

Superintendent Entry Plan



School Administrative Unit 21

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Superintendent of Schools

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Entry Plan Process Goals

- ❑ To better understand the SAU and School Districts and the people as fully as possible in a brief period of time, outside the daily context of crisis and problem solving.
- ❑ To examine key issues in the SAU's past, in order to make sense of how such issues are handled and to identify the norms which affect how the organization may function in the future.
- ❑ To identify the tasks which need to be done and to rank them in order of priority.
- ❑ To establish how these tasks should be accomplished.

Key Entry Plan Process Objectives

- ❑ To develop with the School Boards a set of norms and procedures that will govern how we operate in the future.
- ❑ To determine the issues where Board members believe we should focus our efforts in the next year.
- ❑ To determine the issues which Central Administration and School Leadership face in their work over the next year.
- ❑ To determine what the key issues are for other stakeholders.
- ❑ To work with the School Boards to prioritize these potential initiatives.

Entry Plan Process

- Interviews with Board Members, SAU Administrators, Principals, Student Leaders and Department Facilitators (Winnacunnet High School)
- Visitations to each School
- Open Forums with Staff Members and Parents in each District
- Document Review
- *New Hampshire Way* Series (School Finance, Personnel and Special Education)

Document Review

- ❑ School Board Goals
- ❑ Policy Manuals
- ❑ Board Meeting Minutes and Agendas
- ❑ Budget Documents
- ❑ Federal Grants
- ❑ Capital Improvement Plans
- ❑ Technology Plans
- ❑ Emergency Response Data
- ❑ Administrator Job Descriptions, Contracts and Evaluations
- ❑ Collective Bargaining Agreements
- ❑ Employee Handbooks
- ❑ School Calendars
- ❑ Educator Evaluation Plan
- ❑ Professional Development Plan
- ❑ School Handbooks
- ❑ Annual Reports
- ❑ NEASC Accreditation Report
- ❑ Special Education Data
- ❑ Superintendent Search Consultant Report

Tight Coupling and Defined Autonomy

- Finding: There is a struggle within our SAU to define the appropriate balance between collaboration among the five (5) Districts and the need for local District control.
- Recommendation: The SAU and Districts should be involved in a continuous effort to explore where collaboration and centralization will enhance the efforts of all Districts, while ensuring that local autonomy is always valued and respected.

Strategic Planning

- ❑ Finding: The SAU and our Districts have not engaged in strategic planning efforts focused on what we are trying to achieve for our graduates (both at the pk-8 and pk-12 levels) in at least the recent past.
- ❑ Recommendation: The SAU should initiate a strategic planning effort to define the system's mission and goals, streamline initiatives and develop a focus for the schools, administration, School Boards, teaching staff and communities.
- ❑ Recommendation: The SAU and Winnacunnet District should develop a formal process for conducting ongoing surveys of high school graduates.

Leadership Coaching

- Finding: Principals and SAU Administrators are, for the most part, limited in experience in their present roles. While there appears to be much talent within the group, many feel the need for ongoing support and coaching.
- Recommendation: All SAU and school leaders should have access to quality coaching from outside the system, including those opportunities offered through the New Hampshire Association of School Principals (NHASP).

Competency Based Education

- Finding: While competency based education planning and implementation efforts are off to a positive start, there is a need for continuing education efforts for school board members and parents regarding key components of this important initiative.
- Recommendation: Our competency based planning and implementation efforts must include the development of a comprehensive, clear and flexible three (3) year plan, which includes communication and stakeholder outreach efforts, as well as key decision points regarding important areas like grading, reporting and “move when ready.”

Curriculum Alignment

- Finding: There are a number of outstanding curriculum offerings available across Districts. However, it does not appear that the implementation of some programs are done in a thoughtful manner or evaluated on a regular basis.
- Recommendation: The SAU should implement a comprehensive program review process, designed to conduct a regular review of each program and curriculum area throughout the system (pk-12).

Professional Learning (Support Staff)

- Finding: There is a clear need for a better professional learning program for educational associates, as well as other groups within the SAU.
- Recommendation: The SAU and Districts should implement an effective professional learning program for educational associates, focused on the needs of our schools and students, as well as these individuals. Similar efforts should be implemented with other staff, including office and custodial groups.

School Culture and Communication

- ❑ Finding: There appears to be a need for close attention to school culture and communication in most, but not all, of our Districts. Many teachers do not feel that they are appropriately involved in decisions that impact them and, perhaps more importantly, do not feel that the SAU and school leadership communicate effectively with people who work in our buildings.
- ❑ Recommendation: School leadership should look for opportunities to appropriately involve staff in collaborative leadership opportunities around important issues. School culture should be something that we value and measure at regular intervals.
- ❑ Recommendation: The SAU and school leadership must improve communication with teachers and other staff. While this might best be accomplished through a communication working group in each District, one suggestion would be to meet with teachers and other staff regarding the recommended budget before it goes to the School Board, then at regular intervals during the process.

Parent Communication

- Finding: There appears to be a need for closer attention to communication with parents in our Districts. In many cases parents indicate that they do not receive appropriate information in a timely fashion from SAU and school leadership.
- Recommendation: The SAU and school leadership must improve communication efforts with parents, including (where appropriate) an upgrade of websites and the information available through this means.

Social Emotional Learning and Bullying Prevention

- ❑ Finding: Efforts to implement social emotional and bullying prevention curriculum efforts across Districts have not been thoughtfully planned and coordinated to achieve maximum success and efficiency.
- ❑ Recommendation: The SAU and Districts must implement social emotional learning and bullying prevention curriculum efforts across all schools and grades in a deliberate manner. These efforts must include all stakeholders, including parents.

Technology-Based Human Resource Strategies

- Finding: The SAU has not, to date, implemented technology-based human resource strategies designed to provide better service to employees, while increasing efficiencies across the Districts.
- Recommendation: The SAU should ensure a timely and defined hiring process for all positions, including reference checks, and that these processes are well-defined, user-friendly and paperless (as possible) for all school leaders to implement.

SAU Administration

- Finding: The present meeting and SAU administrative structures place significant demands on SAU level administrators with respect to time management, quality of life, ability to attend other events and productivity. This does not appear to be sustainable and will have long-term impact on the ability of SAU 21 to attract and retain outstanding administrators.
- Recommendation: Consider adopting model(s) to address the identified areas of concern.

Multiple District SAU Strategies

- ❑ Shared Leadership. Some have Assistant Superintendents and/or Directors work directly with certain Boards, although the Superintendent is with each Board at least every other month. The Business Administrator works with Budget Committees and is at Board meetings on an “as needed” basis.
- ❑ Stacking of Meetings. Some schedule their meetings so that two (2) occur on the same evening. This allows SAU staff to attend all meetings, while reducing the number of evenings dedicated to Boards.

Multiple District SAU Strategies

- Smaller District Boards Meeting Less than Monthly.
- Who Needs to be at this Meeting? Some have thoughtful conversations on a monthly basis to determine which SAU administrators really need to attend particular meetings.
- Combined Approaches. Some combine different aspects of these models. For example, one could combine the stacked model with consideration of who needs to be at a particular meeting.

Initiatives Already Underway!

- ❑ Board Training (NHSBA)
- ❑ Comprehensive Policy and Procedure Review Process
- ❑ Director of Student Services (SAU)
- ❑ Single Student Management Software (2019-2020 Budget)
- ❑ Educator (Teacher and Administrator) Evaluation
- ❑ Professional Learning
- ❑ Emergency Preparedness
- ❑ Job Descriptions
- ❑ Employee Self Service Software (2019-2020 Budget)

Closing and Summary

- ❑ SAU 21 and the five (5) member Districts are very good places for students, families and employees.
- ❑ This report represents a starting point for the formulation of long-term SAU and District goals, the development of Superintendent performance goals and, most importantly, a strategic planning effort for our public schools.
- ❑ My goal over the coming months will be to work with the SAU 21 team and building level leaders to develop action plans for those areas identified as priorities by the Joint Board.