

# SUPERINTENDENT QUARTERLY UPDATE

## Message from the Superintendent

Welcome back!! On August 22, 2024 we kicked off the the new school year with our academic convocation, where all staff came together for a morning of appreciation. The program was primarily student driven with a few staff recognitions and celebrations sprinkled throughout. We also heard from Patrick O'day, Chair of the SAU 16 Joint Board as well as a few words from me.

For a large part of the event we had the pleasure of hearing from student speakers across elementary, middle and high schools, where they shared what our vision statement looks like in their schools. We invite you to watch the program linked here: [2024 SAU 16 Academic Convocation](#).

As we begin the year and approach budget season, it may be helpful to understand the roles and responsibilities of the senior leadership team. The following pages highlight what those responsibilities entail. If you would like to meet with any of us, please feel free to reach out.

### Superintendent Responsibilities:

- Oversee and responsible for all operations for 7 school districts & 8 school boards
- SAU 16 Joint Board, Exeter Region Cooperative School Board & Exeter Elementary School Board
- Critical incident management
- Communications & public relations
- Support central office administrators and building level principals
- Oversee policy implementation & related legal issues

## A Few Reminders

### Communication

Open communication is vital to our organization. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me via email, phone, or by arranging an in-person meeting. We are reviewing the communications survey feedback and have already started implementing some of the recommendations. We look forward to our continued work in this area as we begin our strategic planning.

### Strategic Planning

Our major goal this year is to involve the community in shaping the themes for our strategic plan. In late December or early January, you will receive a survey requesting your input on strategic planning. The feedback from this survey will guide our strategic planning sessions scheduled for **March 2025**. Please mark your calendars for the evenings of **March 27th and 28th (5:00pm - 8:00pm)** and the morning of **Saturday, March 29th (9:00am - 12:00pm)**. Your participation is crucial in this process, as your input will help determine the key focus areas for our plan. More information to follow in the coming months.

### Budget Season Is Upon Us!

The SAU 16 Joint Board will review the fiscal year 2025-2026 SAU budget on October 21, 2024, at 6:00 pm. The meeting will take place at Exeter High School in the Roy Morissette Room. We encourage you to join us! Individual district budget information will be posted soon on our [Disclosures, Budgets & Elections page](#). We look forward to collaborating with the community to develop fiscally responsible budgets that address our students' needs.

Respectfully,



Esther Asbell, Ed.D.  
Superintendent



## In this update you will find:

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Frequently Used Acronyms

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Chief Equity Officer Introduction

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Central Office Highlights

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SAU 16 Budget Information

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Save the Date!  
(Strategic Plan Meeting)

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Updated: SAU 16 All School  
Reunification Brochure



SAU 16 New Facebook Page!  
(like and follow)

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## Frequently used Acronyms

PLC	Professional Learning Community
LEA	Legal Educational Agent
MTSS - A, B	Multi-Tiered System of Support A= Academic      B=Behavior
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
SAU	School Administrative Unit
NHRS	New Hampshire Retirement System
CBA	Collective Bargaining Agreement
NH DOE	New Hampshire Department of Education
ADM	Average Daily Membership (average number of students enrolled within a school district each day over a full school year)
EV	Equalized Valuation (determination of an estimate of the full and fair cash value of all property in the district as of a certain taxable date)
NH DOE 25	A multi-fund report of the school district's financial activities for the fiscal year ending June 30.
MS-25	School District Financial Report to be filed annually
MS-22	Report of Appropriations actually voted
MS-26	School Budget
MS-27	Budget form for school districts with a budget committee

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# SAU 16 VISION STATEMENT

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Each graduate demonstrates engaged learning and global citizenship. Our graduates understand the identity of self and others to foster the ability to solve problems independently and collaboratively with perseverance, curiosity, and resilience, and communicate solutions with confidence and empathy. Graduates are reciprocal members of the community which cultivates equity, safety, and belonging for all.

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# CENTRAL OFFICE HIGHLIGHTS

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# Arlynn Polletta, Chief Equity Officer



Hello SAU 16 community and Joint Board Members,

As Chief Equity Officer, I joined SAU 16 in mid-August. In my new role, I will support diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice initiatives across our schools and communities. With an emphasis on relationship-building, I will be spending time this fall developing connections with students, staff, and community members in order to identify needs and ensure that DEI-J goals are focused on creating a sense of belonging for everyone. Additional areas of focus for this year include:

## 2024-2025 Focus Areas

- Working closely with DEI-J Chairs at each school to unify our approach to DEI-J work, identifying areas for potential growth at the building level, and setting actionable goals for the year.
- Collaborating with Curriculum Leaders to ensure an equity lens is utilized in assessing curricular content and standards in various subject areas.
- Supporting DEI-J student groups at the middle and high school levels.
- Curating resources for educators to use in their classrooms.
- Offering professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators.
- Connecting with organizations in the wider community to share SAU 16's commitment to ongoing educational equity.



Respectfully,

*Arlynn Polletta*

Chief Equity Officer

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# DR. CHRISTOPHER ANDRISKI,

## ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENT



Hello SAU 16 Community and Joint Board Members,

No matter how many years you have been in education, the start of the school year is always met with both excitement and a bit of anxiety. This year has been no different as I added the supervision of Food Service and Transportation to my daily responsibilities. Here are some of the things that have been happening and you can look forward to through my office this year:

Respectfully,  
*Dr. Christopher Andriski*  
Associate Superintendent of Schools

### Technology

- 1st year of the technology replacement plan will begin this year in all of schools so that we extend the life of our devices and have a concentrated plan to keep budgets consistent
- Wiring and access points were updated in multiple buildings throughout the SAU and we created a Technology Trust Fund or used Existing Capital Improvement Trust Funds to prepare for future spending 5 years from now
- Artificial Intelligence Committee has been established and will be meeting monthly to address the ever changing needs and progression of AI for our staff and students

### Transportation

- We are currently accepting applications for the open position of transportation coordinator who left us in mid-July
- Monthly meetings have been scheduled with First Student to discuss any issues or concerns that arise over the year
- Late Buses have been added to CMS to assist with transportation home from after school events

### Facilities

- Buildings were sparking upon our return back to school
- Mr. Lyster is working with all schools to look at efficiencies in spending on utilities and other shared services
- Short and long term replacement plans are being reviewed

### Food Service

- All of our food service directors attend a state workshop on August 13 and 14
- Monthly meetings have been established to review plans and consistency in all of our schools
- Preschool feeding will be initiated in all schools that have preschool

### Coaching

- Individual monthly coaching meetings have begun for this year and I will coach all 12 assistant principals and our Athletic Director
  - Quarterly meetings will be held with elementary assistant principals, middle school assistant principals and the high school assistant principals
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## DR. RENEE BENNETT, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT & DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES



ELLEN RIISKA  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF STUDENT  
SUPPORT SERVICES

Dear SAU 16 Community and Joint Board Members,

As our students return to school, they invigorate our mission and remind us of our dedication to their success. I am pleased to announce that I am now serving as the Superintendent Designee for both the East Kingston and Kensington School Districts. This year, alongside my role as Assistant Superintendent, Ellen Riiska and I remain committed to supporting our students and staff in all aspects of student services. Ellen Riiska is the Assistant Director of Student Services for SAU 16, as well as the Superintendent Designee for Newfields School District.

The Student Services department is integral to our District, impacting many areas that may not always be visible. I am eager to share updates and initiatives from my office aimed at enhancing our inclusive practices and providing exceptional support for our diverse learners.

Respectfully,

*Dr. Renee Beauregard-Bennett*  
Assistant Superintendent/Director  
of Student Services for SAU 16

### Goals for the 2024-2025 School Year

#### MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) Work:

- **Collaboration with Leadership:** We are working closely with senior leadership and building administrators to develop a robust support system across all schools within SAU 16. This includes creating a cohesive model that integrates support systems for all grades and schools in the district.
  - **Presentation and Training:** Jill Lizier and Dr. Bennett are actively presenting the SAU 16 shared understanding of MTSS at each building. This involves outlining the framework, principles, and practical applications to ensure consistency and clarity across the District.
  - **Data Systems and Analysis:** We are exploring data information systems that can be utilized to effectively collect, analyze, and utilize data to drive decision-making and improve student outcomes, while supporting building administrators in these efforts.
  - **Professional Development:** Targeted professional development will be provided for educators and support staff to build capacity in implementing MTSS practices effectively, including training on data interpretation, intervention strategies, and tiered support frameworks using grant funds. This is a shared goal in collaboration with Jill Lizier as well.
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# Student Services Continued

## Special Education Services and Related Services

- **Ensure Equitable processes:** We will focus on updating special education forms and processes to ensure equity between buildings.
- **Collaboration:** Special Education Administrators and building administrators will meet every six weeks to review legislative updates and practices related to IEP services and interventions.
- **Enhance Researched Best Practices:** We are committed to supporting inclusive education, ensuring students with mental health needs receive appropriate accommodations and support, including partnering with external organizations for professional development, with a focus on our 6th-12th grade students.

## Mental Health

- **Enhances Student Well-being:** We will support students' overall emotional, psychological, and social well-being, which is crucial for effective learning and personal development. This includes quarterly meetings with school social workers and psychologists to align processes and training.
- **Improves Academic Performance:** Mental health services will address issues like anxiety, depression, and stress, leading to better focus and academic success. We will continue working on MTSS-B systems and transitions between buildings.
- **Identifies and Intervenes Early:** We will provide early identification of mental health issues, allowing for timely intervention. This includes education for Tier I classroom teachers and defining SEL competencies for all students.
- **Enhances Family and Community Engagement:** We will work with stakeholders to design and implement monthly parent information sessions on topics such as child internet safety and signs of mental health issues.
- **Boosts Staff Well-being and Capacity:** We will provide resources and training for educators, including the Tripod system to prevent burnout and promote self-care.

- **Nurses:** We will discuss sustainable systems of care with our nurses, ensuring compliance with revised state statutes and addressing building needs.
- **Title IX:** Ellen Riiska, our Title IX Coordinator, is providing all staff with the legally mandated training and education on preventing and addressing sexual harassment.
- **Coaching:** Individual monthly coaching meetings have begun for Dr. Bennett, who will coach eight special education administrators. Quarterly meetings will also be held with school social workers, counselors, nurses, special education LEA's (Legal Educational Agent), case managers, and 504 Coordinators.
- **Additional Oversight:** Our department also oversees Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, ensuring equal access to educational opportunities for students with disabilities, and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, which ensures educational stability and access for students experiencing homelessness.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to our students and their success.

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# HEATHER MURRAY, DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES



Dear SAU 16 Community and Joint Board Members,

Director of Human Resources, Mrs. Heather Murray and the HR staff handle all aspects of employee relations for over one thousand staff members. SAU 16 has welcomed 84 new staff members this school year, including 26 certified staff (i.e. teachers, school counselors, social workers, and administrators); 35 educational support professionals/paraprofessionals, and 23 support staff. We welcomed these new members to the SAU team, and we are grateful for everyone in our educational community and their commitment to serving students.

SAU 16 is actively recruiting people interested in the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of our students and our school communities. Our special education teams are excited to talk with those in our community who would like to provide personalized attention and classroom support to students. Paraprofessionals are able to build relationships and foster engagement in tasks so students with special needs achieve their learning goals. Our facilities staff and foodservices staff are also searching for those dedicated to ensuring a healthy and safe learning environment for our community. If you are interested in joining the SAU 16 team, please reach out us or go to our website at [sau16.org](http://sau16.org) and click on HR & Employment

Respectfully,

*Heather Murray*

Director of Human Resources

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# JILL LIZIER, CHIEF OFFICER OF CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY



Dear SAU 16 Community and Joint Board Members,

I am Jill Lizier, the Chief Officer of Curriculum, Instruction, and Accountability for all SAU 16 schools. As I enter my second year in this role, I remain deeply impressed by our educator's expertise and investment in student learning and achievement. Below, I'd like to highlight the key aspects of my work this year to support our educators and meet our students' needs.

Respectfully,

*Jill Lizier*  
Chief Officer of Curriculum,  
Instruction and Accountability

## Curriculum, Instruction, and Accountability:

- **MTSS-A (Multi Tiered Systems of Support-Academic):** In working with Dr. Bennett, we are actively presenting to SAU 16 schools a shared understanding of MTSS. Professional Learning around MTSS will continue to be provided to our staff in different areas to build capacity in effectively implementing MTSS.
- **Competency Review Committee:** I oversee and facilitate collaboration among staff representatives from all our schools. This year we are meeting around the following content areas: English Language Arts, Science, STEAM, Art, Music, P.E./Health, World Languages, Social Studies, Library, and Counseling. Our primary focus is continuous alignment of K-12 Competencies and Standards.
- **Weekly meetings with SAU 16 Curriculum Leaders:** These meetings coordinate efforts across SAU 16 schools, focusing on instructional strategies, resources, curriculum, and assessment planning.
- **Instructional Resources:** Streamlining instructional support resources to reduce costs across schools.
- **Required State Assessments:** Monitoring and ensuring adherence to state assessment requirements.
- **School Based Universal Assessments:** Coordinate alignment to enhance Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) in academic areas.
- **Student Centered Assessment:** Developing and utilizing student-centered assessment approaches.

## Curriculum, Instruction, and Accountability:

- Conducting individual monthly coaching meetings for building-level curriculum leaders.
  - Providing weekly support for Professional Learning Community (PLC) Teams, addressing the four critical questions of a PLC:
    - What do we want students to learn?
    - How will we know if they have learned it?
    - How will we respond when they haven't learned?
    - How will we respond when they already know it?
  - Facilitate meetings focusing on instruction and state requirements with SAU 16 ESOL teachers.
  - Maintaining the home education roster and assist guardians and schools in questions and support involving home education.
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# Business Office



**Mollie O'Keefe, Director of Finance**



**Michelle Larson, Assistant Director of Finance**

Dear SAU 16 Community and Joint Board Members,

The Business Office is a staff of 7 people responsible for the financial operation of School Administrative Unit (SAU) 16. SAU 16 is comprised of 7 school districts and 1 SAU office for a total of 8 individual districts. The school districts have approximately 4,300 students K-12, 630 students that attend the Seacoast School of Technology, and 1,000 staff members.



Respectfully,

*Mollie O'Keefe*  
Director of Finance

## Budget Information

### Budgets

- Annually, Mollie O'Keefe and Michelle Larson work with school level and central office administrators to develop all 8 district budgets within SAU 16. The Business Office performs all budget functions and requirements from the initial draft of the budget to the ballot creation.
- Each month, Mollie and Michelle attend all school board meetings to report the year to date spending and how district's are performing against their budgets.

## Negotiation Costing

- Negotiation costing for collective bargaining agreements for all districts within SAU 16

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# Business Office Continued

## Payroll

### Payroll

- Payroll
- Bi-weekly payroll for all 8 districts
- Annual W2s & 1095s
- State & Federal Tax Reporting
- Monthly New Hampshire Retirement (NHRS) Reporting
- Workers Compensation & Unemployment Reporting

## Accounts Payable and Accounting

### Accounts Payable:

- Pays all bills for all 8 districts
- Issues annual 1099 reports to vendors

### Accounting:

- Accounting functions for 8 districts
- Annual Audit & Financial Statements
- State Reporting
- DOE25, MS25, MS22, MS24, MS26/27, warrants, default budgets
- Grants Management and Reporting

## SAU Budget

### SAU Budget:

- The SAU budget supports the Office of the Superintendent.
- The SAU budget is funded by the 7 individual school district budgets.
  - Distribution Formula:
    - 50% Average Daily Membership (ADM)
      - ADM refers to the average number of students enrolled within a school district each day over a full school year.
    - 50% Property Valuation (Equalized Valuation - EV)
      - EV is the determination of an estimate of the full and fair cash value of all property in the district as of a certain taxable date.
- (Both ADM and EV reports are obtained from NH Department of Education [NH DOE].)

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# SAU 16 Budget Process



## The SAU 16 Budget

The SAU 16 Budget encompasses the operating funds for all central office functions and positions. The SAU 16 Joint Board is responsible for developing and approving this budget early in the process, as it is essential for constructing each individual school budget, including those for the elementary schools and the Exeter Region Cooperative Budget.

This is significant because each town within SAU 16 votes separately on its own elementary budget as well as on the Exeter Region Cooperative School District budget, which serves students in grades 6-12 across all SAU 16 towns.

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# SAU 16 Budget Timeline



SAU Budget Discussions	Location & Time
The SAU Budget is presented to the SAU Budget Advisory Committee	Thursday, September 5 - 6:00 pm Julia's Restaurant - SST
The SAU Budget presented to the Joint Board with a Public Hearing	Monday, October 21 - 6:00 pm Roy Morrisette Room - EHS
*The SAU 16 Joint Board votes on the SAU Budget	*Monday, October 21 Joint Board Meeting Roy Morrisette Room - EHS
<i>*The SAU 16 Joint Board votes on a final budget for central office functions and positions during the Joint Board Meeting (immediately following the public hearing)*</i>	

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Save  
the  
Date

SAU 16  
STRATEGIC PLANNING  
SUMMIT

DAY	DATE	TIME
Thursday	March 27, 2025	5:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Friday	March 28, 2025	5:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Saturday	March 29, 2025	9:00 am - 12:00 pm

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# SCAN HERE

SAU 16 has a new Facebook Page!

Scan the QR code below to  
 like and follow us!



SAU16 District

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# REUNIFICATION



## What does Reunification Mean?

Circumstances may occur at a school that require a designated pick up person to pick up their student(s) in a formalized, controlled release. The process of controlled release is called **reunification** and may be necessary due to a critical incident at the school.

Since a controlled release (reunification) is not a typical end of school day event, a reunification may occur at a different location than the school a student attends.

The brochure on the following pages provides more detailed information about this process for SAU 16.



## REUNIFICATION PROCESS

## REUNIFICATION PROCESS

## DURING REUNIFICATION PLEASE REMEMBER:

In the event of a critical incident, SAU 16 will strive to keep you updated as frequently as possible using our mass messaging system, ParentSquare. Therefore, it is essential to ensure that your contact information is accurate and current in our system.

The reunification site at **Phillips Exeter Academy at 54 Court Street, Exeter NH**, allows for the designated pick up person to remain in their vehicle during the entire reunification process. Please see the map of the pick up area on the back of this sheet. School staff members will check your identification and give you a reunification card to fill out while you are in line for student pick up.

- **DO NOT GO TO ANY SAU 16 SCHOOL - GO TO PHILLIPS EXETER ACADEMY, 54 COURT STREET, EXETER NH, FOR STUDENT PICK UP**
- **BRING A PICTURE ID**
- **REMAIN IN YOUR VEHICLE**
- **FOLLOW SIGNAGE AND GUIDANCE FROM SCHOOL STAFF**

Circumstances may occur at a school that requires a designated pick up person to pick up their student(s) in a formalized, controlled release. The process of controlled release is called **reunification** and may be necessary due to a critical incident at a school.

Upon confirming your ID and collecting the reunification card, a member of the school staff will escort your student to your vehicle. This procedure is designed to improve predictability and reduce confusion. Please be aware that the reunification process may take time and is affected by the nature of the critical incident, along with instructions from first responder incident command.



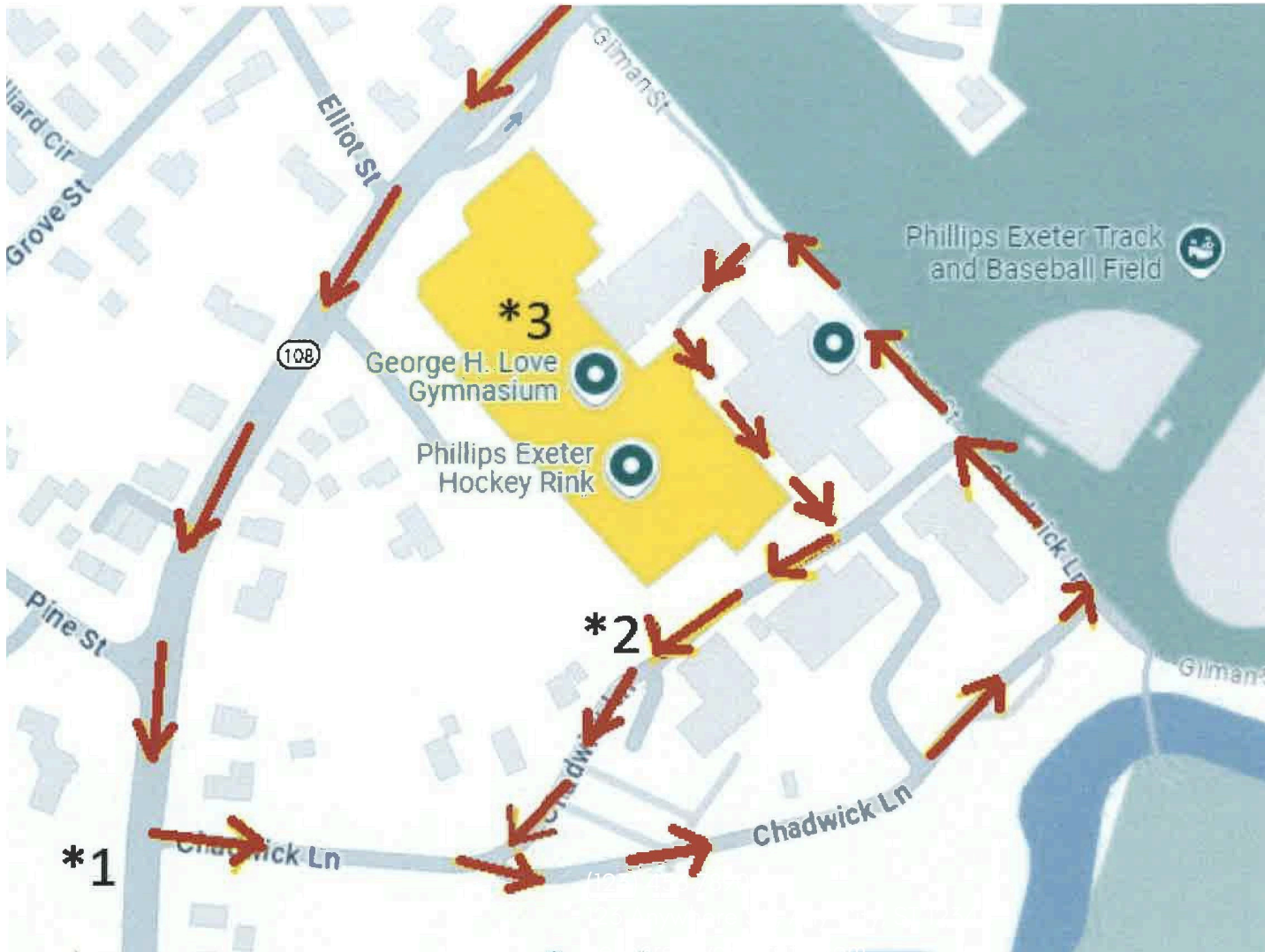
## CONTACT

(603) 775-8400  
SAU 16 Central Office  
30 Linden Street, Exeter, NH 03833  
[saul6.org/safety](http://saul6.org/safety)

# REUNIFICATION MAP

## PHILLIPS EXETER ACADEMY REUNIFICATION SITE

54 COURT STREET, EXETER, NH 03833



Address: 54 Court Street  
Exeter, NH 03833

### LEGEND

1 - ENTER HERE

2 - PICK UP POINT

3 - Student Holding Area

Follow Signs for  
Reunification

STAY IN YOUR  
VEHICLE

Staff will bring your  
student to you

BRING ID



We hope this quarterly newsletter keeps you informed about the efforts of the Central Office Administrators as they support students, staff, and families throughout SAU 16.

SAU 16 CENTRAL OFFICE	603.775.8400
<a href="http://www.sau16.org">www.sau16.org</a>	30 Linden Street Exeter, NH 03833

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