



Engage, Challenge, Support

A Framework for Progress 2023-2025

An update from Superintendent Michael Berry



Ms. Manor's 6th Grade Class



SAU 39 Mission

We engage, challenge,
and support all learners.



OUR VISION

We envision educational excellence. Excellence is determined by individual growth in all content areas, which looks different and unique for each student. We will meet every learner where they are and help them grow, operationalizing the mission as an answer to the question of where we are going.

OUR VALUES

- We believe every student is unique and capable of academic, social, and emotional growth.
- We believe every student deserves to be met with dignity and respect.
- We believe every student has a vital role in their individual development and school community.
- We value our educators and believe in their continual learning and professional development.
- We value the diverse perspectives and contributions of our residents and active community engagement.



Engage, Support, Challenge

February 2024

I am humbled and privileged to serve the Amherst and Mont Vernon communities as your Superintendent of Schools. It has been an extraordinary six months. I began this journey with a comprehensive entry plan. This process included meeting with faculty/staff, students, and community members, conducting summer meetings/retreats with the school boards, and completing a thorough review of documentation: policy, board minutes, contracts, capital improvement plans, and past strategic plans. The entry plan experience has been critical in developing this Framework for Progress.

I am incredibly excited and optimistic about the future of SAU39. It has become clear that the Amherst, Mont Vernon, and Souhegan school communities are devoted to and expect excellence for students. Excellence in these communities includes high academic achievement and a deep care for the whole child. Fulfilling that vision for public education fuels me every day.

Community members have inquired about a guiding educational philosophy underpinning the work of SAU39. I share the belief that school/district leadership must be grounded in philosophy. A philosophical base is critical as I am continually amazed at the speed and the scope of the work in SAU39. The diversity of the expectations keeps three educational philosophies at the forefront of this Framework for Progress.

Essentialism: I have appreciated the increased emphasis on literacy in the last two years. Literacy and numeracy are not all we do in the early elementary years, but they are essential cross-cutting skills. You will see the setting of an ambitious literacy and numeracy goals later in the framework. Essentialism for SAU39 means a deliberate and purposeful focus on literacy and numeracy. This philosophy becomes operationalized in a school through the amount and use of instructional time, the implementation of evidence-based resources and instructional strategies, and a facility with the space to provide effective and efficient high-quality interventions.

Constructivism: Constructivism is a philosophy that addresses how students learn. Students construct their knowledge by connecting content with their experience and prior knowledge. The role of a teacher is to help students find meaning in their learning by connecting the desired standards with their interests. This philosophy is operationalized in a school by honoring different pathways to learning goals, responding to student learning, and having an appropriate physical classroom to implement multiple learning activities simultaneously.

Progressivism: Progressivism is a philosophy that puts students at the center of all decision-making. Progressivism provides opportunities for students to have a voice and choice in their learning and school governance. This philosophy is operationalized in a school by truly doing what is best for kids, providing opportunities for student leadership, and meeting students where they are in the learning continuum.

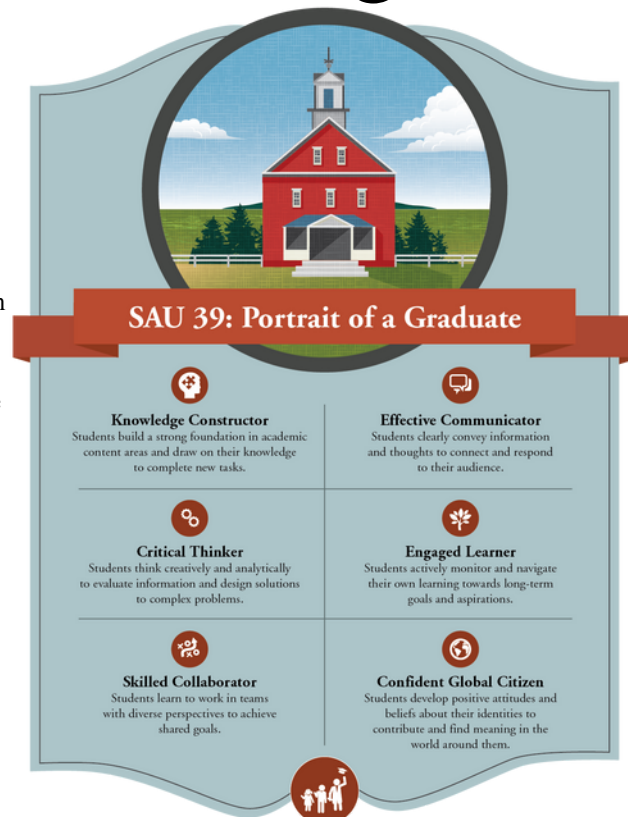
This Framework for Progress articulates six goals:

- Goal I: Improve literacy
- Goal II: Improve mathematics
- Goal III: Expand and improve the use of instructional time
- Goal IV: Support the continual improvement of instructional practices
- Goal V: Build and strengthen partnerships
- Goal VI: Improve facilities

These goals will guide the work for the next 18 months and serve as a bridge to developing an effective, operational, and difference-making strategic plan. The school administration has begun formulating action steps to help accomplish these goals. Please review the goals and strategies articulated in this document. As we continue the work, I will provide an update to the SAU Board in October of 2024 and February of 2025.

I appreciate your support.

Michael Berry
Superintendent of Schools





GOAL I: Improve Literacy

Reading is a vital pursuit that nourishes the mind, enriches our lives, and unlocks a world of knowledge and wisdom. Reading gives us a deeper insight into our surroundings and keeps our minds active and imaginative. Additionally, reading and writing help us to refine our vocabulary and communication skills, empowering us to express ourselves with greater clarity and confidence. Proficiency in literacy can be instrumental in shaping an individual's overall academic and professional success. We must promote a culture of literacy in schools and utilize evidence-based reading and writing practices with our students.

Priorities:

1. Formalize and enhance a culture of literacy in each school.
2. Ensure evidence and research-based practices are implemented in each school.
3. Provide educators with developmentally appropriate and effective curricular resources and professional development to enhance literacy instruction and assessment.
4. Use data to inform instructional decisions to meet the diverse needs of all our students.

Outcomes:

- Increased use of evidence-based practices in classrooms as measured through classroom observation.
- Increasing the percentage of students who demonstrate proficiency or above on the state assessment by 10% with the ultimate goal being that 80% of all students achieve that level.

GOAL II: Improve Mathematics

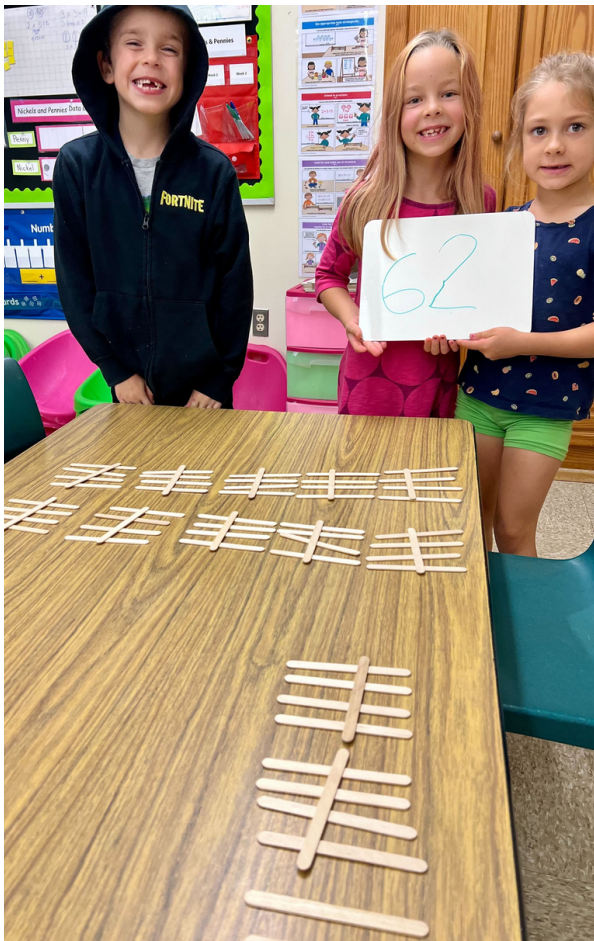
Mathematics is integral to human reasoning and understanding. Mathematics develops mental discipline, logical thinking, and problem-solving skills. Mathematics supports understanding and finding meaning through analyzing data and identifying patterns. Improving math proficiency is a multifaceted goal that enhances academic outcomes and equips students with essential skills for success in higher education, the workforce, and life in a globally competitive and technologically advanced society.

Priorities:

1. Evaluate the current curriculum and resources, identify gaps and deficits, and revise as needed.
2. Ensure evidence and research-based practices are implemented in each school.
3. Provide educators with developmentally appropriate and effective curricular resources and professional development to enhance mathematics instruction and assessment.
4. Use data to inform instructional decisions to meet the diverse needs of all our students.

Outcomes:

- Increased use of evidence-based practices in classrooms as measured through classroom observation.
- Students receive targeted support based on their learning data.
- The curriculum will be aligned through professional development and vertical (k-12) integration.
- Increasing the percentage of students who demonstrate proficiency or above on the state assessment by 10%, with the ultimate goal being 80% of all students achieve at that level.



GOAL III: Expand and Improve the Use of Instructional Time

The efficient and effective utilization of allocated and engaged time is a pivotal factor in enhancing the academic learning experience for students. By making the most of the available time, students can significantly increase their chances of achieving academic success. Therefore, students must develop a sense of dedication and focus towards utilizing their time efficiently. This approach will enable them to optimize every moment to ensure a positive educational experience.

Priorities:

1. Communicate and develop a shared understanding and commitment to the importance of instructional time in SAU39.
2. Review unintended outcomes of school-day start and end times and assess the success of intended outcomes.
3. Refine master schedules in each building to ensure an appropriate balance of academic and social-emotional needs.
4. Analyze the impact of the school year calendar on student learning.

Outcomes:

- Instructional time that supports high academic achievement and deep care for the whole student measured through an annual audit.
- Increased student attendance through support from parents/guardians and students.
- Revised school year calendars and master schedules that reflect best practices.
- Improved student learning outcomes as measured by the statewide assessment.



GOAL IV: Support the Continual Improvement of Instructional Practices

Continual improvement has become a critical factor in promoting equity in education. The constant evaluation and adjustment of teaching methods by educators is the most efficient way to meet the needs of all students. Such an approach ensures that all students have equitable access to resources and support, which is indispensable for their success.

The process of continual improvement is vital in the pursuit of equity in education. By monitoring learning outcomes and assessing teaching methods and curricula, educators can identify gaps in student performance, particularly in areas of disadvantage. With this information, they can adjust the teaching techniques and learning resources to ensure that all students receive equal opportunities to thrive.

Priorities:

1. Implement with fidelity the agreed-upon supervision and evaluation system in SAU 39 with a focus on connecting feedback to research-based practices and resources to support educator growth.
2. Use data to inform instructional decisions at the classroom, school, and district level.
3. Provide high-quality professional development opportunities for educators to continue to improve instructional strategies.
4. Create a supportive classroom and school environment to meet all students' social and emotional needs.

Outcomes:

- Increased use of evidence-based practices in classrooms as measured through classroom observation.
- Improved student learning outcomes in all content areas and decrease the achievement gaps in certain cohorts.
- Documented curriculum and program review cycle for all content areas, programs, and resources.

GOAL V: Build and Strengthen Partnerships

Effective partnerships between students, families, faculty/staff, and community members are essential to success. Such collaborations offer many benefits, including improved academic performance, enriched school resources, and community development. Therefore, fostering these partnerships becomes an essential priority for any educational organization. Partnerships are being pursued with care and diligence.

Priorities:

1. Communicate evidence of progress and achievement throughout SAU39.
2. Increase communication and collaboration among the schools to vertically articulate the curriculum.
3. Recruit, hire, and develop high-quality educators.
4. Ensure transparency in decision-making.
5. Engage families as partners in their child's education.
6. Increase and improve communication about the mission of SAU 39 and district initiatives, budget, data, and policies.
7. Develop and engage in a strategic planning process.
8. Create a review cycle for all district planning documents.

Outcomes:

- Increased participation in school-sponsored activities.
- Continued development of the SAU 39 data dashboard.
- Higher educator and family retention rate.
- Communication plan that includes a social media presence, a fully utilized website, and an opportunity for feedback from the school community.



Goal VI: Improve Facilities to Reflect the Values of Our Community

Investing in well-maintained and safe school facilities is crucial for improving student health, attendance, behavior, and academic achievement. It creates a positive learning experience, promotes good health, and positively impacts student behavior, resulting in better academic performance. Therefore, supporting school facility maintenance is a wise investment that enhances student outcomes.

Priorities:

1. Focus on annual and preventive maintenance programs to ensure quality facilities.
2. Thoroughly assess aging facilities to determine whether they necessitate major renovation or replacement to adequately meet the needs of today's students.
3. Effectively communicate facility needs to the community.

Outcomes:

- Decrease time building leadership spends on facility issues and increase time spent on instructional leadership.
- Increased faculty and student attendance due to better building facilities.
- Increased community confidence as evidence of effective stewardship of district assets.

