

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT #89

MASON SCHOOL DISTRICT

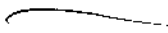
REPORT

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT/DISTRICT

ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW

**Submitted by: Tanguay Educational Consulting Service, L.L.C.
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February 22, 2010



SCOPE OF ASSIGNMENT

I was retained as an independent consultant to conduct an SAU/District organizational review and to make recommendations regarding the status of the District's organizational structure and its progress in establishing the necessary administration systems and operations. I have 30+ years of experience in School District administration. My Curriculum Vitae is available upon request.

SCOPE OF WORK

I have interviewed with Wolfgang Millbrandt Chairman, School Board; Donald Hodges Board Member; Mary McDonald Board Member; Superintendent Deborah Bemis; Betty Mulrey, Principal/teacher; Joan Losee, School Nurse; Becky Partridge, School Board Secretary; Heidi De Lorme, Secretary; Bronwyn Paveglio, Special Education Secretary; Sue Wagoner, District Treasurer; Representatives of MRI; and Robert Suprenant, Milford Superintendent of Schools. The Board requested that the review be "started and finished as quickly as possible."

DOCUMENT REVIEWED

I have reviewed the following: policies of the District as forwarded to me by Becky Partridge, School Board Secretary; financial reports generated by MRI; various financial records of the District letter from MRI, dated January 16, 2010; letter from Superintendent Bemis, dated January 18, 2010; Withdrawal Plan for the Mason School District.

RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are in no order of priority. Even with the imposition of a quick turnaround time, I have been able to compile the following recommendations:

- **Develop an organizational Chart**

An organizational chart is important for the Board, administration, staff, employees and the public to accurately understand the administrative structure of the District.

- **Update existing job descriptions**

Certain staff positions no longer accurately fit with the existing job descriptions. The existing job descriptions should be updated to reflect the reality of the various positions.

- **Develop annual and long - range goals**

State Department of Education Regulations speak to the duties of a Superintendent and a School Board. Those duties include short and long range planning. The Superintendent also has a responsibility to provide, develop and implement procedures to achieve the educational objectives within a school district. The School Board has a duty in consultation with the Superintendent to determine the educational goals of the District and to develop long range plans and identify measurable and obtainable short-term objectives. The goals in the Parent/Student Handbook lack specificity.

Develop a strategic plan

The strategic plan lets the district know where there are now and where they want to be in the future. It is the primary responsibility of the Superintendent to recommend to the Board the options for the development of a strategic plan.

- **Require Board approval of the Parent/Student Handbook before the opening of school in September**

This is self explanatory.

- **Require the Superintendent to conduct an in-service for staff concerning the Parent/Student Handbook and Board Policies before the opening of school in September**

This is self explanatory.

- **Update board policies where appropriate, followed by legal counsel review**

The policies maintained by the Board need to be updated where appropriate and accompanied by legal counsel review. Membership in the N.H School Boards Association would guarantee that Board policies are current and comply with State Regulations, Federal Regulations and best practices.

- **Become a member of the N.H. School Boards Association**

The New Hampshire School Boards Association provides member school boards with training, support, advice, information and other essential services to help school board member perform their job as a public official. There are many benefits to participation in the New Hampshire School Boards Association including training, legislative support and general advice and consultation; all of which will benefit the Mason School District.

- **Approval of all manifests, including payroll manifests**

The Board serves as the gatekeeper for all payments made by the District. The Board has an obligation under the law to approve all manifests including payroll manifests.

- **Approval of all capital project expenditures by the School Board**

As with manifests, only the School Board has the authority to approve capital project expenditures by the Mason School District.

- **Utilize a check and balance to determine if Board policies are being followed, e.g., Board agenda items to reference Board policies when appropriate**

This recommendation is self-explanatory.

- **Attend N.H. School Boards Association in-service workshop(s) for new Board members**

This recommendation is self-explanatory. The in-service workshops afforded by the New Hampshire School Boards Association are an excellent resource for new Board members.

- **Evaluate the Superintendent no later than March 31, 2010**

The acting Superintendent currently has a Consulting Agreement. She does not have a contract as a Superintendent. The decision whether to renew or enter into a Superintendent's Contract needs to be made by the Board no later than April 15, 2010. This decision is best achieved through a structured evaluation of the acting Superintendent.

- **Provide professional development for the Superintendent**

The current Superintendent has not served as a Superintendent of a single school district SAU in the past nor does she have experience with the start-

up of a new single school district. Therefore, it is important that the Board support the Superintendent in funding her ongoing professional development.

- **Require the Superintendent to become a member of the N.H. School Administrators Association**

The New Hampshire School Administrators Association provides the same level of support to Superintendents that the New Hampshire School Boards Association provides to Board members. Particularly in light of the lack of prior Superintendent level administrative experience in a startup district, the Superintendent will benefit from becoming a member of the New Hampshire School Administrators Association.

- **Require the principal to become a member of the Principals Association**

The acting principal has limited experience as a school principal. By requiring her to become a member of the Principals Association, she will receive ongoing support and professional development opportunities through that organization.

- **Provide professional development for the principal**

See recommendations above. It is important that the principal have structured opportunity for professional development.

- **Require the Superintendent to address low staff morale**

Throughout the course of my visits to the Mason School District, it was abundantly clear that there is pervasive low staff morale. The Board should expect and require of the Superintendent that she address the problem of low staff morale.

- **Develop a technology plan for approval by the Department of Education**

A technology plan is required for the District.

FINANCIAL REPORT/ACCOUNTING RECOMMENDATIONS

Each of the recommendations set forth below are self-explanatory and reflect appropriate financial practices for a school district. They are not currently in place.

- Financial reports should separate revenues and expenditures.
- Financial reports should include all encumbrances and estimates through June 30.

- Financial reports should be presented to the School Board at the beginning of the fiscal year and bi-monthly February through June.
- The Board should approve budget transfers.
- An Internal auditing function must be in place.
- Require the school district treasurer to report periodically to the Board. The treasurer is attending all Board meetings.
- Treasurer should not prepare accounts payable and payroll.
- Develop a schedule of monthly payments from the Town for the District assessment.
- Revise the current SAU budget, which currently consists of salaries and related payroll costs only, to include all costs, e.g., travel, tuition reimbursement, supplies, equipment leases, maintenance agreements, telephone, electricity, software licenses, computers, dues and fees.
- The Superintendent salary should not include travel expense as part of her salary, it should be accounted for separately.
- Take into account the relocation costs of moving into the new administrative offices.
- Develop a detailed budget book.
- Conduct a software system analysis.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Consider additional time for the business consultant**

It is evident that the time currently spent by the District's outside business consultant is insufficient to provide the necessary quantum of service for the maintenance of the District. The Board should consider additional time and commitment for the business consultant.

- **Hire independent auditors for the year-end audit as soon as possible**

An independent audit is vital to maintaining the trust of the taxpayers in the public entity. An independent audit will identify and flag any deficient financial practices and provide a template for improvement.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL

After conducting the interviews and reviewing the structure of the SAU, it is my recommendation that the Board consider the following School Administrative Unit organizational model:

- Part-time superintendent 2.5 to 3 days per week fee for services \$75,000 to \$80,000 annually; no benefits
- Full time business manager or accountant; salary and benefits at \$60,000
- Change secretary title to secretary/fiscal clerk, which adds responsibility for preparation of manifests and payroll, for which she is currently being trained
- Hire a Consultant/ retired superintendent to mentor the new superintendent and principal
- Request for Special Education program to be evaluated by SERESC
- The SAU structure recommended in this document could be funded within the proposed budget, assuming that all SAU appropriate costs described above will be included in the Proposed Budget FY 2011.

SAU #89
EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATION SERVICES
BUDGET - FY 2010

	<u>CURRENT</u>	<u>RECOMMENDED</u>
Superintendent Services		
Salary & Benefits:		
Superintendent	128,601.00	75,000.00
Business Manager	<u>57,500.00</u>	<u>55,000.00</u>
Total	186,101.00	130,000.00

This will result in estimated savings of \$56,501.00.

The savings can be used for consulting services, e.g., SERESC, business management services, increase custodians time, and as a contingency fund.

**School Administrative Unit #89
Mason School District
Organizational Chart**

