

# SAU 39 NEWSLETTER



Friday, December 8, 2023

[www.sau39.org](http://www.sau39.org)

## Areas of Focus

### **Focus on Literacy:**

We ensure evidence and research-based practices are implemented as we teach reading and writing.

### **Capture and Expand Instructional Time:**

We ensure that every minute matters to utilize the total value of instructional time and look for ways to expand instructional time.

### **Supervision and Evaluation:**

We support the continued development of the supervision and evaluation model while implementing with efficacy agreed upon expectations.

### **Building Trust:**

We are doing what we say we will do: continuing the practice of transparency, taking every meeting, and having all the conversations.

### **Evidence of Achievement:**

We determine what accurately and authentically reports school and district achievement.

### **Pass Budgets and Improve Facilities**

We work to develop fiscally responsible budgets that include improvements to our facilities.

## Administrative Office

Brick School  
1 School Street  
Amherst, NH 03031  
603-673-2690

Serving as Superintendent of Schools for Amherst and Mont Vernon is an honor and a great responsibility.

I appreciate how the community has embraced me and offered to assist with the transition in leadership. It has been a pleasure to learn about the aspects of the community that contribute to Amherst and Mont Vernon's unique culture.

Since July 1, 2023, I have dedicated my time to learning more about the community by actively listening as I meet multiple stakeholders. More specifically, I have used my time with stakeholders to build relationships and gather feedback about the district and community. By doing this, I have gained a better understanding of the district within its sociological, historical, and political contexts.

The primary purpose is to become more informed of areas and begin developing steps to continue and evolve the work that SAU 39 has accomplished in the name of all students. This work is never done alone. I have had many conversations with school board members, teachers, support staff, school leaders, community members, town officials, and students. This effort is to learn the perspectives of stakeholder groups as we move forward.

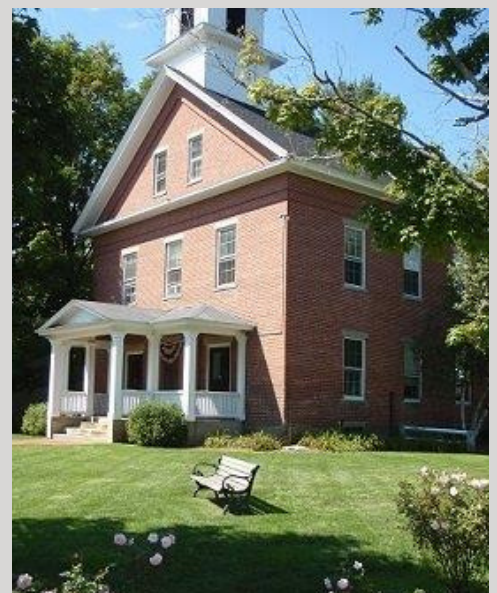
In SAU 39, we have committed ourselves to engage, challenge, and support all learners. We will create schools with the optimum balance of high academic expectations and deep care for students' social-emotional well-being. We will continue to work to operationalize the mission as an answer to where we are going.

Engaging, challenging, and supporting students is the mission of SAU 39. If we continue to invest in balancing high academic expectations and deep care for students, we will ensure a high-quality education for all students. The result will be a personal and professional educational experience for our students and families.

We have a great deal to be excited about in our districts.

I appreciate your support.

Michael P. Berry  
Superintendent of Schools



## SAU 39

## Serving the towns of Amherst and Mont Vernon

### School Buildings

Clark Elementary School  
Preschool & Kindergarten  
14 Foundry Street  
Amherst, NH 03031  
603-673-2343

Wilkins Elementary School  
Grades 1-4  
80 Boston Post Road  
Amherst, NH 03031  
603-673-4411

Mont Vernon Village School  
Kindergarten - Grade 6  
1 Kittredge Road  
Mont Vernon, NH 03057  
603-673-5141

Amherst Middle School  
Grades 5-8  
14 Cross Road  
Amherst, NH 03031  
603-673-8944

Souhegan High School  
Grade 9-12  
412 Boston Post Road  
Amherst, NH 03031  
603-673-9940

### A Message from the Assistant Superintendents

We are pleased to provide the community with insights on the work from the central office. We both appreciate and enjoy the diverse responsibilities and areas of focus that constitute the Assistant Superintendent role. We can go from advising a teacher on student math placement to discussing grant allocations to working on healthcare choices in negotiations. It is our honor and privilege to help **engage, challenge and support all learners**.

Our areas of focus during the 23-24 school year:

- We meet routinely with building leadership to provide resources and support. Recently, we have been meeting with leadership in all of our schools to create long-range plans for teachers' professional development and student support programs. This planning will help us develop our federal grant programs.
- Hiring credentialed faculty is becoming more of a challenge in public schools. We both enjoy working with new teachers to support them in meeting NH certification requirements. We work directly with faculty members to develop and submit their site-based learning plans to the NH Department of Education (NH DOE). In addition, we both provide coaching and support through the classroom observation and evaluation process.
- In addition to supporting teachers who are working on a credential, we also support teachers in renewing their credentials every three years. We are in the process of setting up our renewal procedure for this school year, which begins in January.
- We work throughout the year supporting professional development. We both oversee the SAU 39 professional development committee and help plan our in-service days. We are currently working with building leadership on finalizing plans for our December early release professional development time.
- Each District is undertaking significant facility work. We both have input on designs, educational specifications, and what is best for kids regarding the future of the school buildings. The facility work is especially important as these decisions will impact educational delivery and the taxpayer for years.
- Developing, reviewing, and updating policy is a major responsibility of the school board. We both enjoy working with the boards on integrating best educational practices into SAU 39 policy.

We hope this helps provide context to our role and serves as an example of some of the work we do to support education throughout SAU 39.

Please feel encouraged to contact either of us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Christine Landwehrle and Steve Chamberlin



# SAU39

WE ENGAGE, CHALLENGE,  
AND SUPPORT ALL  
LEARNERS



# CLARK-WILKINS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



KATHLEEN MURPHY  
PRINCIPAL

## THIS ISSUE

*Core Values*  
*What Sets Us Apart*  
*School Goals & Priorities*

## WHAT SETS US APART

### Fourth Grade Leadership Opportunities:

Joey's Club is learning about therapy dogs and working directly with our therapy dog, Joey, to support him in helping students in the school. Principal's Council is responsible for daily announcements and work on larger school-wide projects. Recess Rangers serve as mentors to first-grade students and support games and social activities during recess time.

### Afterschool Clubs:

Clark-Wilkins students in grades K-4 have been provided with the opportunity to participate in a variety of afterschool activities. These clubs are exceptionally popular and we use a lottery system to ensure equity of access to participate for students. Clubs are organized by our staff and range in offerings to include Spanish, Dodgeball, Chess, Arts and Crafts, Lego Challenge, and Nature's Workshop.

### Artist in Residence:

We were excited to welcome back Troy Wunderle with the Big Top Circus for a weeklong artist in residency with our third-grade students. Mr. Wunderle worked in collaboration with our third-grade teachers and physical education teacher, Mr. Holt, to engage students in learning gross motor skills and teamwork to grow self-confidence.

## CORE VALUES

Students who are part of the Clark-Wilkins school community will feel a sense of pride in their school and engage in learning in a fun and meaningful manner. Families will feel welcomed in our buildings, supported by their neighbors, and know that their children are well cared for and receiving the education that they deserve.

## SCHOOL GOALS AND PRIORITIES

We will utilize engaging and effective instructional strategies and curriculum resources to meet the needs of all students. We promote a culture of literacy at Clark-Wilkins, fostering a love for reading from a young age by creating a literacy-rich environment and modeling lifelong learning. We ensure evidence-based practices are used with students in literacy and conduct regular observations with classroom teachers, interventionists, and special educators to provide ongoing feedback on their practice.

We will foster a supportive and inclusive environment promoting social-emotional development, instilling a sense of pride, and enhancing students' overall well-being. This is achieved by utilizing consistent language and approaches, rooted in Responsive Classroom practices, to provide expectations for a safe and productive learning environment.

We strive to strengthen partnerships with families and the wider community, to ensure Clark-Wilkins is seen as a welcoming and supportive school. To achieve this, we plan to partner with the PTA and other Amherst community groups to support students and families, while helping to contribute to the sense of community outside of our classrooms. We will continue to host community events and expand upon our traditional offerings, welcoming families into classrooms and the school buildings.

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# MONT VERNON VILLAGE SCHOOL



TOM LECKLIDER  
PRINCIPAL

## THIS ISSUE

*Core Values*

*What Sets Us Apart*

*School Goals & Priorities*

## WHAT SETS US APART

**MVVS Falcons SOAR together:**  
Show Respect  
Others First  
Always Safe  
Responsible Citizens

**Coding and Programming:**  
Our students are learning coding & programming in technology class and in a new Robotics Club launched this fall.

**Student Leadership:**  
We have been building and expanding opportunities for students to take on leadership responsibilities, from making morning announcements to recess mentors.

**Word of the Week:**  
We are building excitement around vocabulary with a word of the week highlighted on our bulletin board & featured on daily announcements.

## CORE VALUES

MVVS is an engaging and supportive community where students are known and understood as individual learners. We are respectful, kind, safe, and responsible. Our students receive individualized support, promoting measurable growth in academics and social-emotional learning. Our staff provides a high level of knowledge and skill explicitly tailored to our K-6 community of learners, who are also active learners and current on best practices. We are humbled to have the opportunity to partner with the MV community to support our students and their families.

## SCHOOL GOALS AND PRIORITIES

We promote a literacy rich environment and encourage interest in writing for all students. With our blended approach to reading instruction, our students are using their foundational reading skills applied in building comprehension and fluency.

We support the development of mathematical thinking by continuing to encourage interest and excitement in math for all students. We are using Bridges in Mathematics resource in grades K-5, with three main components including problems and investigations, numbers corner, and work spaces.

We create supportive classrooms and school environment to ensure the social and emotional needs of all students are met. We provide ongoing professional development to all staff in Responsive Classroom including job embedded coaching for teachers throughout the school year.

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# AMHERST MIDDLE SCHOOL

*Celebrating 50 Years*  
1974-2024



KRISTEN GAUTHIER  
PRINCIPAL



**THIS ISSUE**

Core Values

What Sets Us Apart  
School Goals & Priorities

## WHAT SETS US APART

**Integrated Arts Electives:** Students have the ability to choose elective integrated arts classes in the 7th and 8th grade based on their unique interests. We have a wide variety of offerings in art, music, innovation & design, technology, and family & consumer science.

**Athletics & Co-Curricular Activities:** Student involvement at the middle school level is highly correlated with positive academic and social-emotional outcomes. Students have the option to join 20+ different clubs and 17+ athletic teams. We truly have something for everyone.

**Opportunities for High School Credit:** Students have an opportunity to enroll in high school level credit-bearing courses including Mathematics and World Language.

## CORE VALUES

Amherst Middle School believes in a *student centered learning community*. Students learn through academics, athletics, co-curricular activities, and school events. Students at Amherst Middle School have the unique experience of being a part of the school community for four years, which allows them to build strong relationships and experience academic and social-emotional continuity. Students feel a sense of belonging to the school through assignment to interdisciplinary teaching teams and advisory groups (Morning Meeting/Launchpad). Students are also given the opportunity to choose their learning experiences and express their interests through a variety of unified arts offerings. The school has a strong partnership within the community it serves, including school boards and the Parent Teacher Association.

## SCHOOL GOALS & PRIORITIES

**Increase the level of effectiveness of communication of student achievement.**

- Ensure effective communication, including an accessible reporting system with students and families, including but not limited to: positive feedback, progress, and areas of concern.

**Continue to support student centered instruction based on research and evidence-based best practices and real-time data.**

- Prioritize supervision and evaluation, frequent classroom visits and provide meaningful and timely feedback
- Consistently review instructional time and the master schedule to ensure flexibility and maximize contact time.
- Increase collaboration among teachers within grade levels and with counselors and social workers to support students and meet their individual goals and needs.

**Continue to reinvigorate the middle school philosophy - meeting students where they are (academically and social/emotionally) , providing meaningful opportunities for interdisciplinary work, and instill a sense of joy in learning.**

- Reinforce the interdisciplinary teaming model through team names and classroom locations.
- Develop school-wide events and activities that encourage team identity and belonging. Ensure each grade level has a marquee event.

**Continue to develop a culture of trust and professionalism among staff.**

- Utilize summer in-service day to work with The Browne Center to develop a commitment among all staff that will be reinforced throughout the year.
- Regularly appreciate and honor the good work of members of the Amherst Middle School community.

# SAU39

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# SOUHEGAN HIGH SCHOOL



DANA CURRAN  
PRINCIPAL

## THIS ISSUE

*Our Mission*

*23-24 Priorities*

*Vision & Values*

*What Sets Us Apart*

## OUR MISSION

We aspire to be a community of learners born of respect, trust, and courage.

We consciously commit ourselves:

- To support and engage an individual's unique gifts, passions and intentions
- To develop and empower the mind, body and heart
- To challenge and expand comfortable limits of thought, tolerance, and performance
- To inspire and honor the active stewardship of family, nation, and globe.

## 23-24 PRIORITIES

- Actively involve the entire school community in shaping our shared vision for Souhegan High School.
- Formalize and enhance a culture of data to make informed decisions and improvements that benefit students, staff, and the overall school community.
- Enhance the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to ensure a collaborative, evidenced-based framework to address students' academic, behavioral, and social emotional needs.

## VISION & VALUES

Our graduates will embody a passion for continuous, lifelong learning, demonstrating independence, respect, thoughtfulness, and self-direction. They will adopt a mindset characterized by the courage to embrace change while also appreciating tradition. These individuals will excel in critical thinking, creative problem-solving, and collaborative teamwork, preparing them for success on any chosen path beyond Souhegan.

- We believe that all students benefit from high expectations and strong relationships with a focus on the whole child.
- We believe in the continued growth for all members of the school community and allocation of resources to ensure students are always challenged and teachers are masters of their craft.
- We believe in inclusive, evidence-based policies, practices, and pedagogies that empower students to be the best version of themselves.
- We believe in the active involvement of all who live in our communities.

## WHAT SETS US APART

**Learning Commons:** Along with our student-centered Info Center, the Learning Commons is a revitalized space at Souhegan that serves as a hub of student learning and life. Furnished with flexible seating and staffed with a paraprofessional, tutor, and our Student Achievement Coordinator, the Learning Commons is a place for students to get drop-in support from staff or peer tutors, to collaborate with one another, or complete individual pursuits.

**Co-Teaching:** At Souhegan, we embrace co-teaching, which is a collaborative approach where general and special educators team up to deliver instruction. Our commitment to this practice over the last year includes investing in professional development, supervision, and planning time. This supports our values of inclusivity and growth and strengthens our multi-tiered system of supports.