

Superintendent Report to the School Boards

May 2021

Website Feedback Sought

Our websites (Schools and SAU 7) are a great communication tool for the school and community.

Did you know that our websites include:

- ... the current and future school calendars?
- ... the sports schedules for games home and away?
- ... the school board monthly meeting schedule?
- ... School Board agendas, minutes, and annual meeting information?
- ... Board approved policies?
- ... a listing of our School Staff?

We would appreciate your feedback about our website. Please take a moment to [complete this survey](#). We intend to use your feedback to improve our website during the spring and summer. Thank you!

School Year End Plans

We are planning in-person graduation ceremonies at all of our schools this spring. While we will be following all health and safety protocols, we are looking forward to celebrating with our students and families.

The following dates have been finalized:

Colebrook HS Graduation: Thursday, June 10th at 6:00 pm.

Pittsburg HS Graduation: Saturday, June 12 at 10:00 am.

Stewartstown Eighth Grade Graduation: Wednesday, June 16 at 5:00 pm.

Educational and Academic Outcomes

Our schools continue to monitor our student's progress in reading and mathematics through local assessments. In addition, we are preparing to administer NH SAS assessments this Spring. Once the strengths and challenges of student needs are identified, professional development, resources, and coaching support will be planned and implemented.

Some predict learning loss due to the effects of remote learning and due to the pandemic. We are fortunate to have been able to provide in-person instruction for the majority of this school year. In addition, our teachers have participated in numerous professional development sessions throughout the year to support our students. These have included: social-emotional learning, student engagement, health and safety, creating a digital toolbox, collaborative and interactive skills, outdoor education, formative assessment, personalized learning, competency education, and more!

This summer we have several professional development events planned for our teachers and support staff. As you know, we organized a regional curriculum committee this year which includes teachers and administrators from all schools in SAU 7 and Canaan. This team has provided direction and guidance as we plan our professional development with an eye toward school improvement. What follows is a list of these development opportunities and a brief description. All of these events will be funded through our grants.

1. Education Design Institute - June 21-25

Over 60 educators will participate in this interactive session. This session, led by award-winning facilitators, Brain Stack and Jon Vaner Els of Sanborn, NH., will assist instructors in our schools in deepening learning practices to improve education. We are excited to continue on this pathway in the region where we have a strong mission: to move our schools forward through meaningful educational change and provide pathways to success in college, career, and life for all students. For more information about this education design work, please see this [LINK](#).

2. Self Paced Curriculum Work - July 1-31

Teachers who participate in this endeavor will apply their learnings to the development of curriculum units in their respective schools and classrooms. We will continue to encourage collaborative work, provide structure for the curriculum development process, guide the work with feedback and expect a high-quality product that will be shared across the region.

3. Responsive Classroom - August 16-19

This session will serve as a refresher for some teachers and new learning for others in our elementary and middle schools. A Responsive Classroom is a student-centered, social and emotional learning approach to teaching and discipline. It is comprised of a set of research, and evidence-based practices designed to create safe, joyful, and engaging classrooms and school communities for both students and teachers.

4. Restorative Practices - August 16-19

In our reimagined schools, we are shifting our high school student discipline practices to restorative practices. Countless studies have shown that traditional discipline practices are no longer effective in today's schools. In fact, traditional practices were so commonplace in part because the ability to apply an immediate consequence was less time-consuming for the one

doling out the punishment. However, we now embrace restorative practices because they draw their strength in their ability to empower students to learn from unacceptable choices, to understand their impact, and to grow personally in their ability to make more sound decisions and resolve problems. Restorative practices represent a positive step forward in helping all students learn to resolve disagreements, take ownership of their behavior, and engage in acts of empathy and forgiveness.

5. Crisis Prevention and Intervention Response - August 24 and 25

At times the behavior of our students is out of the ordinary and requires a more structured and collaborative response. Crisis Intervention training is perfect for educators who directly intervene in crisis situations, teaching staff de-escalation techniques as well as restrictive and nonrestrictive interventions. With more than 40 years in evidence-based de-escalation and crisis prevention training, CPI programs are the gold standard for schools.

6. A.L.I.C.E. School Safety Training - August 26

All staff needs to be prepared with proactive options-based strategies to help them feel empowered to make the best decision rather than hopelessly endure a difficult situation. ALICE Training provides our staff with the tools to respond to a school-wide crisis and perform school safety drills and exercises. This training is implemented in conjunction with our law enforcement community and will help us keep our schools safe.

7. Technology Training - Summer and Coming School Year - 21-22

We have invested a great deal of resources into technology this year thanks to the addition of grant funds. We started the year last year with several professional development sessions related to technology. Throughout the year we expanded our equipment and tools and many teachers gained experience and strategies to integrate technology into their instructional practices. Through surveys, we will target professional development activities based on identified needs and utilizing webinars, blogs, hands-on training, and coaching.

Long Term Planning

We will devote the majority of our August 12 SAU 7 Board Meeting to long-term planning. The SAU 7 strategic plan is expiring and it is time to reflect on our progress and chart our future for the school districts in our region!

To this end, I would like to propose that our school board chairs or their representative join me for an ad hoc committee to plan for this event. The ad hoc meeting will be held in June (tentatively Tuesday, June 8 at 5:30 pm). The August SAU 7 Meeting will be held at Columbia Town Hall.

During the summer retreat at our August 12th SAU 7 Board Meeting, we will aim to set specific goals to guide our work for the coming year. We will report the status of our students' achievement across all

schools in the SAU along with plans for the coming years to target growth areas. We will also report on the portrait of a graduate work that our school staff and students have been engaging in to help us visualize the future. The next step is to articulate the pathway for our innovative school system and pave the way for the initiation of a strategic plan for the future of our school system.

Be well and take good care everyone!

Debra Taylor, PhD

SAU 7 Superintendent

