

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

The night before school starts is like New Year's Eve for students and educators. We are saying good-bye to summer and welcoming in a new academic year. With that, most of us also are making New Year's resolutions. Instead of "lose five pounds", our resolutions are more like "get straight A's", "make sure every child feels welcome", and "don't miss anyone's bus stop".

We all know that January resolutions are often forgotten by February. To make sure that this does not happen with schools' September resolutions, SAU 39 has set school-wide one-year measurable goals and is holding itself accountable for progress towards those goals.

This is the second year of our strategic plan where we have been making New Year's resolutions in this way. Last year we set goals centered on our literacy initiative and were pleased to discover in June that for the most part we met or exceeded the goals we set. The momentum that we sustained throughout the year by focusing on one-clear resolution allowed us to use various strategies to achieve the goal, while feeling a sense of purpose and community as we toiled separately towards it. We "lost that five pounds" and celebrated!

Teaching is an art with great purpose..."to engage, support and challenge all learners". (That is the mission statement for SAU 39). How do we really know we are doing a great job of teaching without goals along the way? How do parents and school boards know how to support us if they don't know our resolutions?

I encourage you to check in with your school and your school board this year to understand its goal for the year. Ask how it did last year in reaching its goal. Find out what plans are in place for this year.

Before a child can promise to improve, he/she must be part of a school district that is always seeking to improve. I can assure you that Amherst/Mont Vernon/Souhegan are ready to start the 2008-09 school year with measurable improvements in place. Please consider yourself a part of this process.

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