Increase parent involvement
- d. Expand communication with community

The annual progress toward achievement of each goal and strategy are noted below.

Goal 1: All students reach maximum potential.

Thanks to the collective efforts of students and staff, we have made significant progress towards goal 1 of our strategic plan. Continued school improvement efforts this year and have resulted in improved teaching and learning as demonstrated by student assessment outcomes and continued high graduation rates. Congratulations to Pittsburg School students, staff, faculty, and administration for reaching their school improvement goals. They have made sufficient progress to be recognized and removed from the New Hampshire Continuous Improvement School list!

Our efforts to broaden student voice are evident across schools on several levels from student government to clubs and athletics. We also welcomed student board representatives to the school board this year. Notably, each day our students voice is integrated into our classroom instruction

as we continue to implement competency-based education as noted in each of the seven principles of the graphic defining Competency Education below:

Definition of Competency Education

Design Principle 1
Students are empowered daily to make important decisions about their learning experiences, how they will create and apply knowledge, and how they will demonstrate their learning.

Design Principle 2
Assessment is a meaningful, positive, and empowering learning experience for students that yields timely, relevant, and actionable evidence.

Design Principle 3
Students receive timely, differentiated support based on their individual learning needs.



Design Principle 7
Rigorous, common expectations for learning (knowledge, skills, and dispositions) are explicit, transparent, measurable, and transferable.

Design Principle 6
Strategies to ensure equity for all students are embedded in the culture, structure, and pedagogy of schools and education systems.

Design Principle 5
Students learn actively using different pathways and varied pacing.

Design Principle 4
Students progress based on evidence of mastery, not seat time.



Written by L. Levine and S. Patrick, 2019

As stated in the revised SAU 7 strategic plan, the need to expand vocational offerings has come to fruition as we have completed our first year and one half of operation of the New North Point Career and Technical Education Center with 5 programs: Education, Health Sciences, Information Technology, Hospitality and Culinary and Automotive Technology. Many institutions of higher education, non-profit organizations and businesses are partnering with us as we implement running start and dual enrollment courses, school to work experiences and industry certifications to prepare our students for future success in career and post-secondary endeavors.

Goal 2: Employ, retain, and support highly effective staff.

Our efforts to strengthen recruitment and retain staff have come to fruition in SAU 7. We continue to find success in recruiting new staff and as of this date, we have filled all but one position. This accomplishment is a result of the outstanding recruitment efforts of our administrative staff, our supportive parents and community members. We continue to recruit new teachers and high school graduates who return following completion of their undergraduate studies. Their devotion to our students and school community are inspiring. Part of the success of our staff retention efforts is the result of our two-year mentoring program where experienced faculty work with new teachers to guide and support them during their initial years with us. Unlike many districts in the region, we have maintained our teacher retention above 90% over the past two years following COVID 19. A strong school culture, consensus negotiations, and

teacher led professional development and learning communities have led to these outcomes and the stability of our school communities.

In SAU #7 we challenge all learners by aligning competencies with standards. In this way we ensure that the competencies are valid, relevant, and rigorous, and that they reflect the knowledge and skills that learners need to succeed in their chosen fields or careers. We also communicate expectations and criteria for mastery to our learners and provide them with clear and transparent rubrics or feedback to monitor their progress and performance. Having competencies with standards is like a roadmap. No one drives a car without knowing their destination!

Another way we make SAU # 7 Competency Based Education challenges for all learners is by providing learners with multiple and varied opportunities to demonstrate their competencies using different types of assessments, such as projects, portfolios, simulations, presentations, tests or peer reviews. These assessments are authentic measuring the learners' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors. The varied assessments challenge learners to apply their competencies in different ways - and the results are amazing!

We also strive to make SAU # 7 Competency Based Education challenging by offering learners flexible and personalized learning paths that allow them to school the pace, sequence, and mode of learning that best suits their needs, preferences, and goals. It means that learners can choose the level of difficulty, complexity or depth of the learning task, and they can select the topics or themes that interest them or relate to their goals. In this way our students are more engaged, self-directed and responsible for their learning!

SAU #7 Competency Based Education challenges all learners by providing feedback and support which fosters learner reflection, self-regulation, metacognition and challenges them to continuously improve. Learners collaborate and communicate through discussions, debates, group projects and online forums. Here learners can learn from and with each other and challenge each other to achieve at high levels. We foster a growth mindset among learners and provide opportunities for engaging and motivating experiences. This boosts learners' motivation, confidence and resilience and challenges them to reach their full potential!

Goal 3: Establish community relationships and partnerships.

Schools are at the heart of the community. They are a true expression of the love and care and singleness of heart which we hold for each and every student. This is expressed in a number of ways. First, we collaborate with community partners to expand vocational course offerings and provide more school to work. We have educational partnerships and articulate dual enrollment and running start courses with White Mountain Community College, NH Technical Institute, Plymouth State University, Southern New Hampshire University, and the University of New Hampshire and the NH Learning and Innovation Center. We also partner with local schools and early education and care providers. We also have several partnerships with health science providers including the Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital, the Coos County Nursing Home, and

several area medical providers. We partner with industries in the region including American Performance Polymers, the Balsam's Resort, Northern Tire, and Noyes Chevrolet. Each school and the SAU administration have worked hard following COVID to increase parent involvement and expand communication with community. We redoubled our efforts to reinvigorate and create new parent involvement through school-wide events, student performances, art exhibitions, athletic events, parent conferences, curriculum nights and open house. In addition, the schools used their Facebook pages to highlight exciting school activities and student accomplishments. Parent participation increased and satisfaction was evident over the course of the past year as a result. The SAU office updated the website to provide informative district wide and school board updates. The Superintendent recorded children's books and posted them online for students to enjoy at home. While more work needs to be done, we are pleased with our progress to date. We will continue to engage and communicate regularly with our school community.

Be well and take good care.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Taylor

Debra Taylor, PhD.

Superintendent

*“Enter this new year with gratitude for this new chance to create your dreams.”
—by Avina Celeste*

