

Superintendent Kimberly Saunders – SAU #1

FAQs

Did you ever intend to hold a nationwide search for a Superintendent?

The school board's intent is to always seek the best qualified candidates to fill any openings at SAU #1. Our decision to dedicate \$50,000 to the process preceded the knowledge that any progress on the strategic plan would have to wait for at least one year while a new superintendent comes up to speed on the district and its specific and unique needs.

Has any of the \$50,000 been spent?

No, the money has been returned to the original fund.

Why are the other Superintendent job openings a factor in the process for SAU #1?

It was not a primary factor, but the idea of competing against as many as 20 other New Hampshire school districts posed two immediate threats: first, we might lose Superintendent Saunders to another district, leaving us with a leadership void in the top two positions and the loss of a great deal of institutional knowledge and memory. Second, competing for popular candidates could trigger an expensive bidding war for a quality replacement, which could mean spending even more limited funds on a new superintendent. The school board believed the prudent choice, which provided a well-qualified replacement while maintaining our timeline for a strategic plan for SAU #1 would be to hire Ms. Saunders.

At what point in the process did you decide to hire Superintendent Saunders?

The decision was a culmination of a number of factors that the school board believes led to the right choice in offering the permanent position to Ms. Saunders. First and foremost, Ms. Saunders had seamlessly led a transition to ensure work on the strategic plan would continue, and planning for the 2016-2017 school year was well underway. During the transition Ms. Saunders immediately demonstrated knowledge and value to the district. In addition, she has played an integral role in

leading the district towards meeting goals related to the strategic plan. When it became clear that a new superintendent would need time to acclimate to the district and its nine towns, requiring a delay on progress to the strategic plan, that timeline became an immediate point of concern to the board, given the urgency around the plan's development and implementation. Soon after, the SAU #1 school board became aware of the many superintendent vacancies in other school districts around NH. We learned we would be competing against as many as 20 of the 80 school districts for a superintendent. Those factors provided a realization that SAU #1 already had an outstanding leader and we took steps to make Ms. Saunders our permanent Superintendent.

Will this decision save the SAU #1 money?

Yes it will. By not spending this money, it can be returned to the general fund for SAU #1 and spent on other priority programs or initiatives, thus saving taxpayer dollars for another purpose.