



Happenings @ SAU 70



From Our Superintendent

Happy Summer!

I just left the Ray School where our Hanover High seniors were visiting with their elementary counterparts on the playground during Buddy Day. This relatively new event is a beautiful representation of the virtuous cycle that is public education. Each of our schools are wrapping up the year with a variety of activities and celebrations as we close this academic year and look forward to the next. From my perspective, this year is the first that seemed “normal” by pre-pandemic standards. But “normal” doesn’t do this year justice - since its beginning, this school year has felt better than normal. Everyone seems happier, more engaged, and committed to our interdependent work in support of teaching and learning. I hope everyone has a great summer as we ready ourselves for next school year.

Environmental Club

Our HHS Environmental Club has been hard at work this year developing an SAU-wide climate action plan, modeled after the [plan](#) already in place at HHS. Meanwhile elementary students at Marion Cross and the Ray School have been taking on environmental sustainability challenges at their schools. On Sunday, June 2nd, the HHS Environmental club hosted their younger colleagues to bring these groups together to

share their efforts and to brainstorm priorities for the future. HHS students presented background information on climate change, the process of developing a climate action plan, and gave examples of the many projects they have led at the high school. MCS students presented their work investigating food waste and offered well-reasoned solutions to make better use of our resources. Ray students continued their well-researched advocacy for conversion from fossil fuels to renewable energy at their school. The level of scientific knowledge and creative solutions to complex problems demonstrated by all of these students was impressive.

Electric Buses

On that note, we have been notified that SAU 70 has been selected to receive a federal grant that will provide us with three electric school buses! We are still waiting to learn the details, but are really excited to put this new technology to the test. Incidentally, conversion of our bus fleet from diesel to electric buses is an element in the HHS [Climate Action Plan](#).

Survey Discussions

Over the past several months, Hanover Board Chair, Ben Keeney, and I have been meeting with staff and parents to review the results of two large surveys that we distributed in 2022 and 2023 in conjunction with our strategic planning efforts. The first survey was a wide ranging effort to inform each of the four areas of our plan: academics, student support, facilities, and organizational effectiveness. The second was primarily focused on out-of-pocket costs incurred by parents during a typical school year. We are truly grateful for the time so many of our staff, students, and families took to share their perceptions and offer their suggestions for improvement. Initially, we shared the survey results in the aggregate. As we analyzed the data by school, we noticed significant differences among the school-level results and presented the [disaggregated data](#) first to staff, and then to parents and guardians, wrapping up our last presentation at HHS on June 12. One of the most interesting findings is the tension between the desire for academic rigor and the concern about student mental and emotional well-being. In a community that not only values education, but is built on a foundation of high academic achievement, balancing the pressure to succeed and the nurturing of our students' mental and emotional health is a big challenge, and a major focus of our strategic plan. I am reading a really good book on this topic by Jennifer Wallace, titled *Never Enough: When Achievement Culture Turns Toxic and What We Can Do About It*. I highly recommend it!

A look back and a look ahead...

Looking back on the pandemic years, I remember being amazed by how our school community came together in the face of great uncertainty, adversity, and fear. Everyone - staff, families, students, and the community at large rallied together. Despite the odds and in defiance of the national norm of major learning loss, our children not only persevered, but excelled. Our collective effort to keep our schools open and our students learning was truly inspiring. The positive energy that saw us through those days and years is still present and will fuel our efforts to make a great school system even better. Thank you all for an outstanding school year!

Sincerely,
Jay Badams
Superintendent



From Our Assistant Superintendent

SAU 70 Secures Major Grants to Enhance School Safety and Educational Programs

SAU 70 has been awarded substantial NH SAFE grants for its New Hampshire schools, providing a significant boost to the district's safety and security measures. The Bernice A. Ray Elementary School will receive \$50,000, the Frances C. Richmond School approximately \$70,000, and Hanover High School \$96,000. These funds will be directed towards critical safety upgrades, including improved access control, enhanced surveillance systems, and advanced emergency alerting mechanisms.

Over the past summer, the Bernice A. Ray School has already benefited from significant safety enhancements, such as revamped entrance and office access, and upgraded locking systems on classroom doors. The newly acquired NH SAFE grants will facilitate similar improvements across other NH schools in the district, further strengthening the overall safety infrastructure. These upgrades will include new locks on classroom doors, updated

cameras, and enhanced access controls, ensuring a safer environment for students and staff.

In addition to the safety grants, SAU 70 receives preliminary Title grant funding, totaling approximately \$100,000 annually. These funds will be allocated to various educational initiatives, including summer programs, professional development, and special activities like purchasing equipment for music and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) activities. Collaboration with principals and their teams is underway to determine the best use of these funds to meet the diverse needs of the District's schools.

Efforts to update the Academic/Curriculum goals in the Strategic Plan are also in progress. This initiative aims to revamp curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development over the next five years, tailored to the specific needs of each school within the SAU.

An upcoming highlight is the Instructional Coaching for Engagement Professional Development day, scheduled for June 27, 2024, at the Ray School. Open to all SAU 70 staff and funded by Title II, this event has already seen over 30 participants sign up, reflecting a strong commitment to professional growth and enhanced instructional practices.

Furthermore, the district is working on improving curriculum transparency for parents and community members. A new template for curriculum information will be developed for the district's website, with Karen Wright, the district's Communications Coordinator, partnering with me on this project. The goal is to complete this task during the 2024-25 school year, with annual updates planned thereafter.

These initiatives underscore SAU 70's dedication to enhancing both the safety and educational quality of its schools, ensuring a secure and enriching environment for all students and staff.

Regards,
Robin Steiner
Assistant Superintendent



[SAU 70](#)

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