

Education Report

Beverley Bucknor



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Superintendent

Blossomed with God
Equipped with God
Steadfast with God
Tomorrow with God

Blossomed with God: Southern New England Conference (SNEC) schools have been blessed and have blossomed in multiple ways. Our education institutions embraced new initiatives, survived COVID-19, and successfully reopened following the shutdown. Our principals and teachers have expanded their academic pursuits and world views. SNEC schools have developed and grown with God.



Theresa Robidoux
Associate Superintendent

The trajectory of SNEC schools requires promotion and growth within the school, church, and town communities. Sharing ways that God has infused the daily life of each classroom through the integration of faith and learning in academic study is vital to growth. Greater Boston Academy, Cedar Brook School, and Wachusett Hills have blossomed in the last five years.



Cacilda Morris
Administrative Assistant

South Lancaster Academy, Amesbury, Bayberry, Warren, and Laurel Oaks held steady until just following the lifting of the COVID lock down. Their 2021-2022 enrollment has shown enrollment is growing again. All SNEC schools have met their financial obligations to the conference and paid their non-conference bills. This is another blessing of growth.

Equipped with God: The spiritual climate in SNEC schools is dependent on beginning each day with worship, and daily Bible lessons. Ending the day's learning activities with prayer invites God's blessings on the school. Students are reminded



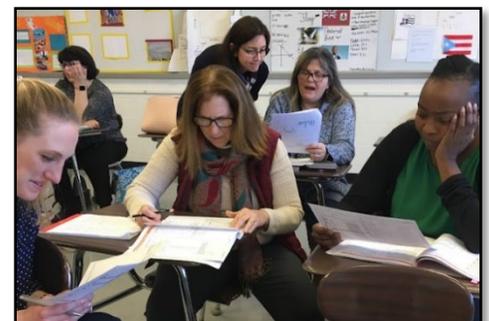
from multiple perspectives that God is eager to equip each person with tools to do their best. Weeks-of-prayer are conducted twice a year. Bible studies are taught by our local pastors. There have been baptisms as a result.

Our SNEC schools are equipped with endorsed NAD curriculum. The following textbooks were introduced during the last five years: Bible - *Encounter*; Language Arts - *Pathways 2.0: A Journey to Excellence through Literacy*; Science - *By Design*; Social



Studies - *McGraw-Hill Series*; Math - *Big Ideas*. *Encounter*, *Pathways*, and *By Design* were all written specifically for SDA Schools with the Adventist world view. A new standardized test was approved by NAD entitled *Measures of Academic Progress* (MAP). It is fully on-line. Schools have also enhanced their science program with Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) projects. They are working on computer coding, engineering projects, agricultural plans, and LEGO Robotics. Several of our schools were recipients of Versacare grants based on their STEM proposals: Cedar Brook \$10,000; GBA \$10,000; SLA \$10,000; South Shore \$5,000; Wachusett Hills \$5,000; Warren \$5,000. Schools are equipped by God's help.

The office of education began professional learning communities for our teachers which provide in-depth exploration of



best teaching practices and an introduction to Standards Based Learning (SBL). Educators are grouped according to grade levels and meet three half-days each year. Several meetings were self-directed by the teachers. Some of the topics discussed were academic rigor, social emotional

learning, student motivation, balancing school with work, and communicating with parents. Teachers were encouraged to teach using project-based learning (PBL) and STEM initiatives.

We were privileged to invite notable experts who presented to our teachers. Dr. Heather C. Forkey, MD (UMASS) presented *Beyond the Behavior: Getting Curious not Furious with Those Who have Experienced Trauma*. Dr. Linda Caviness, PhD (ret. LSU) presented *Neuroscience and Holiness, How the Brain Prefers to Learn*, and *Heart/Brain Science for the Classroom*. Dr. Keith Driberg, PhD (LSU) worked with the secondary education teachers on SBL strategies and perspectives.

The SNEC Office of Education has specifically provided for first year teachers and teachers new to the system in the form of workshops during pre-school week. Supporting and equipping teachers are important functions of this office.

Leadership skills are encouraged within our workforce. Teachers and principals were given opportunities to lead out in workshop sessions throughout the last five years. We see potential leaders emerging.

We have begun to conduct school climate surveys to understand strengths and address weaknesses. All our schools are accredited by NAD for the equivalent of six years or the highest possible years if the accreditation visit was delayed by a year.



God has equipped our schools to serve. Students participate in community service by visiting the elderly in nursing homes prior to COVID, connecting with those in need by donating clothing, care packages, and caring cards. School programs inspire sharing God's love through Sabbath presentations, seasonal Christmas, and spring programs. The sharing of songs, skits, verses, and scripture fosters disciples for Christ.

Our 5th and 6th grade's Outdoor School is held yearly at Camp Winnekeag. We shortened the event from two and a half days to one day. The reduction of days was necessitated due to fewer chaperones available for overnight trips. The day is still



packed with meaningful activities and students are happy to spend time making new friends while enjoying their school friends in a beautiful outdoor setting.

Steadfast with God: Challenges allow us to experience the constant calming presence of God. The closing of Berkshire Hills in 2019, and the temporary hiatus of South Shore in June 2022 saddens us. Multi-grade schools, specifically one-teacher schools are closing due to families moving away. This leaves no young families with school age children to fill the void.



COVID-19 challenged our schools in ways that our Adventist system did not expect. We are proud to say that our teachers were able to meet the rigors of new and adjusted professional strategies within 24 to 48 hours of lockdown. Our principals prepared plans addressing COVID-19 school procedures for in-person, hybrid, and fully virtual school sessions. These plans were voted by the school boards and shared with each family. Procedures were imbedded in the plans to accommodate staff and/or students who contracted or were exposed to the virus.

As a result, our teachers and parents fostered closer partnerships and relationships while working for and with our students. The office of education met virtually with each teacher that year to discuss what was working and what challenges they had encountered. Praying with and for each teacher was an important part of these meetings.

God's steadfast support has been reflected in the seeking of teachers. Hiring has become increasingly difficult. Fewer education majors are graduating from our colleges and universities. We are now seeking qualified educators from overseas. Our priority is to hire those from the United States. However, for the last two years, we have hired teachers from Canada, Puerto Rico, and Brazil. We have also hired teachers from the US who earned majors other than in education. They desire to teach and are enrolled at Andrews University taking certification courses to become fully qualified to teach.

Tomorrow with God: SNEC office of education works with the president's and treasury offices to process student education financial support for boarding academy and college students. Elementary students have access to the three-way plan. SET funds are for academy students. SNEC College Scholarship funds for students attending Adventist colleges in NAD were awarded 282 times and totaled \$532,006.96. A recent upgrade to the scholarship for junior and senior education majors will award \$10,000 each of the two years. This prepares our young people for tomorrow on earth.

Claiming the embodiment of hope, faith, and love as the fruition of a relationship with Christ is the goal of every educator and worker in our SNEC educational institutions. SNEC schools are preparing students for tomorrow on earth and tomorrow for eternity. This is a profound task that can

only be supported by the Holy Spirit. Teachers and parents are partners seeking to make students disciples for Christ. Our schools share the vision of growing the kingdom of God. Visits to the schools on any given day show students and teachers who are committed. It's seen in their facial expressions. It's seen in individual tasks and teamwork. SNEC schools are the BEST places to be for our children.

