

## Superintendent's May Report

5-23-16

1. The second part of the RSU 63 Facilities Study will be present during the first hour of the Board meeting. Oak Point Associates architect Tyler Barter and senior interior designer, Sarah Smith, will present the results of interviews with staff members on the instructional, exterior school safety issues, and administrative needs in a new facility. They will present a concept design for a new school. They will review their findings, conclusions and recommendations. The Board will then have to decide if they want to recommend to their citizens building a modern energy efficient school or investing in repairing and maintaining three separate schools. The pros and cons will be presented.
2. In 2015 unacceptable levels of lead were found in the water supply of some sinks in Holden Elementary School and Holbrook Middle School. At that time the source of the lead was identified in the kitchen sink plumbing fittings, and boys and girls rest rooms sink plumbing fittings. The lead source was removed and the water tested last summer. This year, after reviewing the earlier test results I contacted the state water quality people to determine if I was reading the results correctly, and to determine that we had done all that was required. After the discussion with the state official in charge of water quality testing, I asked to have the water tested sooner in the Holden School. Unfortunately, the test results showed unacceptably high levels of lead in the Teacher's Room rest room. We immediately shut off the use of water for consumption in the Teachers Room rest room and will follow up with additional required protocols. In addition, plumbers inspected the plumbing in the Teacher's Room rest room and removed any suspected parts.
3. Holbrook Middle School Principal, Mr. Modery, notified you of a break in the sewer line causing the escape of unpleasant gasses. After considerable investigation of the septic system by school personnel, Mr. Modery and Mr. Morgan suggested shutting off the sewer pumps and checking the odor. When odor only occurred when the sewer pumps were running, this proved to isolate the problem to the line between the pumps and the septic tank. Eventually plumbers and a backhoe were brought in to dig up the line going into the septic tank. A break in the sewer line was discovered, under the school, which is an extremely unlikely location. The plumbing company removed the broken pipe and installed a new one. Jake had the sewer system holding tank pumped so that we could hold school until the system was repaired.

4. From AASA - The U.S. Departments of Education and Justice released joint guidance to help provide educators the information they need to ensure that all students, including transgender students, can attend school in an environment free from discrimination based on sex.

Recently, questions have arisen from school districts, colleges and universities, and others about transgender students and how to best ensure these students, and non-transgender students, can all enjoy a safe and discrimination-free environment.

Under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, schools receiving federal money may not discriminate based on a student's sex, including a student's transgender status. The guidance makes clear that both federal agencies treat a student's gender identity as the student's sex for purposes of enforcing Title IX.

The guidance explains that when students or their parents, as appropriate, notify a school that a student is transgender, the school must treat the student **consistent with the student's gender identity**. A school may not require transgender students to have a medical diagnosis, undergo any medical treatment, or produce a birth certificate or other identification document before treating them consistent with their gender identity.

The guidance also explains schools' obligations to:

- Respond promptly and effectively to sex-based harassment of all students, including harassment based on a student's actual or perceived gender identity, transgender status, or gender transition;
- Treat students consistent with their gender identity even if their school records or identification documents indicate a different sex;
- Allow students to participate in sex-segregated activities and access sex-segregated facilities consistent with their gender identity; and
- Protect students' privacy related to their transgender status under Title IX and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

5. I have been informed that the Maine Department of Education approved the RSU 63 Performance Evaluation and Professional Growth System (PEPG) contingent upon receiving a copy of the board minutes showing approval which were submitted with the proposed plan. I learned last Friday that 60 plans have been submitted and only 29 plans have been approved. Congratulations to our Steering Committee
6. 42% of districts nationwide participated in farm to school programs and activities in 2013-2014. (Source: US Dept. of Agriculture).

7. Distance learning depends on internet access. Nationwide, 75% of American households had a broadband subscription in 2014. New Hampshire led the nation with 82.1% while Mississippi only had 59.1%.  
(source: US Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey 1-year estimates).
8. 7.8 million students participate in organized secondary school athletics.  
(source: Journal of Athletic Training, as of 2014-2015)
9. Rise of the digital classroom- The digital classroom is no longer a new concept-half of school districts nationwide believe they've completed their 1-to-1 initiatives and the infrastructure required, according to the annual Digital School Districts Survey from the Center for Digital Education, published in March.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth Smith, EdD  
Superintendent of Schools