

What is SAU 56?

School Administrative Unit (SAU) 56 is shared by Somersworth and Rollinsford. [SAU 56](#) consists of the superintendent, business administrator, special education director, and a team of support staff that provide administrative services to both districts.

What is Rollinsford's membership in SAU 56?

Membership and assessment (i.e., the fees that each school district pays for receiving SAU services) is based on a formula that includes the number of students enrolled in each district, compared to the total number of students governed by the SAU, as well as the equalized valuation from each community. Rollinsford's current assessment is 16.47% of the SAU budget.

The Rollinsford school board is also part of the 14 member SAU 56 board, which oversees the governance of the SAU, including staff, budget, and policies. Rollinsford has five seats on the SAU board and Somersworth has nine seats.

Is Rollinsford required to be in an SAU?

Yes. By law, the school district must receive the services of a superintendent, special education director, and business administrator.

What is the current status of SAU withdrawal?

The Somersworth School Board and City Council have voted to initiate a withdrawal committee to explore the options of withdrawal from SAU 56.

What are Rollinsford's options?

Rollinsford has two options at this point:

- Explore all withdrawal options via a committee
- Remain in SAU 56 when Somersworth withdraws. Rollinsford would most likely have to re-structure the SAU in this scenario.

What options will the committee study?

Some options that the committee may explore include joining another existing SAU to receive the required services, contracting services from an SAU, forming its own SAU, etc. The committee will study the legality, feasibility, affordability, and impact on students for each option before making a recommendation. The Committee must also make a determination on what will work for Somersworth.

What is the withdrawal study timeline?

This is not a quick process. Getting to the point of withdrawal will take over a year. The first step is to place a warrant on the ballot in March 2019 asking Rollinsford voters to authorize the formation of a committee to study withdrawal options. If the warrant passes, the committee will study all the options and make a recommended plan of action.

The State Board of Education must review the plans of both Rollinsford and Somersworth to determine that each district is adequately covered by the respective withdrawal plans. If the Rollinsford plan is approved by the State, the recommendation will then be placed on the ballot in March 2020 for voter consideration.

During that time, Somersworth will need to hold a public hearing in Rollinsford explaining their plan. In turn, Rollinsford must hold a similar public hearing in Somersworth. Any plan brought forward to the voters from the withdrawal study committee must receive 3/5 of the vote for voter approval.

What happens if the warrant to form a study committee does NOT pass?

If the warrant does not pass during the March 2019 vote, Rollinsford will need to remain in SAU 56 and restructure it as necessary.

Formation of our own committee ensures that we can adequately explore all the options and choose the one that works best for Rollinsford students and taxpayers.