

Regional Listening Tour

What is Your Vision for New Hampshire Schools?

Note takers recorded stakeholder feedback during the NH Department of Education's Regional Listening Tour in **Exeter on November 9, 2016**. This document highlights the high-level summary and common themes from the meeting.

Student Success

- Need to help students develop non-measured skills ("grit"), as well as develop executive functioning. Help them be able to take ownership of their own learning.
- Can students transfer their content knowledge into marketable skills?

School Characteristics

- Would like to see environmental education embedded in more academic areas – research shows positive effects on students cognitive and social well-being as well as their physical and mental health.
- Want to know how schools deal with discipline issues – retention/suspension. Do they engage in positive use of restorative justice?
- Want to know if schools engage students in active, hands-on problem solving – not sit at your desk curriculum.
- Does school really emphasize "career ready"? How well does it develop students to have teachable skills or address the needs of students who aren't pursuing an academic (college) tract?
- Want to see schools with vocational programming.
- Does the school/district have early intervention for students to bring them up to a point where they can be academically and socially ready to engage with their peers?
- Does the school have student-centered curriculum. Looking for personalized instruction but not just through technology or blended learning opportunities.
- Want to know that school offers instruction that is balanced across subjects (including the related arts) – not such a heavy focus on reading/math at expense of other things. Classes should give students more exposure to music, arts and sciences – also want to see the inclusion of civics education.

School Success

- Measure if students are graduating with marketable skills – are they career ready when they leave high school?
- Schools need to find ways to let parents know how students are doing beyond reading and math. Need to incorporate and involve all teachers in the discussion about how students can be successful.

Statewide Issues

- State needs to be looking at the quality of education for students who are deaf in the state – schools and districts are using loopholes that allow them to fill teaching positions with individuals who are not truly certified/qualified – this results in a declining quality of education for students who are deaf. There is unequal access to communication services and quality.
- Would like to see the NH Summer Summit opened up to all schools/districts (not just low performing). All schools can benefit from the opportunities to learn about the cutting edge things happening in the state and best practice efforts.
- Evaluation of schools needs to change and take focus off of underperforming or failing status and look more directly at the teachers – what are they doing? Are they engaging in best practices? Or, are they engaging students?
- Communication from the DOE around test scores could be improved to public (and newspapers) by providing more supplemental materials to help them understand what the scores mean.

- Examine funding for professional development – too much money is spent on very structured programs which makes it hard to incorporate other things. Money needs to be spent on helping teachers to teach better.
- Need to become intentional about breaking down barriers between communities and the quality of education that is being offered so that schools/teaching is equitable no matter in what system the student is enrolled.
- Look at developing common definitions across the state for educational terms as the understanding of schools and districts will determine what they do (i.e. – “reading” – What is reading? What does it take to be a reader?)
- How do we shift to more performance-based learning? Also – address the gap of competency-based education at the middle school (is present at elementary and high school).
- Need to be more forward thinking about where students can be headed in their future – we tend to prepare them on the type of high school education for today’s jobs – not tomorrow’s jobs.