



Happenings @ SAU 70



From Our Superintendent

What is SAU 70?

The name SAU 70 has always struck me as a utilitarian name. When I have to fill out a form that requires me to name my employer, or people ask me where I work, I often get the follow up question, “What is that?” The shortest answer I’ve been able to come up with is that SAU 70, or School Administrative Unit 70, is the joint central administrative office for the Hanover, NH, Norwich, VT, and Dresden Interstate School Districts.

In terms of governance, both NH and VT charge school boards with the establishment and operation of public schools. In both states, elected boards have one employee, a superintendent, who is charged with running those schools in accordance with federal, state, and local laws and regulations, as well as implementing board policies. In our region, it would be impractical and unaffordable to hire a “CEO” for every district, so affiliations of school districts, “school administrative units” in NH, “supervisory unions” or SUs in VT, share the costs of central office administration.

Even in a school system as relatively small as ours, “the SAU” is often used derisively in statements of bureaucratic frustration. Having been a creature of central office bureaucracy for more than 20 years, I think part of the ambivalence-bordering-on-disdain comes from a lack of awareness of what actually goes on in the central office. To help clarify, we will be offering this quarterly newsletter to keep you informed about what’s happening at the district and state level, and how those “happenings” may affect our schools.

What does the SAU do?

The SAU manages the financial, human resource, operational, technological, facility, and district educational leadership functions of our school system. What is unusual about our SAU is that we carry out those functions in two states with very different (and frequently changing) laws and regulations, not to mention reporting requirements and computer interfaces with each state’s respective Department/Agency of Education. I’ll use the Business Department as an example of the complexity of the SAU’s work. The Business Department at SAU 70 is headed by our Business Administrator, Jamie Teague. The list of operational responsibilities that fall under her department is too long to describe here, but let’s just consider the financial aspects of that office...

Past, Present, and Future

The Business Office has to get it right. Our taxpayers fund our schools based on the financial reporting that our SAU Business Office submits annually. Ensuring that our records of prior year spending are accurate and that our financial statements are exact is a lot of work. All of that “past” work is subject to an annual audit to verify that we’ve conducted our business according to established legal and accounting standards. In the “present,” the Business Office oversees all of our purchasing, prepares monthly financial statements, and manages payroll for multiple employee groups with varied compensation structures, benefits plans, and state pension systems. With an eye on the “future,” the Business Office works closely with the schools and school boards to shepherd the budget process. An iterative exercise, budgeting begins in August, and culminates in January before voters have the last word on voting day. With multiple meetings along the way, the volume of work associated with the budget process is huge. I’ll share the similarly complex work of our other departments in future newsletters.

Who is the SAU?

Our SAU 70 Team is a dedicated group of specialists and administrators who work to support the primary functions of our school system - teaching and learning. Our team consists of Rhett, Rebecca, Heather, Wendy, Teresa, Jamie, Carmen, Amy, Bridget, Robin, Ryanne, Karen, Josh, Tony, Matt, and Jay. You can learn more about our team at the "[Meet the SAU Staff](#)" link under the "Our Districts" tab on our website.

Strategic Planning

It was a long and winding road, but over the summer, our school board members completed and approved our [strategic plan goals and our Portrait of a Learner](#). Thanks to the many hundreds of you who provided your input through surveys and public meetings over the past three years, we now have identified priorities in the areas of academics, student support, organizational effectiveness, and facilities for the next five. Since the plan's approval on August 8th, decision-making teams throughout our schools and departments have been developing strategies and initiatives at the building and district level that will help us make progress toward those goals. There will be opportunities for you to provide feedback and to participate in future planning as our efforts continue through the remainder of this school year.

Regards,
Jay Badams



From Our Assistant Superintendent

A Month of Productivity and Progress

It has been a busy few months at SAU 70! As we transitioned into the fall season, our dedicated educators and staff members have been hard at work, making significant strides

in education. Here's a glimpse of what's been happening in our district throughout September and October:

K-12 Teams Collaborate for Success

Our K-12 teams have swung into action, representing a diverse group of staff members from each grade level. These teams have been a powerhouse of innovation and collaboration, focusing on specific subject areas, including math, social studies, science, and counseling. Through regular meetings, these teams have been diligently examining the district's Strategic Plan, ensuring that our educational goals are on the right track. Feedback provided by these teams is invaluable in shaping the future of our district.

Curriculum Development Takes Center Stage

Curriculum development remains a top priority in our district. In a dynamic educational environment, it's essential to continually assess and improve our curriculum to meet the evolving needs of our students. Each subject area is under scrutiny as we work on enhancing curriculum documentation. This ensures that our students receive the best education possible, grounded in current research and best practices.

A Focus on Science Instruction

This academic year, our attention is squarely fixed on science instruction in our elementary schools. As we embark on the second year of implementing the Illustrative Mathematics program in kindergarten through grade six, we are excited about the possibilities it holds for our young learners. The emphasis on science instruction at the elementary level underscores our commitment to providing a well-rounded education that prepares our students for success in a rapidly changing world.

Our dedicated teachers and staff members have been attending professional development sessions, enhancing their teaching strategies, and integrating new resources into the science curriculum. By fostering a love for science in our elementary students, we aim to nurture a generation of critical thinkers, innovators, and problem solvers.



As we head into November and beyond, the energy and enthusiasm in our district is palpable. The SAU 70 community remains dedicated to fostering an environment of excellence and continuous improvement. Together, we look forward to an exciting year of growth and achievement for our students.

Stay tuned for more updates and successes from SAU 70. Thank you for your unwavering support as we work together to shape the future of our community.

Regards,
Robin Steiner

Strengthening Safety Measures: School Staff and Law Enforcement Join Forces

Hanover, NH, October 6, 2023 - In a concerted effort to enhance the safety and preparedness of their educational communities, our school safety committees, in partnership with the Hanover and Norwich Police Departments, recently conducted a comprehensive professional development session centered around a reunification exercise. This collaborative initiative is poised to bolster emergency preparedness and elevate the safety standards within the schools.

Empowering School Staff

The session focused on empowering school staff with the knowledge and tools necessary to respond effectively to various emergency scenarios. Attendees received specialized training in areas such as:

- **Emergency Response Protocols:** Staff were educated on the specific procedures for handling reunification, ensuring the safety of students and staff.
- **Communication Skills:** Effective communication in high-stress situations was a key emphasis, with staff members learning how to convey crucial information to both students and parents during reunification.
- **Logistics and Planning:** Participants were equipped with the skills needed to practice and refine their reunification plans, allocate resources efficiently, and seamlessly coordinate with local law enforcement and emergency services.

The mock reunification exercise simulated real-life emergency situations. These exercises allowed school staff and police officers to practice their roles and responsibilities in a controlled environment, honing their abilities to handle crises with confidence and competence.



Looking Ahead

The professional development opportunity represents a significant dedication in safeguarding the welfare of students and staff. The collaboration between school staff and the local police departments underscores the commitment of all involved in providing a secure and nurturing environment for the educational communities. The committees will continue to work collaboratively to refine processes and practices.

Thank you all for your dedication to school safety in our learning communities.