



School Administrative Unit 21

September 30, 2022

Dear SAU 21 Parents and Guardians,

It has been such a nice start to the school year. We are thrilled to have been able to open the year with some of our traditional back to school activities and opportunities like open houses, curriculum evenings, and back-to-school socials. Students and staff are fully engaged in teaching and learning, and that work really began on day 1. One of the first classrooms I visited when school began had 3rd graders defining and distinguishing between “acute” and “obtuse” angles. As you might imagine, these third graders used their whole selves to show which angle was which.

A focus on Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is still important in our schools, and in the coming weeks you will learn more about a universal screening tool that we will be offering to students/families across grades 3-12 to better understand a student's individual strengths in the SEL domains. The Holistic Student Assessment is a student survey that helps educators and families better understand each student's unique strengths and needs in three critical areas: Resiliencies, Learning/School Engagement, and Relationships. More information is provided [here](#). As this is a non-academic survey, parent/guardian consent will be required for students to participate.

On a side note, several Winnacunnet High School students and staff contributed to a recent [article](#) about how to support adolescent mental health, and I encourage you to take a look to learn more about ways to aid children and teens who may be struggling.

I recently reread some pieces of a book called [Creating the Schools Our Children Need](#) by Dylan William. While released in 2018, much of the info in the book still feels timely. Among other things, William argues that improving schools requires a culture of continuous improvement in classrooms with teachers regularly collecting and responding to student formative assessments. This is not new information, but it underscores the importance of our work with teachers in curriculum and assessment. Time for teachers to work together is critical for reviewing and responding to student performance and is a high priority in our schedules and calendar across the SAU.

Coming up on Tuesday, October 4th is our Portrait of a Learner community event. We hope you will join us in a conversation to identify the skills and abilities that students will need to be successful in school, work, and life. The evening kicks off at 5:30, and pizza and child care will be available. Middle and high school aged students are welcome to participate. Additionally, as described in the attached flyer, a variety of door prizes generously supplied by local vendors will be given away to people who register. Follow the QR code in the attachment or click [here](#) to register. We hope to see you there.

Best wishes for a terrific weekend!

Meredith

[Portrait of a Learner](#)

[Door prizes](#)

2 Alumni Drive
Hampton, NH 03842
603-926-8992
sau21.org

Meredith S. Nadeau
Superintendent of Schools

David T. Hobbs, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent for
Curriculum, Instruction and
Assessment

Mary A. Toomey, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent of
Student Services

Matthew C. Ferreira, Ed.D.
Business Administrator

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