Nottingham School Board Members:
Ms. Susan Levenson – Chairman
Mr. Peter Perron
Ms. Gail Mills
Ms. Lauren Chaurette
Ms. Carrie Jaye Scott - absent

Northwood School Board Members:
Mr. David Ruth
Mr. Tim Jandebeur – Vice Chairman
Mr. Scott Bulger
Ms. Karen Brieger
Mr. Bill Mello - absent

Strafford School Board Members:
Ms. Lynda Powers
Mr. Bruce Patrick - absent
Ms. Carol Lord
Ms. Tina Nichols
Mr. Brian Monahan

Others:
Dr. Robert Gadomski, Superintendent, SAU #44
Mr. Scott Reuning, Special Education Director, SAU #44
Ms. Carrolle A. Popovich, Secretary, SAU #44 Joint Board

Visitors:
There were no visitors in attendance

The SAU #44 Joint Board met in Room 505 in Smith Hall at Coe-Brown Northwood Academy for a duly posted work session at 7:07 PM.

Chairman Levenson reminded Joint Board members that during the work session, no formal votes would be taken; that they would not meet in non-public session and that only straw polls would be taken.

Dr. Gadomski began by advising Joint Board members regarding the differences in the proposed 2014-2015 SAU budget from the last meeting (budgetary increase of 25%), to this work session (budgetary increase of 13.6%). He explained that the Curriculum Coordinator and Web Master positions had been taken out of the proposed 2014-2015 SAU budget, and stated that the Joint Board could decide if they wanted to exclude the positions from the proposed budget, or put them back. Dr. Gadomski noted that
Dr. Gadomski stated that he’d like to make the position a full-time receptionist/secretary/webmaster position, explaining that the individual within the position would also maintain the SAU web site, inclusive of posting policies and forms to the site. He referenced the Joint Board’s previous discussion about the feasibility of digital storage, the extensive amount of work that would need to be done to scan documents and the importance of having training to complete the tasks. Dr. Gadomski stated that he proposed to use the receptionist/secretary/webmaster position to accomplish the scanning tasks over a period of time, adding that after a year, the SAU would have a better idea about the amount of storage that would need to be done.

Discussion ensued regarding the Curriculum Coordinator position. Dr. Gadomski distributed information relative to FY 2015 New Items for proposed budget (breakdown of Curriculum Director salary and Webmaster/IT). He noted that if the Joint Board agreed to leave this position within the proposed budget, it would increase the budget by $105,404.51. He noted that if the Joint Board agreed to eliminate the proposed position from the 2014-2015 budget, it would continue to place that position’s responsibilities on the Director of Student Services, himself and others. Dr. Gadomski also advised that in January/February of 2015, the SAU would have a more detailed look at all of the bookkeeper responsibilities. Mr. Monahan asked if a Curriculum Director was the same as a Curriculum Coordinator. Dr. Gadomski advised in the affirmative. Discussion ensued regarding the number of hours the current receptionist worked, with Dr. Gadomski noting that the individual currently works 29 hours per week. Mr. Jandebeur asked if the SAU Office was open Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. He was advised in the affirmative. Further discussion continued regarding structured hours for the receptionist position, with Dr. Gadomski explaining how they were structured such as answering telephones, working on job forms, printing and making copies. Mr. Jandebeur suggested the feasibility of an additional part-time position, rather than making the current position full-time, referencing rising insurance costs. He stated that he’d prefer to stay away from additional benefits as much as possible, citing the costs involved. Dr. Gadomski advised that the current individual working as the receptionist would have her hours extended, adding that she would opt to take the buy back, rather than receive benefits. Mr. Jandebeur stated that there were people who were looking for part-time work. A question was raised regarding whether the current receptionist could also serve as a web master. Dr. Gadomski advised that training would be done so that individuals within the SAU Office could put things on the web site. He noted that another 29 hour per week position could be added, and stagger the telephone and web master coverage. Ms. Chaurette questioned the receptionist hours being extended to full-time and whether the web master responsibilities would be a priority. She asked how the proposed full-time receptionist/secretary/web master position duties would be policed, stating that she was in favor of another part-time position. Chairman Levenson asked how information was currently being posted on the SAU web site. Dr. Gadomski advised that Ms. Osburn was posting most of it, adding that although the training was not difficult, the plan was to also train the special education secretary and the administrative assistant to the superintendent. He pointed out that although he’d like to see links from the SAU web site to the three individual schools and policies to make it more effective, the SAU Office just didn’t have time to address the SAU web site every day, noting that the process was time consuming. Ms. Nichols asked if three individuals within the SAU Office could be assigned specific areas within the site to post information. Ms. Nichols pointed out that once information was posted, maintaining the site wouldn’t be as time consuming. Dr. Gadomski advised that presently, there wasn’t anything on the site that was time sensitive. He stated that he could bring a proposal before the Joint Board for two (2) part-time positions. Further discussion ensued whether Joint Board members wanted to add additional hours to the current receptionist position, or add another part-time person within the budget. Mr. Jandebeur stated that he didn’t feel that there was a need for an additional part-time position to work 29 hours per week doing web site work. Mr. Perron suggested that an additional part-time position could be budgeted for 20 hours per week. Mr. Bulger pointed out the time consuming task of scanning documents. Mr. Ruth suggested that the SAU Office hours be decreased, and have the office close at 3:00 PM. Mr. Jandebeur noted that that option had been tried previously, and, as a result, a lot of complaints had been received. Mr. Bulger spoke to the benefits of having an additional part-time person. Ms. Brieger cautioned Joint Board members about the need to have variety in work place tasks, other than just scanning documents. Ms. Mills asked if there were other major scanning jobs that would need to be completed. Dr. Gadomski advised that updates to policy books would need to be done. Ms.
Mills asked about the amount of work that needed to be done on the web site, and suggested that some of the work be contracted out. Dr. Gadomski stated that if the part-time receptionist and another part time person were included within the proposed budget, he still envisioned web site management, scanning of documents for digital storage and telephone coverage to be done. He cited the importance of having an individual at the front desk position at all times. Mr. Perron suggested that the Joint Board consider two (2) part-time positions, with a not to exceed number of hours. Dr. Gadomski advised that he’d take the receptionist/web master position out of the proposed budget; would leave the 29 hour per week receptionist position within the budget and bring back a proposal which would include a 20 hour and 29 hour per week positions. Mr. Perron stated that he felt that the SAU Joint Board should give administration the latitude to ensure that the two part-time positions proposed not exceed a specific amount of hours. Chairman Levenson asked Joint Board members whether they were in favor of including two (2) part-time positions within the proposed budget or leaving it as status quo. On a straw poll, seven members indicated that they were in favor of including two (2) part-time positions within the proposed budget and five (5) members stated that they wanted to leave it as status quo. Ms. Nichols suggested that someone be hired on a temporary basis to scan documents. Further discussion ensued regarding the issue of not having someone at the front desk at all times. Dr. Gadomski reviewed the changes within the telephone protocol at the SAU office. Ms. Brieger noted the importance of looking at the call volume within the building. Dr. Gadomski noted the daily telephone call volume was sporadic. He stressed that he felt that the front desk position should be manned from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM daily because the position filters people coming into the office. Mr. Reuning cited the importance of having someone announcing calls, and noted that the previous telephone system wasn’t working at a level needed to interact with the public and wasn’t efficient. Further discussion ensued regarding a proposed additional part-time position within the SAU Office, with Dr. Gadomski pointing out that this individual would be trained in managing the web, would do digital scanning, would work with human resources and do other time consuming tasks. After further discussion, it was agreed that Dr. Gadomski should bring back a costing for the two part-time positions for the Joint Board to re-review at their upcoming November 25th meeting. Dr. Gadomski advised that he would bring back different options so that the Joint Board could see the cost differences.

Discussion ensued regarding the Curriculum Coordinator position. Dr. Gadomski advised that this position had not been included within the proposed 2014-2015 budget. He noted that much of the tasks for this position were falling on the shoulders of the principals within SAU #44. Dr. Gadomski spoke about the benefit of having a curriculum director, noting that there would be someone everyday working at and revising curriculum, which would also lend itself to consistency. Mr. Ruth stated that while he liked the idea, he wanted to have the same curriculum throughout all three schools. Mr. Perron stated that he’d prefer to see a curriculum coordinator position at the district levels, rather than the at the SAU level. Ms. Brieger asked what the job responsibilities would be for a curriculum coordinator. Dr. Gadomski cited the importance of having the same instruction in all three schools, and the importance of having consistency. He noted that some districts do a combination of a curriculum director with other positions, as well as just a stand-alone curriculum director. Dr. Gadomski advised that he would suggest that the Joint Board consider having one centralized person in the position of curriculum director. Mr. Reuning cited the importance of the Joint Board reflecting back on reports such as the NESDEC report as well as the special education audit report as it pertained to special education as well as the strengths of each of the three (3) districts within SAU #44. He stressed the need and opportunity to have some horizontal work done; pointing out that curriculum work was one way to get that done. Mr. Reuning stated that his goal in special education was to get people together and talk about what is good in all three (3) districts. He stressed the importance of working together collaboratively. Ms. Brieger stated that she’d rather see a curriculum director position within the proposed SAU budget, rather than a receptionist position. Ms. Mills stated that she’d also be interested in having a SAU curriculum director position. Dr. Gadomski suggested that he leave this position out of the proposed budget, adding that the Joint Board could revisit the cost factors involved. Ms. Chaurette pointed out the differences within all three (3) towns within SAU #44. Mr. Perron noted his concurrence, stating that eventually, centralization would make sense. He noted that, unfortunately, the SAU #44 Joint Board had a track record of not trusting the SAU, and cited the importance of showing how different systems would work, in a concerted effort to build trust. Dr. Gadomski noted that having a part-time curriculum coordinator position may or may not work, but noted other possibilities. Dr. Gadomski pointed out that the Nottingham, Northwood and Strafford proposed
budgets were down, as the three bookkeeping positions were now within the SAU budget. Dr. Gadomski advised that he’d make adjustments to the proposed budget and would bring these adjustments before the Joint Board at their November 25th meeting. Mr. Jandebur pointed out that the SAU #44 Joint Board should be extremely proud of what they’ve accomplished, citing the NESDEC Report, centralized bookkeeping and the Special Education Audit Report. He stated that the Joint Board currently had a full plate to get through and make work correctly.

Discussion ensued regarding the special education preschool numbers. Mr. Reuning advised that there was a mistake in the data, which affected the data. He noted that, after going through the child find reports, and comparing end of year reports to the State, new numbers were verified. Mr. Reuning stated that currently, there was a 40 (Northwood)/40 (Nottingham)/20 (Strafford) split, and added that if a three year average was done it would equate to 42 (Northwood)/44 (Nottingham)/14 (Strafford) split. He pointed out that the State system was out of compliance, adding that inputted IEP’s were inconsistent, an issue which had since been resolved. Ms. Powers stated that the Joint Board had been previously provided with two options to consider for the preschool program: fund it on a percentage basis or a cost per pupil basis. Chairman Levenson asked if all three districts intended to stay within the Preschool Program. Ms. Powers, the Chairman of the Strafford School Board, advised that the Strafford School District was not succeeding from the Step by Step Preschool Program. Chairman Levenson asked if all Joint Board members were comfortable with doing a three year average, as explained by Mr. Reuning. On a straw poll, all but one Joint Board member noted that they were comfortable using the three year average, as noted by Mr. Reuning. It was the consensus of the Joint Board that the figures, as provided by Mr. Reuning within the last page of the Step by Step Preschool 2015 Proposed Budget – Report # 23028 would be the figures used to go forward with Preschool costs. Discussion ensued regarding the costs involved for the preschool program. Mr. Reuning advised that Page One of the Step by Step Preschool 2015 Proposed Budget (Report #23028) would be updated to include the appropriate cost splits per district. He noted that the Preschool budget was down from $399,710.67 to $397,235.55. Further discussion ensued regarding line items within Page One of the Step by Step Preschool Program. Joint Board members also reviewed the program revenues. Chairman Levenson asked how programs within the Preschool Program were being measured and accessed. She suggested that the SAU reach out to other preschools to coordinate the program relative to skill sets. Mr. Reuning advised that a concerted effort was being made to provide private providers curriculum and also make sure that early literacy for students was being met, as well as providing preschool outcome measurement results. Chairman Levenson noted the importance of the Joint Board fully understanding the value of the information. Mr. Reuning advised that he would provide the entire Joint Board with a presentation about the preschool program. Mr. Perron noted the importance of knowing what the success of the program would be, as time, resources and money have been invested into the program. Mr. Reuning stressed the importance of the child find process.

Ms. Nichols stated that she wanted to discuss the superintendent’s staff, and specifically the special education staff. She noted that the budget reflected the title of Special Education Director within the budget. Dr. Gadomski advised that the Joint Board had previously agreed to extend the position of Special Education Director to Assistant Superintendent/Director of Student Services, noting that the change would adjust the title to more of what Mr. Reuning is doing and would make the position more of an evaluative role to other positions. Ms. Nichols stated that the Joint Board hired Mr. Reuning as the Special Education Director, and didn’t feel that there was a need to add another layer. She stressed that she felt that the Special Education Director should be a dedication position to special education. Ms. Nichols also noted her concern about the grant writer position as well as the Assistant Special Education Director. She asked about what the special education director did, and who was managing grants. Mr. Reuning advised that he was responsible for the coordination of the grants. Discussion ensued with Dr. Gadomski reviewing the responsibilities of grant coordination. Ms. Nichols noted her concern was that grants were not being written. Dr. Gadomski advised that the SAU Office was not exploring competitive grants. Mr. Reuning advised that the Assistant Special Education Director was not doing grant management, and reviewed the role of the Assistant Special Education Director. Dr. Gadomski reviewed the number of out of district placements, and the responsibilities of the Assistant Special Education Director. Mr. Reuning reviewed the LEA responsibilities that the Assistant Special Education Director is responsible for. Chairman Levenson asked about changes within the special education roles. Discussion
continued regarding the role of the Special Education Director, the Assistant Special Education Director and a Student Services Director. It was agreed that Joint Board members wanted to see job description comparisons for the position of Special Education Director, and an Assistant Superintendent/Director of Student Services. Dr. Gadomski agreed that there should be further discussion relative to job descriptions, adding that he’d label the position however the Joint Board wanted. It was the consensus of the Joint Board that they wished to have further discussion about job descriptions at the next meeting of the Joint Board in a non-public session. More discussion ensued regarding the Special Education Audit Report, and the benefit of having this information available to the entire Joint Board prior to meeting of the SAU Joint Board, to discuss and approve the SAU budget. It was agreed by all that the American Educational Consultant Report would be heard first on November 25th. It was further agreed that the SAU #44 Joint Board meeting would commence at 6:00 PM to first hear the report of the American Educational Consultants Report, and then begin the public hearing relative to the proposed SAU/Preschool Budgets at 7:00 PM. Joint Board members also agreed to hold the November 25th meeting in the Library of the Northwood School. Continued discussion ensued regarding the roles within the SAU #44 office. Chairman Levenson noted the time frames established for the Nottingham School District budgetary schedule, and pointed out the importance of the Northwood School Board having continued collaboration relative to the budgetary process with their respective budget committee.

Set Future Meeting Dates:
November 25, 2013       6:00 PM          SAU #44 Joint Board Meeting to receive the report from American Educational Consultants
                      Meeting to be held at the Northwood School Library
November 25, 2013       7:00 PM          SAU #44 Public Hearing
                      re: 14/15 proposed SAU/Preschool budgets
                      Meeting to be held at the Northwood School Library
November 25, 2013

                      SAU #44 Joint Board Meeting
                      Immediately following the close of the Public Hearing
                      Meeting to be held at the Northwood School Library

The work session completed 8:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Carrolle A. Popovich
Secretary, SAU #44 Joint Board
Approved by the Joint Board – 11-25-2013