

New Hampshire's Vision for Redesign:
**MOVING FROM HIGH SCHOOLS
TO LEARNING COMMUNITIES**



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New Hampshire's Vision for Redesign: MOVING FROM HIGH SCHOOLS TO LEARNING COMMUNITIES



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Dear Friends and Colleagues:

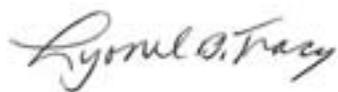
The release of this report, “*New Hampshire’s Vision for Redesign: Moving from High Schools to Learning Communities*,” could not be more timely for New Hampshire. From the leadership of Governor John Lynch in his initiative to seek ways to improve the graduation rate of New Hampshire high school students, to the Department’s *Follow The Child* initiative, we are seeing school after school in the Granite State focusing on what matters most – the documented progress of each student, personally, socially, physically, and academically.

This document is meant to support the work being done every day in our schools as educators, along with students, parents, and community leaders, seek to improve the quality of secondary education through meaningful redesign. The document has brought together several important bodies of work, including the NH *Minimum Standards for School Approval*, national high school redesign theory and practice as exemplified through the National Association of School Principals’ *Breaking Ranks II*, and the revised secondary accreditation standards of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. By aligning the rich practices and policies found in these leadership documents within a context supportive of the work of New Hampshire educators, *New Hampshire’s Vision for Redesign* will support the improvement of our secondary schools.

I would like to thank Paul Leather, chairman, and other distinguished educators who worked tirelessly for over two years on the effort. Members of the State Board of Education who contributed, particularly Chairman David Ruedig and Fredrick Bramante, were particularly supportive toward the successful completion of this project. It has been an exciting time for the committee, as they sifted through the state and national developments of high school design, to create and articulate a shared vision for the future of secondary education here in New Hampshire. Thanks also go to the many hundreds of students, educators, community leaders, business leaders, parents, and citizens who, through a series of focus groups, provided the perspectives on which this vision document is based.

New Hampshire’s Vision for Redesign will be of great value to the New Hampshire schools and communities that seek to improve educational offerings. Most importantly, it will positively impact our students’ preparation for the future, as high schools move toward becoming learning communities.

Sincerely,



Lyonel B. Tracy, Commissioner
New Hampshire Department of Education



CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| LETTER FROM THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION | ii |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | 1 |
| Personalization and Relationships | 1 |
| Rigor and High Standards | 1 |
| Relevance and Engagement | 1 |
| Results | 2 |
| Empowered Educators | 2 |
| Follow The Child | 2 |
| Redesign and State Standards | 2 |
| Summary | 3 |
| INTRODUCTION | 4 |
| DATA GATHERING AND INPUT | 5 |
| GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR HIGH SCHOOL REDESIGN | 6 |
| Personalization and Relationships | 6 |
| Rigor And High Standards | 8 |
| Relevance and Engagement | 9 |
| Results | 10 |
| Empowered Educators | 12 |
| FOLLOW THE CHILD | 16 |
| REDESIGN AND STATE STANDARDS | 17 |
| EXAMPLE OF A COMPETENCY-BASED ASSESSMENT TRANSCRIPT | 21 |
| Appendix A | |
| HIGH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP PRELIMINARY REPORT | 26 |
| Appendix B | |
| DATA GLEANED FROM NH EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS | 37 |
| Appendix C | |
| BRII/NEASC/NHDOE MATRIX | 40 |
| AFTERWORD | 48 |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | 48 |

Quotations from high school focus group and summit participants – students, parents, educators, counselors, school and district administrators, community members, higher education personnel, policy makers, state-level education leaders- appear throughout this document.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION has released a report, *“New Hampshire’s Vision for Redesign: Moving from High Schools to Learning Communities.”* This report brings together state, regional, and national resources with the work of New Hampshire educators in a plan to support the improvement of our secondary schools.

One hundred years ago, less than 20% of secondary students completed high school. Today, every student must complete a rigorous high school curriculum leading to graduation. But in 2005, an estimated 2,300 of our students dropped out of high school.

To address these issues, education leaders have come together over the past several years to gather research, opinion, and data on the New Hampshire high school experience. A series of meetings, forums, and focus groups was held, including two New Hampshire education summits, three statewide student forums, and the activities of a state-level high school leadership team. These activities generated input from administration, teachers, councilors, students, school boards, business and community members as well as state and national organizations as the Association of School Principals, the U.S. Department of Education, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, and the National Governors Association’s high school redesign initiatives.

Six guiding principles for the future of our high schools emerged from this body of discussion and research:

- Personalization and Relationships
- Rigor and High Standards
- Relevance and Engagement
- Results
- Empowered Educators
- Follow The Child

PERSONALIZATION AND RELATIONSHIPS

Personalization means implementing individualized teaching and learning methods to best meet the needs of each student. Part of personalization involves building relationships between students and adults—teachers, administrators, parents, and community members—as well as between those adults. Schools that report success with high school redesign efforts mention personalization as an important aspect of all learning relationships.

RIGOR AND HIGH STANDARDS

Every student deserves a course of study that allows them to learn in a deep, meaningful and practical way.

Achieving this requires high standards that clearly identify and describe what is expected of students across the curriculum. Such standards serve as a common target for students, staff, and parents. High standards should address character and emotional development as well as academic growth. They should apply to all programs, including Career and Technical Education programs. They should apply to all students, not just those in certain academic tracks. Standards should address not only academic knowledge but everyday life skills such as problem-solving, team building, and time management. In developing high standards, everyone should be involved, including school personnel, students, parents and community members.



RELEVANCE AND ENGAGEMENT

Relevance connects what students learn to the skills they practice in real-life situations. By engaging every student in learning we can dramatically reduce the number of dropouts and allow students to acquire the skills they need to be successful and contributing citizens. Expanding the scope of extended learning opportunities (such as through internships and independent study) is a practical way to make this connection and ensure that students are engaged in their education. The challenge for educators is to engage each student, showing relevance while at the same time keeping the students’ horizons broad, because we know that we cannot predict today what may or may not be relevant in students’ later lives.

RESULTS

Collecting and analyzing data on results is vital to the success of high school redesign efforts. This data should first be used to determine the steps to support a student's growth. It can also help a school understand whether it has reached its goals or whether a program needs to be modified. Assessment should include both academic and non-academic goals, and schools should have a plan to collect and report the data internally and to the greater community. Such a system should encourage teachers to be reflective about their teaching so they can improve it and therefore improve student learning.



EMPOWERED EDUCATORS

This goal incorporates several components:

Effective Leadership

Educators must become effective leaders, making choices that serve the vision and mission of the school, creating environments in which others share in the leadership process, and reaching out to community members to draw them into a relationship with the schools. Schools must nurture effective leadership with ongoing training and support.

Teachers as Learning Facilitators

Teachers should transition from a traditional delivery approach toward coaching, mentoring and facilitating student learning. As learning facilitators, teachers become more active designers of curriculum. They encourage students to assume responsibility for their learning and move from teacher-centered to student-centered education. The transition to new roles for teachers will require a strong professional development effort, but will lead to more exciting and rewarding careers for teachers.

Whole Community Involvement

New Hampshire defines parent and community partnerships as collaborations among educators, parents/guardians, and the greater community, all actively engaged in defining, implementing and sustaining relationships to ensure a personalized learning experience for each learner. These collaborations create schools that share the responsibility for the delivery of education, as a vital part of the whole community's involvement in the education of young people.

Professional Learning Communities

Professional learning communities are places of continuous learning and growth. They are vital and spirited environments in which the openness to exchange ideas, to share information and insights, and to establish mutually supportive relationships enhances the learning process. Leadership in professional learning communities is visionary, committed, and inclusive. The physical environment reflects the inclusive nature of leadership and the school structure facilitates engaged learning. This may sound like an ideal, but it is both possible and necessary if each and every student is to emerge from the school system as an engaged and successful learner.

FOLLOW THE CHILD

The student-centered Follow The Child initiative calls for personalized learning and assessment so that each child can flourish in four domains: personally, socially, physically and academically. In this initiative, each student's educational plan is personalized through an analysis of who the student is as a person. Parents, educators, and students work together to determine the student's learning pathway. The strategies for learning are both short-term and long-term, and draw from resources inside and outside of the school. They combine classroom and community learning, coached or mentored learning, and independent learning. The student's learning path is monitored, and the delivery plan is adjusted as needed. Schools that develop this type of personalized approach to education help students learn more, encourage more students to graduate from high school, and ensure that those graduates are better prepared for their next steps in life.

REDESIGN AND STATE STANDARDS

Beyond the guiding principles mentioned above, the report addresses New Hampshire's recently passed *Minimum Standards for School Approval* and their relation to high school redesign. Important objectives within the new standards are:

- **greater flexibility in developing a school calendar**
Schools now have the option of maintaining a

school year based on hours of instructional time per year rather than the traditional 180-day calendar. This option allows schools to develop innovative pathways to address students' learning and personal needs. A student could now fulfill credit requirements at various times and places and not necessarily inside the school walls.

- **extended learning opportunities for credit towards graduation** Schools may now allow students to propose alternative approaches to acquiring skills and knowledge other than in the traditional classroom setting. If a district chooses to implement extended learning opportunities, it must establish policies describing the process of approval, the expected involvement of the student and parents in the process, how students will demonstrate the mastery of required course competencies, the relationship to the awarding of credit, and how extended learning opportunities will be accessible to all students.
- **harnessing of local resources** This section of the new rules states that “Schools shall strive to harness all available community resources, including but not limited to organizations, businesses, talented individuals, natural resources, and technology...” Models of harnessing local resources already exist in many schools that have Career and Technical Education (CTE) Centers.
- **distance learning and the use of technology in learning** School districts may, at their option, allow correspondence, video-based, Internet-based, and online courses. The local school board must maintain policies to ensure that such courses comply with federal and state regulations, that academic standards for awarding credit are similar to those for traditional courses, that only approved students may receive credit for such courses, and that such students

participate in all required assessment programs.

- **personalization of learning** This section of the standards advocates personalized learning strategies to address the learning styles, strengths, interests, and needs of each student. Districts interested in pursuing personalized learning strategies should develop local board policies to implement such strategies.
- **transition from a Carnegie unit-based grading system to credit based on competency demonstration** The revised standards require school districts to move from a system based on the Carnegie unit (a measure of the length of time a student has studied a subject) to a system that awards credit based on mastery of the subject. This transition must take place not later than the 2008-2009 school year. Local school districts must identify or develop high school course competencies, decide on appropriate ways to assess competency, and define sufficiency (identifying necessary and sufficient evidence for students to demonstrate mastery).

The report concludes with a sample competency-based assessment transcript that includes extended learning opportunities.

SUMMARY

This report, “New Hampshire’s Vision for Redesign,” which is a culmination of conversations, leadership efforts, and input from throughout the state, points out and supports concepts that reinforce the need for change and the need to focus on particular issues. The research, data, and changes in the state *Minimum Standards for School Approval* all serve as guidance and support for local initiative. We believe that the best changes will happen within a district and that the state will support those changes that lead to each student being an engaged and successful learner.

INTRODUCTION

“We in public education are embarking upon an exciting journey of change. The change will require a new delivery system, a system which involves all segments of our community and its citizens.

Educational change will be the result of uniting, nurturing, and cultivating a learning community that will allow and encourage innovation and risk. It must be a community that supports the evolution of ideas and concepts and creates an environment that allows for the citizens of the community to play an active role.

The learning community will draw upon all of its human resources to serve as teachers, facilitators. The time has come to break down the barriers that prevent the sharing of knowledge, experience, and thought—barriers such as the number of hours required for learning, the limited number of hours within the day, the specific location, and who can certify that learning has taken place.

Education can no longer be limited by years, walls, clocks. We must create a learning environment that is continuous, accessible, and flexible. The change in education will require a shift in the traditional delivery system...

...Change will require constant, consistent, and persistent involvement of the entire community. Members must recognize their roles and responsibilities within the community. If we are willing to listen and learn from one another, we can change our delivery system, and if we can change our delivery system, we will change education.”

Thomas Brennan wrote these words in 1993, while he was principal of Conant High School in Jaffrey, NH. They describe his vision for a high school education that would meet the needs of all students and prepare them for a lifetime of success. His words have proven to be prophetic. New Hampshire is now deeply engaged in developing a vision for high school redesign that encompasses the creation of learning communities in which every participant is actively involved in the process of learning. The various influences that shape the course of public secondary education have come together in a common purpose to encourage the very change in education that Brennan described.

Given this common focus, we hope this document will prove useful to those engaged in the redesign of New Hampshire’s high schools. This effort is in keeping with the New Hampshire *Minimum Standards for School Approval*, the high school accreditation standards of the New England Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges, and the strategies and recommendations found in the National Association of Secondary School Principals’ *Breaking Ranks II™: Strategies for Leading High School Reform*.¹

New Hampshire’s goal is that each student will receive a rigorous and personalized education. The vision for New Hampshire high school redesign is understanding that the interests, passions and dreams of each student

are keys to ensuring that they are engaged and successful learners.



The purpose of this document is threefold:

- to assist local educators and community stakeholders to develop a new high school delivery model that ensures every learner is engaged and successful
- to inspire active, sustained participation in the process of high school redesign
- to encourage the concept of learning communities

¹ (Reston, VA: NASSP, 2004.)

DATA GATHERING AND INPUT

NEW HAMPSHIRE HAS AN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM that it can be proud of in many ways. However, we know from the educational community, including students themselves, that improvements in the overall performance and completion rates of high school students are urgently needed. This vision document



for New Hampshire's high schools has been prepared through several statewide efforts, including two New Hampshire education summits, three student forums, and the activities of a high school leadership team. The process also included ongoing input from the New Hampshire Association of School Principals (NHASP), and the state's alignment effort with the U.S. Department of Education, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges' standards, and the National Governors Association's high school reform initiatives.

At the same time, the National Association of Secondary School Principals teamed with the

Education Alliance at Brown University to revise their ground-breaking set of recommendations, *Breaking Ranks*, into an updated compilation. *Breaking Ranks II™: Strategies for Leading High School Reform* provides a compendium of descriptions, recommendations, and tools for high school principals working to change the culture of their school communities. A group of New Hampshire principals trained in the *Breaking Ranks II™* strategies work with colleagues to help design and implement plans for local school change.

At a New Hampshire Education Reform Summit held in 2004, participants had the opportunity to choose among seven concurrent workshops. More than one-quarter of the participants chose to attend a workshop on high school reform, indicating the importance of this topic to the community. The fifty-five participants in the workshop included educators, administrators, policy-makers, higher education personnel, and business people from all over New Hampshire.

Also in 2004, the New Hampshire Department of Education convened a statewide high school leadership team, with a goal of crafting an initiative customized to New Hampshire's local context. This team gathered feedback from across New Hampshire in the form of workshops, forums, focus groups, and a statewide High School Leadership Summit held in January, 2005. Overall, more than six hundred representatives, from nearly every high school in the state and a number of interested groups, came together in these face-to-face events to offer their perspectives, concerns, and hopes regarding secondary education in New Hampshire.²

In the spring of 2005, the NHASP and the NH Department of Education sponsored a *Breaking Ranks II™* conference which brought added attention to important redesign issues as well as a commitment to partner in this effort. Finally, in February of 2006, Governor John Lynch sponsored a one-day summit on New Hampshire's high school graduation rate.

These collaborative efforts, nationally, regionally, and statewide, have converged into a groundswell of support for high school redesign. This is the impetus for New Hampshire's vision of change.

² (For data from these events, see the High School Leadership Preliminary Report at www.ed.state.nh.us.)

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR HIGH SCHOOL REDESIGN

A VISION OF REDESIGN REQUIRES STRUCTURE. Schools need to know where and how to begin, or—if they have already begun to implement changes—the possibilities for adopting promising new practices.

The main principles that guide the redesign process are Personalization and Relationships, Relevance and Engagement, Rigor and High Standards, Results, Empowered Educators (which includes Effective Leadership, Teachers as Learning Facilitators, Whole Community Involvement, and Professional Learning Communities), and the Follow The Child initiative. These principles are by no means discrete and unconnected, but overlap and blend with each other in supporting the creation of successful, thriving, and lively learning communities.

PERSONALIZATION AND RELATIONSHIPS

Across the country, schools that report success with high school redesign efforts consistently mention personalization as an important aspect of all learning relationships. Students who feel a personal connection to their high school experience are more likely to succeed. Personalization includes personalized learning and personalized environments. To achieve these, schools must allow for the creation of personal connections between students and adults in their schools and their communities. These connections that help them develop the habits, skills, and dispositions they need to succeed during and after high school.

“A truly personalized school would have to have a phenomenal communication system – with parents, with community members. That is key. How we communicate within the school and outside the school needs to go beyond progress reports and grades.”

Such relationships foster the conditions for student aspirations as defined by the Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations (www.qisa.org):

- Belonging
- Heroes
- Sense of accomplishment
- Fun and excitement
- Curiosity and creativity
- Spirit of adventure
- Leadership and responsibility
- Confidence to take action

In learning environments where personalization is successfully implemented, all students and adults feel they have a place and that they are each responsible for the learning environment. In such a learning community, each student has the opportunity to be an active participant in shaping her or his own learning experience.

A key goal of personalization is that each student will acquire the knowledge and skills embedded in New Hampshire’s six *K-12 Curriculum Frameworks*. While the standards described in the frameworks are common for all students, each student has unique interests, needs, strengths, and learning styles. Students who are connected to their educational communities through personalized relationships and plans are more likely to persist in their education and to succeed as learners. An important strategy to foster personalization is to provide strong and appropriate support services for student development. This includes comprehensive school guidance and counseling programs that consistently connect with students throughout their educational experience and especially as they transition from middle school into high school. Internships and other real world experiences can add to the richness of the learning experience for each student, reaching beyond the immediate school environment.

At the heart of personalization is the customization of instruction that honors the multiple intelligences, learning styles, histories, and interests that students bring to their learning environment. Personalization, therefore, has two major components: personalized relationships and personalized learning.

Personalized Relationships

A personalized learning environment has an outstanding system of communication that connects students, advisors, community members, and teachers. Students and educators feel free to meet voluntarily. Advisors work with students from their enrollment until graduation. Parents are intimately connected to their children’s work. Smaller classes and community connections are actively encouraged.

When New Hampshire citizens had the opportunity to discuss personalization, both adults and students expressed a desire for students to get to know adults outside the context of their roles. They believe that all professionals in the learning communities should begin to assume the responsibilities of guiding students through all aspects of their high school experience. For this to occur requires a process by which professionals know when and how to access resources in the learning community.

Personalized Learning

While national definitions of personalized learning often focus on advisories and/or portfolio systems, New Hampshire citizens expressed a need for more depth and breadth than those tools alone can offer. Students suggested “thinking outside the box” in such ways as having students create their own schedules to create motivation for achievement, allowing students to make personal choices in the direction they want to take within a class, and allowing a high school experience that spans three to five years (depending on the needs of the student) rather than a one-size-fits-all mandate of the traditional four years.

The following list of thoughts regarding personalization was developed by educators, students, and community members. These thoughts can help start the conversation about personalization within a learning community:

- professional development for all staff at all levels
- clear expectations for the culture and climate of the learning community
- realistic vision and mission statements
- role modeling and demonstrating the desired behavior
- reaching out to others regardless of who they are
- student/staff involvement: Is it real or superficial? What authority do students/staff really have in decisions?
- exploring established programs/systems for best fit with the school, its population and its philosophy. Examples include career academies, freshman academies, and resources such as *High Schools that Work*, *Breaking Ranks II*, *Smaller Learning Communities*, *International Center for Learning in Education*, and the *Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations*.
- recognizing that the time needed to connect in meaningful relationships is not an add-on but is a

different way of creating an environment for learning

The qualities of personalization cannot be mandated. Once personalization is explored, developed,

and defined, each district should determine how it will integrate personalization into its own learning community.

What could personalization look like?

A working definition of personalization is “the rigorous, joyful process of engaging each learner in

acquiring important skills and knowledge, based upon the learner’s needs, interests, passions, learning styles, and timetable, and utilizing all available resources.” A closer look at this definition can provide guidance on where to start with redesign efforts.

rigorous A personalized learning process will open the door to higher standards. If students are leading the direction of their learning path, they must also accept the challenge to become the best they can be. Students know that the more skilled they are, the more likely they will be able to pursue their dreams and become successful in their chosen fields.

joyful Learning is boring when it is forced, uninspiring and irrelevant in the eyes of the learner. Learning is joyful when it is interesting, fun, exciting, challenging, and creates a craving for more. Personalized learning is joyful.

engaging each learner Students need to feel that their interests are valued in the learning process and that the curriculum is relevant to real life. This encourages students to be engaged in their own education. When this connection is made, students are motivated and enthusiastic. By engaging every student

“Last year I had a math teacher who had come from an elementary background. She taught so differently – she took down all of our birthdays. My birthday was on a midterm day and I was taking her midterm and she brought me a bag of goodies. She really cares about me.”

in learning, we can dramatically reduce the number of dropouts and improve the opportunities for students to acquire the skills they need to be successful and contributing citizens.

needs, interests, passions We can begin to foster a learning community of engaged and successful learners by studying the needs, interests, and passions of each student. If skilled educators ask the right questions of students and know what to do with the answers, the ingredients for success will begin to appear. The student’s own answers will point the way to an engaging personal path to success. These answers will enable educators to meet the academic needs of students, as well as uncovering their social, personal, and physical needs.

learning styles Although some students learn well in a traditional classroom, many students do not find that environment conducive to their learning style. Personalized learning strategies must incorporate a

student's own learning styles into the delivery plan. When asked the importance of teaching differently to students who learn differently, 93% of students and teachers in New Hampshire said it was very important.

“As educators, we need to make sure we are not shutting doors on kids. In math, we have to guarantee that doors are not shut whether they are college bound or not – it’s opening up a world of possibilities for students.”

However, less than 10% of students and less than 20% of teachers said they had observed this differentiation of teaching style consistently happening in New Hampshire’s high schools—a discrepancy that indicates how students and educators think education needs to change if it is to improve.

timetable Learning is an unending, lifelong process and can take place in meaningful ways in many environments, inside and outside of school. The timetable for a student to learn can vary for each student. For some, a traditional schedule of 180 days, 5.5 hours per day works well. For others, the learning timetable may look very different and could range from college-like day and evening classes to community learning experiences to an accelerated learning plan.

all available resources When resources are limited to those within the walls of the school, it is impossible to personalize learning for every student. However, if the resources that are also available outside of the school are harnessed, we will have the tools necessary to engage each student. This means including businesses, organizations, talented individuals, natural resources, and learning through technology.

RIGOR AND HIGH STANDARDS

Every student deserves a course of study that allows him or her to learn in a deep, meaningful and practical way. Not only do students need to know facts, they need to know how to apply those facts to new situations, how to solve problems, and how to expand their knowledge and opportunities. All students deserve a rigorous secondary education that prepares them for post-secondary education and meaningful careers.

Rigorous standards are those that clearly identify what students are expected to know and be able to do across the curriculum. In New Hampshire, these standards are contained within local curriculum competencies, national standards, the New Hampshire Grade Level Expectations and Grade Span Expectations, and the six

New Hampshire K-12 Curriculum Frameworks.

High standards in each subject are the foundation for academic success. They provide a clear definition of expectations for all students and serve as a common target for students, staff and parents. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment must be aligned with the standards. Benchmarks must be identified and articulated to all members of learning communities to provide evidence of progress toward achieving the standards. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, (<http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/cssch/csshas1.html>) states that successful schools have high standards that:

1. expect all students will achieve at high levels
2. link to local, state, and national standards
3. establish measurable performance indicators and benchmarks for all students
4. emphasize conceptual understanding and the application of knowledge, skills, and processes
5. communicate learning expectations to students and parents
6. serve as the basis for culturally inclusive curriculum, instructional methodology, resources, and assessment measures for evaluation criteria
7. are used by teachers to guide instructional planning and implementation for diverse learners
8. guide assessment strategies which inform students, parents, teachers, and other community members about student achievement

In keeping with this definition, we can offer the following guidelines for high standards in our high schools.

High standards address the whole child.

Success includes not only academic success, but also expectations that all students will meet standards of character development and emotional development. Such standards strongly support and enable academic success.

“Character development, responsibility, respect, curiosity, creativity...those need to be cultivated.”

High standards challenge students to achieve their aspirations.

Depending on the needs of the individual student, remedial programs and accelerated programs are equally beneficial. The Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs are held to high standards statewide, and have begun to be valued as such. Nevertheless, some students

have indicated an interest in CTE classes but said they would not enroll in them since they knew that those were not as heavily weighted as academic classes. They felt it would be detrimental to their overall GPA and ultimately effect their chances to go to a four year college. Schools should review and revise any policies that hold CTE courses to less than high standards or describe them as having lesser credit weight.

High standards are for all students.

This includes students who are at-risk and students receiving special education services—each and every student, and every learning style. The practice of tracking students should be reviewed by each school for its effectiveness. Students on particular tracks may miss out on classes and experiences that could ignite their curiosity and keep them in school. Tracking encourages division among the general student population based on academic ability.

High standards address goals and expectations in learning as well as the application of knowledge, skills, and processes.

New Hampshire's *Minimum Standards for School Approval* allow for awarding academic for real-world learning experiences occurring outside the school walls. Eliminating the Carnegie unit as the sole determiner of achievement allows teachers to focus on competency-based performance measures rather than seat time. Competency-based performance measures, based on local curriculum competencies, national standards, New Hampshire Grade Level Expectations and Grade Span Expectations, and the New Hampshire *K-12 Curriculum Frameworks*, represent a solid educational foundation for all students in New Hampshire. New Hampshire citizens, including teachers and students, believe that assessment of students' knowledge needs to move beyond the traditional paper and pencil tests. Teachers are encouraged to use student portfolios, projects, and performance of competency to allow students to demonstrate their knowledge through higher order thinking skills such as synthesis, assimilation, critical thinking skills, and application of knowledge. These assessments would encourage demonstrations of academic knowledge as well as skills that are necessary beyond school, such as problem-solving, team building, and time management. Teachers and students need flexibility in their daily schedules to accommodate these varied learning experiences.

When schools apply the state and national standards and the curriculum frameworks locally, they are urged to personalize high standards for their own learning community. When developing high standards, all stakeholders must be involved, including school

personnel, students, parents and community members. Students need to have a voice in determining high standards and to feel that they are valued as individuals. High standards apply not only to students but also to teachers. When teachers have the opportunity to look at student work together, in teams or groups, they reach greater consistency in shared understanding and ensure high standards for all. With this greater responsibility placed on teachers, continuous training for them becomes essential. Teachers need professional development activities to enhance their professional skills and keep them informed of best practices and research-based teaching strategies. Sufficient time needs to be provided for these activities to occur.

RELEVANCE AND ENGAGEMENT

Students must believe that what they learn has relevance to their current life and their life after high school. Relevance connects learning to the skills student practice in real-life situations. Conversely, meaningful student engagement with the real world enriches the educational experience. Expanding the scope of extended learning opportunities (such as through internships and independent or mentor-guided study) is a practical way to make these connections.

In its *Executive Summary* for the year 2004, the National Academy of Sciences offered that:

Students demonstrate academic engagement when they are attentive and do the assigned work. They show enthusiasm for their work by raising questions, contributing to group activities and helping peers. Disengagement is evident when students are bored or make little effort. Students who are academically disengaged may daydream or even sleep in class, talk to peers about non-class matters, make noise or otherwise disrupt the class.

Many New Hampshire citizens find the Academy's description of engagement to be incomplete. Students especially feel that it is possible to exhibit all of the positive behaviors depicted by the Academy and still not be engaged. This happens when students experience a frustration with required courses and units of study that seemingly have no relevance to their lives. Engagement includes an active inquiry, an enthusiastic involvement, and a belief in the relevance of learning.

Today's teachers need to be adept at demonstrating the value and importance of mastering these lessons. When

“What are we doing to turn these kids into thoughtful, contributing members of society?”

teachers demonstrate that they genuinely love teaching and their subject matter, they become a key ingredient in the recipe for academic engagement. Teachers who are passionate about teaching and learning are also more likely to engage many of the high-achieving

“Academic engagement is personal, but can come from teacher stimulation. Teachers and students have to work together. There are some skills to survive in this society. It needs to be explained why the skills will be important in everyday life.”

students who focus only on the steps necessary for graduation and/or getting into college, leaving personal inquiry and quest for learning as secondary priorities.

The challenge facing New Hampshire high schools that wish to foster a more engaged student body is to develop educational opportunities that provide curricula and instructional practices that:

- create student interest in their work and ownership of their work products;
- inspire curiosity to explore and learn about new things;
- generate wide-spread excitement about learning and achievement;
- challenge each student to do their best work; and
- are meaningful to the lives of students and emphasize the value of acquiring new knowledge or skills.

Students and teachers need to work together to create engagement in learning. Teachers introduce new concepts and guide the conversations about big ideas, but students need the flexibility to personalize the lessons. In addition, teachers and students must develop positive relationships that will allow them to communicate openly about adapting the learning goal to each student’s personal interests. Students tell us that they will attempt more rigorous challenges for teachers who have made the effort to learn about their strengths, talents, and unique problems, and especially for those teachers who have demonstrated that they sincerely care about each student’s success. The result is greater engagement by both parties and a more personalized education for the student.

RESULTS

The goal of New Hampshire’s high school redesign effort is for each student to graduate ready for college, work, citizenship, and life. For this to happen, New Hampshire citizens must ask themselves challenging

questions such as, “Is our district committed to ensuring that all high school students graduate prepared to enter the next phase of their lives? Is every student in the district prepared for college and/or work, and to become an effective contributing citizen?” Demonstration of skill and knowledge attainment, and participation in integrated extended learning opportunities are two ways that graduates become prepared to apply what they’ve learned in a real world setting.

When schools consider a results-oriented redesign, they need to identify:

- desired outcomes
- the assessments that will be used to measure results
- a system of recording, reporting and effectively using the data.

Desired outcomes

Desired outcomes can be academic goals, course competencies, standards to be reached, or work-based competencies. Outcomes can be defined in different ways or serve different purposes; they can be *formative* or incremental, based on a growth model, or they can be end-of-course or *summative* to the educational experience. For example, the principles for redesign outlined in this document can all be transformed into goals or action items for schools.

Assessments

In developing a results-oriented process, educators should consider assessment in two distinct areas. First is the assessment of non-academic goals. Correlating non-academic goals to student achievement will help determine what activities support student learning. Examples could be the level of parental involvement, teachers’ professional development and its connection to the determined goals, or the level of personalization of student learning strategies. It is important to collect data on these indicators because they bring value to the process of decision making. For instance, parental involvement is usually connected to student achievement. It is not enough to assume parental involvement. We must have data that supports setting intermediate goals or action-steps to improve involvement.

Secondly, schools must develop a comprehensive plan to assess student achievement. This plan should include formative assessment, summative assessment and other types of assessments needed.

Formative assessments are often done when beginning a program of learning or during the program. It “refers to all those activities undertaken by teachers, and by the students in assessing themselves, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are

engaged. Such assessments become formative when the evidence is actually used to adapt the teaching to meet the needs.”³

Formative assessment can:

- increase student gains
- provide timely feedback to students on progress toward goals
- provide insight for teachers as to their lesson quality
- provide timely corrective actions to increase student gains toward goals or competencies

In learning methods that use formative assessment, teachers and students identify goals, outcomes, and the criteria for achievement. They engage in conversations that look into what the student is learning and how it is working, bringing a depth to the individual learning experience. Teachers and students who have engaged in this learning method report these conversations to be the most significant experiences in the learning activities. Student self-reflection is also a part of this assessment process. Students become actively engaged in their own learning. Because formative assessments supply immediate evidence and feedback to help students improve and advance their learning, they provide opportunities for mid-course corrections. They allow teachers to respond to identified learning needs and strengths, and to alter programs to facilitate higher student achievement before the end of the program.

Summative assessments, on the other hand, provide a summary of student learning at a particular point in time. Many times this occurs at the end of a course or series of activities, such as when a chapter test or a final exam is given. Such assessments are not designed to provide the contextual feedback described above, but can be very valuable in shaping how educators organize and design learning experiences. They let educators, learning facilitators, mentors, and presenters know if the intended learning has been received and retained. Most standardized tests are summative. Summative assessment is often based on the cumulative learning experience and can refer to all of the state or local normative tests or criterion referenced tests that are typically given at the end of a year or course.

Integrated into all of this should be a school's decisions about what level of *authentic assessment* they will use to collect data and results. Authentic assessment is based on demonstration of learning by the student and observation of learning by the assessor. It can be formative, summative, or both. Rather than a learner's report of what they know, it is an authentic

performance of applied knowledge. This can range from the use of portfolios (electronic or not) to performance assessments that are judged at their completion. Authentic assessment could also include project-based assessments that occur over time.

Recording, reporting and using the data

Results means not only assessing for data, but using the data. Schools must be purposeful in designing a system that uses the data to report the level that each student has achieved in the desired outcomes, goals, course competencies and expectations. This reporting focuses on the student and helps determine what steps must be taken to support the student's growth. This same data



can be used to assess the effectiveness of learning goals or instructional plans. An example could be examining outcome data to determine if the goals and instruction were aligned with the assessment questions. Another might be analyzing the strategies used to address different learning styles in the class and the resulting student achievement. It is important to design a system that expects teachers to be reflective about their teaching so they can improve and therefore improve student learning.

Because this data is important for schools and the greater community, schools should have a plan to collect and report it internally and externally. The reports should include the data, its relationship to other data pools, what the data means and what will happen as a result (action plans, next steps, etc.). For instance, a school might incorporate a system of reporting the use of formative assessment data to parents and students at mid-semester. If the data indicated that students did not achieve at a desired

³ Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards Through Classroom Assessment, P. Black and D. Wiliam, in Phi Delta Kappan Vol. 80 (2) pp.139-148 October 1998

level, the report would also include information about a plan to improve outcomes for current students and those that may follow, a plan that addresses both student and program level issues.

In the types of learning communities discussed here, schools can no longer simply record results. Accountability has increased at all levels. Our communities expect to have a results-oriented process that is comprehensive yet achievable, as well as being meaningful to students, educators, parents, and the whole learning community.

EMPOWERED EDUCATORS

Leadership is not only about individual leaders. It is also about a process of leadership that enhances and develops the school culture and climate. Effective leaders make choices that serve the vision and mission of the school. They create environments in which others share in the leadership process because the responsibility for growth and change goes beyond school administrators to include teachers, students, and parents. Effective high school leaders also reach out to community members to draw them into a supportive relationship with the school.

Effective Leadership

Schools with effective leadership are those that nurture the qualities of leadership. In such schools, ongoing training and support will be evident, along with clear vision statements that all interested parties understand and embrace.

When asked about leadership, education stakeholders focused on three major areas of concern:

- shared leadership
- support for educational redesign at all levels
- skills of an effective leader

Shared leadership means knowing when to make immediate decisions and when to use a more collaborative approach. To be effective, the process of shared leadership must provide opportunities for everyone in the system to have a voice in the vision and direction of the school. This includes providing opportunities for meaningful student participation, supporting educators as they assume increased leadership roles, and pursuing parent and community relationships that foster a sense of shared responsibility for the learning environments. In all these areas, creating an environment of trust allows others to step forward when there is an opportunity for shared leadership.

Supporting educational redesign involves providing assistance to teachers and other educators as they “step outside the box” of the familiar. This will require

different approaches to professional development. In the educational process, calculated risk-taking is necessary. Therefore, good leaders are entrepreneurs who envision, create, and support environments that allow for risk and support the challenges that go along with it.

To be an effective leader, one needs certain skills. Administrators must know about best practices in effective schools and must serve as role models to everyone in their schools. The administrator must have a clear vision for the school and be able to articulate that vision to all stakeholders. He or she must be committed to staying in the school long enough to realize the vision. In addition, the learning community must support their effective leaders and encourage them through the challenges inherent to the leadership role.

“Leaders create environments that allow others to emerge as leaders.”

Effective leaders share leadership in all appropriate ways, welcoming input and feedback. They view the educational environment as a community, rather than a hierarchy. They set the tone for change and see it through.

Teachers As Learning Facilitators

The traditional definition of a teacher is a person who teaches. To some, this definition implies first hand, direct delivery of the learning experience. However, New Hampshire high school redesign envisions teachers moving from this traditional delivery approach toward coaching, mentoring and facilitating student learning.

This approach can enliven the learning community as it empowers teachers to become more active designers of curriculum and facilitators of learning. The teaching role becomes less one of implementing externally-made curriculums and more that of an active decision-maker in the curriculum planning process. The teacher serves not only as an instructor but also as a facilitator, mediator, model, coach and guide for student learning, and is at times a co-learner and co-investigator with students. The teacher’s knowledge acts as a catalyst that facilitates students’ learning and growth. Teachers and students participate in learning investigations with practicing professionals in the field. Teachers are sources of information *and* instructors in techniques of inquiry and thought. They become organizers of learning opportunities, guiding each student to the most effective learning environment.

As facilitators, teachers challenge, question and stimulate students in their thinking, problem solving and self-directed study. They provide rich learning

environments, experiences, and activities. They create opportunities for students to work collaboratively and to solve problems through authentic tasks. They share knowledge and responsibility. In addition, teachers challenge students to make sure they understand the larger learning expectations and course competencies so that high standards are reached. As a result of teachers' modeling, students begin to challenge themselves and each other as they work, think, and learn.

In this process, students assume responsibility for their learning and move from teacher-centered to student-centered education. The student becomes more active and less passive in the learning process. Each student becomes an engaged and successful learner, demonstrating a high level of interest in their work, ownership of it, and an excitement for learning.

As learning facilitators, teachers challenge students to accept responsibility for the direction of their learning, to contribute effectively to their own mastery and understanding, to reflect on learning actively and continuously, and to communicate what they've learned through discussions, projects and presentations. Learning then becomes relevant to real-life, regardless of whether it occurs in the classroom, the school setting or the local community. How such learning occurs is less important than that it does occur, either through direct delivery in a classroom, as a result of a skilled educator's efforts in facilitating, guiding and overseeing a student's learning opportunities outside of the traditional classroom environment, or through a combination of both.

According to the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory in *New Times Demand New Ways of Learning*⁴, facilitators of learning:

- engage in negotiation, stimulate and monitor discussion and project work, but do not control
- help students to construct their own meaning by modeling, mediating, explaining when needed, redirecting focus, and providing options
- consider themselves as learners, willing to take risks to explore areas outside their own expertise, and collaborating with other teachers and practicing professionals

As students become more self-directed through teacher facilitation, they:

- take opportunities to explore new ideas/tools; push the envelope in ideas and research
- develop ideas and skills that simulate the role of practicing professionals (i.e., engage in real research) through the coaching of a learning-mentor relationship

- teach [model for] others in formal and informal contexts
- develop products of real use to themselves and others

A strong professional development effort is needed to assist with this transition to new, broader roles. This transition will lead to more exciting and rewarding careers for teachers as they see their efforts resulting in marked increases in their students' love of learning.

Whole Community Involvement

New Hampshire defines parent and community partnerships as collaborations among educators, parents/guardians, and the greater community, all actively engaged in defining, implementing and sustaining relationships to ensure a personalized experience for each learner.

Each partner has its role. The community must play a substantive role in providing a wide range of opportunities so that learning can be designed for each student. The role of parents and guardians involves spreading awareness to their children and the community, and monitoring the progress as schools

“Partnerships are symbiotic relationships; not only should a community support its schools, but the schools should also give back to the community.”

move beyond the traditional model to a long-range, sustainable new model.

This change will require a thoughtful strategy to be developed in every community. According to New Hampshire's *Minimum Standards for School Approval*, every school district should “strive to harness all of the worthwhile resources in the community, including businesses, organizations, talented individuals and natural resources.” For this to happen, all involved groups must be aware of the various roles and responsibilities in the education process, and each group must actively carry out its role. This will change the way education is delivered, as the option of engaging in quality learning experiences in the community will become an equally important part of the educational process.

Examples of these rich partnerships already exist in school districts around the state. Career and Technical Education programs have also been creating such partnerships for many years and are important role models for community involvement. The New

⁴ (1995, web document, <http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/edtalk/toc.htm>)

Hampshire Department of Education plays a key role in highlighting successful examples of these partnerships and assisting districts to succeed in local efforts.

Professional Learning Communities

Each school needs to become a professional learning community, in which each person who has a



relationship to the educational process understands and supports the importance of continuous learning for all of its members. In its most simple form, this means that students are seen as having valuable insights that can enrich a learning conversation; teachers are supported in expanding their fields of knowledge; administrators grow from the input of their staff, student and community members; and the community at large understands its critical role in the professional learning community.

Members of professional learning communities have a passion for learning and care intensely about the students. Establishing relationships that promote healthy learning requires understanding that students come to school struggling with issues of family, friends, hopes and dreams. This is true for adults in the professional learning community as well. There must be a spirit of community and collegiality and opportunities for all instructors to share interests and expertise with each other.

A professional learning community requires visionary and committed leadership. Such leadership can enable a culture of trust and respect between all members of the professional learning community. This leads to an environment that is open to experimentation and new ideas, where members have a willingness to change and to see change as exciting and invigorating. Effective leaders also support consistent and meaningful student participation in forming and evaluating critical aspects of the learning environment. Leadership should come from all strata of the professional learning community.

It will take time to develop and share the vision that the community and the school members create, and to establish common understanding and mutual support for the well-being of all involved. In a professional learning community, it is vital to model continuous learning for all and to provide an environment that enables people to have healthy balance in their lives. The physical environment within and outside the school building must be conducive to engaged and inspired learning, and structured in a way to facilitate it.

Another consideration is the role of higher education in creating a professional learning community. More and more occupations are requiring entry-level workers to have skills that are beyond what many currently graduating high school students possess. Schools must ask themselves whether their delivery system is providing the right exposure to skills and knowledge necessary for learners to enroll in college and succeed. Professional learning communities can partner with institutions of higher education by creating systems where learners can take college classes while still in high school. This linkage is particularly important for students who never saw themselves as “college material” and could play a critical role in expanding their self-image and opening future possibilities that would impact their lives forever.

The professional learning community includes all stakeholders in a continuous process of learning and engagement. When people work together, pre-K through post-secondary education and beyond to lifelong learning, the benefits to the state and its children are enormous.

Roles in High School Redesign

As mentioned earlier, each member of a professional learning community has a role to play.

The role of students is to:

- understand the vision for high school redesign and its impact on possibilities for learning
- be active participants in their own learning and seek out opportunities to learn
- explore their own interests and learning styles and advocate for the development of their personalized learning strategies

The role of parents and guardians is to:

- understand the vision for high school redesign and its impact on possibilities for learning
- participate in the high school redesign process and the related opportunities available to their children
- be active participants and advocates on their children’s support team
- ensure that schools understand and are implementing personalized learning for their children

The role of teachers is to:

- understand the vision for high school redesign and its impact on possibilities for learning
- understand the needs, interests, and learning styles of each student
- inspire students to achieve at higher levels than they envisioned for themselves
- expand their own learning to increase their ability to support the needs, interests and learning styles of each student
- support other educators as active participants in a learning community

The role of school administrators is to:

- advise the school board on developing policies to ensure a shared vision for high school redesign and a common understanding of expectations
- develop and implement procedures that engage all stakeholders and ensure that they understand and accept their roles in carrying out the vision
- implement procedures to achieve the vision by harnessing opportunities inside and outside of the school

- model visionary and committed leadership for the community of learners as they implement change and build support for personalized learning

The role of school boards is to:

- develop policies that enable the vision of high school redesign to be realized, while ensuring high standards and student safety



The role of community members is to:

- understand and accept the greatly heightened role they will play in the learning community and that this community includes businesses, organizations and talented individuals
- ensure that acquiring an education is no longer limited to one building but is a lifelong process of learning and preparing for a successful and meaningful life

FOLLOW THE CHILD

The Follow The Child initiative calls for personalized learning and assessment so that the whole child can flourish in four domains: personally, socially, physically and academically.

We are all familiar with the traditional classroom delivery of education, as well as aspects of the traditional model that worked and didn't work. Educators have been working tirelessly, especially over the last decade, to move away from the one-size-fits-all model to practices that ensure no child is left behind. In November 2005, the New Hampshire State Board of Education crafted a Statement of Purpose that highlighted its commitment to the Follow The Child initiative:

[Our] focus is to help local districts develop a more personalized approach to education so that our kids learn more, so that all of our students graduate from high school and those graduates are better prepared for their next steps in life. This personalization has many names—high school reform, real-world learning, extended learning, and others. We prefer to use the term Follow The Child, by which we mean that each student deserves personalized learning strategies and evaluation so that his or her unique talents can flourish. The Board has set the general framework for this Follow The Child initiative in its recently passed *Minimum Standards for School Approval*. Our task now is to help local districts take advantage of this more flexible framework and to respond to the challenges of these new standards.⁵

In the Follow The Child initiative, the student's educational plan is personalized through an analysis of who the student is as a person. Parents, educators, and students work together to determine each student's learning pathway. This includes the student's hopes and

dreams, interests, passions, strengths and weaknesses, learning styles, personal, social, physical, and academic needs. The goal is to ensure that the student will be an engaged and successful learner.



The strategies for learning will be short-term and long-term in nature and will be customized for each student. The delivery plan based on these learning strategies will draw from unlimited resources both inside and outside of the school. The opportunities combine classroom and community learning, coached or mentored learning, and independent learning. The student's learning path, including both the successes and the challenges, is monitored and documented, and the delivery plan is adjusted as needed. Learning takes place in an atmosphere of caring relationships, and parents and educators are there to support, guide, and champion the student throughout all phases of the learning experience, and during the transition to the next educational phase after high school.

⁵ Statement of Purpose unanimously adopted by the New Hampshire State Board of Education, November 9, 2005

REDESIGN AND STATE STANDARDS

BETWEEN 2004 AND 2005, THE STATE BOARD OF Education and the New Hampshire Department of Education convened a task force to revise the state's *Minimum Standards for School Approval* through a process that was highly collaborative and inclusive. Task force membership included the New Hampshire School Boards Association, the New Hampshire School Administrators Association, the New Hampshire Association of School Principals, the New Hampshire chapters of the National Education Association (NH-NEA) and the American Federation



of Teachers (AFT), state education board members, local school board members, teachers (including special education personnel), and members of the New Hampshire Department of Education.

The task force considered the most current and relevant research and information, including: expectations of New Hampshire and national business communities; data on national, state and local dropout rates and graduation rates; and higher education institutions' expectations of their incoming students. The process was driven by a commitment to providing schools with flexibility and opportunity. Two concepts from the work of this task force stood out and remained a focus throughout: "each student as an engaged and successful learner," and "students demonstrate joy in learning."

In 2005, New Hampshire adopted the revised *Minimum Standards For School Approval*. Many of the changes support innovative and promising practices for high school redesign. Among the key high school issues addressed in the revised standards are:

- personalization of learning

- harnessing of local resources
- greater flexibility in developing a school calendar
- extended learning opportunities for credit towards graduation
- distance learning and the use of technology in learning
- moving from a Carnegie unit-based grading system to credit based on demonstration of mastery

To support local schools and districts in their redesign efforts, we have included descriptions and explanations of these standards and how they support the vision for New Hampshire's high schools.

Personalization of learning

Many of the changes in the rules are intended to instill excitement for learning in every student. The goal is for each student to be an engaged and successful learner. The State Board of Education believes that personalized learning strategies should be put in place to address the personal learning styles, strengths, interests, and needs of each student. Districts interested in pursuing personalized learning strategies should develop local board policies, as well as policy and guidance at the school level, to implement this important change. A good place to start is the development of a student advisory process in which personalized attention to student goals is addressed as part of an overall Follow The Child plan at the school or district level.

The specific standard states:

(j) The policy relative to meeting the instructional needs of each student shall require administrators and teachers to consider students' differing talents, interests, and development when planning the educational programs specified in Ed 306.

(k) The policy relative to partnerships among schools, families, and communities shall comply with the following standards...:

(3) Schools shall frequently communicate school performance, student progress, personalized learning strategies as adopted by the local school board, and academic opportunities, using both print and online formats...⁶

(Note: all excerpts from the New Hampshire *Minimum Standards for School Approval*, adopted July 1, 2005, are a partial representation of the actual school approval standards and may refer to portions of the standards not quoted here. For more information, please see the full document at www.ed.state.nh.us.)

⁶ Ed 306.04 Policy Development (J), (K) (3)

Harnessing of local resources

This section of the new rules opens exciting possibilities that districts might make available for students. Examining the available resources in the region will reveal opportunities for partnerships. Models of harnessing local resources already exist in many schools that have Career and Technical Education (CTE) centers. The centers have been engaged with the community for years, through cooperative education and student internship



programs. This connection between CTE centers and local resources has been a key component of student learning. CTE center directors are an excellent resource in expanding this concept to include the entire learning community.

The specific standard states:

(k) The policy relative to partnerships among schools, families, and communities shall comply with the following standards...

(6) Schools shall strive to harness all available community resources, including but not limited to organizations, businesses, talented individuals, natural resources, and technology, to engage each student in achieving the necessary skills and knowledge...⁷

Greater flexibility in developing a school calendar

In the revised *Minimum Standards for School Approval*, the school year is defined in terms of hours of instructional time rather than number of days per year. The transition from the traditional 180-day calendar to a flexible calendar based on hours provides schools with innovative ways to address students' learning and personal needs, as well as those of faculty. Combined with the harnessing of resources, it allows students to

fulfill credit requirements at various times and places and not necessarily inside the school walls. The concept of education happening at any time and any place can open doors to a greater learning community.

The specific standard states:

(a) Pursuant to RSA 189:1 and 189:24 Each school shall maintain a school year option as provided in either (b) or (c) below.

(b) Each school with a school year option based on hours shall be subject to the following requirements:

(1) The school shall maintain in each elementary school, a school year of at least 945 hours of instructional time;

(2) The school shall maintain in each middle and senior high school, a school year of at least 990 hours of instructional time;

(3) The school day of an individual student shall not exceed 8 hours of instructional time; and...

(c) Each school with a school year option based on days shall be subject to the following requirements:

(1) The school shall maintain a standard school year of at least 180 days of instructional time...⁸

Extended learning opportunities for credit towards graduation

This section of the new standards takes advantage of harnessing local resources and empowers students to take an active role in determining the path of their education. It allows them to propose alternative approaches to acquiring skills and knowledge other than in the traditional classroom setting.

The teacher's role in extended learning is to ensure that students meet standards of competency established by the state and district before they can earn credit toward graduation. As a model, New Hampshire's Career and Technical Centers and School to Career programs have already developed and implemented program-level competencies to ensure the relevance and rigor of the learner's experience. These competencies may be tailored to the expected learning goals in an academic area. Once again, directors of CTE centers can be an excellent resource in this regard.

If a district chooses to implement extended learning opportunities, it must establish local board policies describing the process of approval. This includes the expected involvement of the student and parents in the process, and other terms and conditions such as the

⁷ Ed 306.04 Policy Development (K) (6)

⁸ Ed 306.18 School Year

demonstration of competencies gained through the experience and the awarding of credit. The local policy may indicate the areas (academic or other) in which extended learning opportunities will apply for that school or district. It should also indicate that extended learning opportunities are available for all students.

The specific standard states:

- 4) If a district chooses to offer extended learning opportunities, the extended learning opportunities shall:
 - a. Consist of activities designed to:
 1. Provide credit or supplement regular academic courses; and
 2. Promote the schools and individual students' educational goals and objectives;
 - b. Be governed by a policy adopted by the local school board that:
 1. Provides for the administration and supervision of the program;
 2. Encourages that certified school personnel oversee an individual student's program;
 3. Requires that each extended learning proposal meet rigorous standards, and be approved by the school prior to its beginning;
 4. Specifies that credits can be granted for extended learning activities, including, but not limited to, independent study, private instruction, team sports, performing groups, internships, community service, and work study; and
 5. Requires that granting of credits shall be based on a student's demonstration of competencies, as approved by certified educators;
 - c. Incorporate student participation in selecting, organizing, and carrying out extended learning activities;
 - d. Provide opportunities for students to acquire knowledge and skill development comparable to knowledge and skill development in courses offered at the high school; and
 - e. Be available to all students...⁹

Distance learning and technology

The revised standards make it clear that technology can play a huge role in accessing new learning opportunities. Learning communities can utilize technologies that support long distance learning (including online courses), as well as technology that improves communication between students and teachers. In this regard, technology is not only used to deliver a program, but as a tool that supports the learning process.

The specific standard states:

- (a) In this section, "distance education" means correspondence, video-based, internet-based, and online courses.
- (b) If a district chooses to offer distance education, the provisions of (c) - (f) below shall apply.
- (c) The local school board shall be responsible for:
 - (1) The approval, coordination, and supervision of distance education courses offered for instructional purposes or high school credit, or both, in the district; and
 - (2) Granting student credit for completion of distance education courses.
- (d) School districts may cooperate to share delivery of distance education courses.
- (e) The local school board shall adopt policies relative to all distance education courses offered by the school district to require that:
 - (1) The courses comply with all federal and state statutes pertaining to student privacy and to public broadcasting of audio and video;
 - (2) Credit courses require students to meet similar academic standards as required by the school for students enrolled in credit courses offered by the school;
 - (3) Only students approved by the school principal or designee shall be eligible to receive credit for distance education courses; and
 - (4) Students earning credit for distance education courses shall participate in all assessments required by the statewide education improvement and assessment program.¹⁰

⁹ Ed 306.27 High School Curriculum, Credits, Graduation Requirements, and Co-curricular Program. (b) (4)

¹⁰ Ed 306.22 Distance Education

Moving from Carnegie units to demonstration of mastery

The *Minimum Standards for School Approval* also address the transition from a system based on the Carnegie unit to a system that uses the demonstration of mastery to identify student achievement. This transition must take place not later than the 2008-2009 school year. School districts will be asked by the Department of Education to certify and demonstrate that they have a process in place to assess competency for all courses at the high school level. The Department will look to known tools and processes, such as the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) High School Review process to assist local school districts in this effort. The Department does not anticipate that it will review actual course level competencies as part of the school approval process. However, it will require local districts to develop a plan and method of assessing course level competencies. This plan must be supported by policy and must include the implementation of the standards. Further, the district will be expected to review the plan and method regularly and evaluate them for effectiveness.

To emphasize the need for local flexibility and autonomy, the state has left local districts the responsibility for deciding on and developing policies relative to the state approval standards. It is the purview of the local school district to:

- identify or develop high school course competencies
- decide on appropriate competency assessment methods, and
- define sufficiency (identifying necessary and sufficient evidence for students to demonstrate mastery).

It is assumed that all high schools already have course outcomes in place through which teachers identify successful completion of their courses. This has been a common practice for many years. The revised standards provide an opportunity to review these course outcomes for consistency, quality, and rigor, and to develop competencies through which mastery of course learning can be measured. Local policies defining how competency assessment will be administered should allow for a variety of assessment methods appropriate to the situation and learning. While sufficiency of evidence and appropriate assessment methods are local responsibilities, school districts are encouraged to think of these as extending beyond a single test to multiple forms of assessment, for the following reasons:

- multiple forms of assessment are recognized by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges as research-based best practice

- multiple forms of assessment allow for the use of formative assessment, encouraging students to learn and reach beyond current understanding and performance
- multiple forms of assessment minimize the use of single tests as short cuts to “test out” of courses

Districts and high schools are encouraged to focus on defining and reaching a common understanding of the parameters and critical indicators of their competency



assessment process, rather than on writing competencies on a course by course basis. The Department will continue to identify templates and models for competencies, and start the process of collecting competencies to share with all districts and high schools in the state.

The change from Carnegie units to credit by demonstration of mastery of competencies will help schools focus on student learning at a high level, rather than awarding credits based on “seat time.” It will help districts think about the standards they want students to reach and how students will demonstrate what they have learned. Districts will be accountable for their students reaching acceptable levels of achievement.

The specific standard states:

(d) By the 2008-2009 school year, the local school board shall require that a high school credit can be earned by demonstrating mastery of required competencies for the course, as approved by certified school personnel. Until the 2008-2009 school year, the local school board shall require that a high school credit can be earned as provided in (1) or (2) below, or both:

- (1) Attendance at a course scheduled to meet for no less than 135 clock hours of instructional time if the school operates on an 8-period schedule or for no less than 150 clock hours of instructional time if the school operates on a 7-period schedule; or
- (2) If a competency assessment is in place as provided in (i) below, by demonstrating mastery of required competencies for the course, as approved by certified school personnel.¹¹

While the *Minimum Standards for School Approval* apply to P-12 education, certain aspects greatly impact high schools and provide flexibility in designing 21st century learning communities. Such flexibility will allow students to pursue their interests and passions inside and outside of the traditional educational environment, as well as through technology, while fulfilling the requirements of the school district. However, equity challenges remain, such as the needs of students who cannot afford to pay for private instruction, who do not have the transportation resources to take advantage of learning opportunities outside of school, who attend school in areas of the state with varied but limited resources, or who attend schools that cannot afford the latest technologies. These challenges cannot be ignored. While every student may not have the exact opportunities as every other student in the state, opportunities provided by flexibility must be available to every student.

EXAMPLE OF A COMPETENCY-BASED ASSESSMENT TRANSCRIPT

From 1997 to 2005, many New Hampshire schools came together with business and community people and college admissions professionals to design a model transcript that might be used for recording the nexus of classroom and extended competency-based learning. The following transcript example illustrates what one student's transcript might look like in such a system.

As extended learning opportunities increase in New Hampshire's high schools, a method of recording and

communicating the rich learning that takes place through this method will become increasingly necessary. Schools may use or adapt the following design to fit their local system, or may choose to design their own method. More information on competency-based assessment and competency-based transcripts is available from the Department of Education and from experienced high schools around the state.

(see next two pages)

¹¹ Ed 306.27 High School Curriculum, Credits, Graduation Requirements, and Co-curricular Program.

COMPETENCY-BASED TRANSCRIPT: SAMPLE

NEW HAMPSHIRE HIGH SCHOOL

Student Name: Jane Jones Birth Date: September 27, 1990
 SASID #: 00000000 Address: Street Address
 Parent(s)/Guardian(s): Donna Jones City, NH 00000
Ruth Jones and Robert Jones Phone: 603/555-0000
 Start Date: 9/1/04 Last Updated: 5/30/08 Graduation Date: 6/10/08 GPA: 3.26

This transcript uses the following course codes:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1) Classroom Course | 7) Private Instruction |
| 2) Credit by Examination | 8) Independent Study |
| 3) Distance Learning/Online Course | 9) Athletics |
| 4) Off-Campus Course | 10) Performing Groups |
| 5) Internship/Apprenticeship | 11) High School Equivalency Credit Earned before High School |
| 6) Paid Employment | 12) Other |

1. Attendance (For 180 School Days)

| | | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------|----------|------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| 9th Grade | Absent: 6 | Tardy: 3 | 11th Grade | Absent: 5 | Tardy: 4 |
| 10th Grade | Absent: 7 | Tardy: 2 | 12th Grade | Absent: 6 | Tardy: 2 |

2. Course Work and Competency Performance Summaries

| 9 th Grade | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------|----------------------|----|-----------------------------|--|---------|
| Course Work | Quarter Grades | | | | Final Grade | Credits |
| (1) Geometry | B+ | B | A- | B+ | B + | 2 |
| (1) Biology | B | C+ | B | B | B | 2 |
| (2) Geography | B | B- | B- | C+ | B - | 2 |
| (5) Visual Art | B+ | A- | A- | A- | A - | 2 |
| (1) Health | B | B- | | | B - | 1 |
| (1) Introduction to Literature | B- | B- | B | B- | B - | 2 |
| (1) Physical Fitness | | | B+ | B+ | B + | 1 |
| (3) Applications of Geometry | | | | | A - | 2 |
| (4,12) Elements of Cartoon Art | | | | | A | 2 |
| Competency Performance Summaries | | | | | | |
| Decision Making and Problem Solving Skills | Self-Management | Communication Skills | | Ability to Work with Others | Information Use (Technology, Research, Analysis) | |
| Not Yet Proficient | Not Yet Proficient | Not Yet Proficient | | Proficient (1) | Not Yet Proficient | |
| Mathematics | Science | Social Studies | | English, Language Arts | Arts | |
| Proficient (1) | Proficient (1) | Not Yet Proficient | | Not Yet proficient | Proficient (4,12) | |

| 10 th Grade | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------|----------------------|----|-----------------------------|--|---------|
| Course Work | Quarter Grades | | | | Final Grade | Credits |
| (1) Algebra | B- | B | B | B+ | B | 2 |
| (3) Astronomy: Journey to the Cosmic Frontier | C+ | B | B | B+ | B | 2 |
| (1) French I | C- | C | C+ | C | C | 2 |
| (8,11) Creative Writing (Focus on Sci-Fi) | A | A- | A | A | A | 2 |
| (1) Introduction to Economics | C+ | B+ | | | B | 1 |
| (8) Observing the Solar System | A- | A- | A | A | A - | 2 |
| (4,9) Physical Fitness | | | C+ | B- | B - | 1 |
| Competency Performance Summaries | | | | | | |
| Decision Making and Problem Solving Skills | Self-Management | Communication Skills | | Ability to Work with Others | Information Use (Technology, Research, Analysis) | |
| Proficient (8) | Not Yet Proficient | Not Yet Proficient | | Proficient (1) | Not Yet Proficient | |
| Mathematics | Science | Social Studies | | English, Language Arts | Arts | |
| Proficient (1) | Proficient (1,3,8) | Not Yet Proficient | | Proficient (8,11) | Proficient (4,12) | |

3 October 2002

The scoring rubrics used to assess the Competencies are available upon request

COMPETENCY-BASED TRANSCRIPT: SAMPLE

| 11 th Grade | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|--|-------------|---------|
| Course Work | Quarter Grades | | | | Final Grade | Credits |
| (1) Algebra II | B- | B+ | B+ | B | B | 2 |
| (1) Physics | B+ | B+ | B+ | B+ | B + | 2 |
| (4,8) French II | B | B- | B- | C+ | B - | 2 |
| (1) Humanities I (US History) | B+ | A- | B+ | B+- | B + | 2 |
| (3) The Origins and Expansion of the Universe | A | A | A- | A | A | 2 |
| (5) Christa McAuliffe Planetarium | B+ | A- | A | A | A - | 2 |
| (1) US Government and Civics | C+ | B- | B- | B | B - | 2 |
| (1) American Literature | B+ | A- | A- | A- | A - | 2 |
| Competency Performance Summaries | | | | | | |
| Decision Making and Problem Solving Skills | Self-Management | Communication Skills | Ability to Work with Others | Information Use (Technology, Research, Analysis) | | |
| Proficient (8) | Proficient (5) | Proficient (5) | Surpasses Proficiency (1,5) | Proficient (4) | | |
| Mathematics | Science | Social Studies | English, Language Arts | Arts | | |
| Proficient (1) | Proficient (1,3,8) | Proficient (1) | Proficient (1,8,11) | Surpasses Proficiency (4,12) | | |

| 12 th Grade | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|-------------|---------|
| Course Work | Quarter Grades | | | | Final Grade | Credits |
| (1) Career Skills and Technology | B+ | B+ | B | B+ | B + | 2 |
| (3) Dynamics of Black Holes | A | A+ | A- | A- | A | 2 |
| (1) French III | C | C+ | C+ | C+ | C + | 2 |
| (1) World Literature | B+ | B | A- | B+ | B + | 2 |
| (4) Advanced Telescope Observational Techniques | A | A | A- | A- | A - | 2 |
| (5) Stephen Hawking Institute | A | A- | A- | A | A - | 2 |
| (7,10) Private Piano Lessons (including recitals) | A | A- | A | A | A | 2 |
| Competency Performance Summaries | | | | | | |
| Decision Making and Problem Solving Skills | Self-Management | Communication Skills | Ability to Work with Others | Information Use (Technology, Research, Analysis) | | |
| Proficient (8) | Proficient (5) | Surpasses Proficiency (5) | Surpasses Proficiency (1,5) | Proficient (1,4) | | |
| Mathematics | Science | Social Studies | English, Language Arts | Arts | | |
| Proficient (1) | Proficient (1,3,8) | Proficient (1) | Proficient (1,8,11) | Surpasses Proficiency (4,7,10,12) | | |

3. Additional Information

| | | | | |
|---------------------|--|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Class Rank | 35 th (of 95) | SAT Scores | Verbal: 640 | Quantitative: 500 |
| Certificates | Certified Planetarium Instructor, Christa McAuliffe Planetarium – awarded January 24, 2002 | | | |

4. Comments *Schools may record comments from teachers, counselors, worksite supervisors, and/or others.*

Descriptors of Performance Competencies:

- **Decision Making and Problem Solving:** The student will make developmentally appropriate decisions and using problem-solving strategies to investigate and understand in a variety of contexts.
- **Self-Management:** The student will demonstrate individual qualities such as responsibility, self-management, integrity, respect for self and others, flexibility, confidence, and a willingness to explore.
- **Communication Skills:** The student will use a variety of methods, appropriate to the purpose and audience, to communicate effectively.
- **Ability to Work with Others:** The student will work effectively with others, including people from diverse backgrounds, and contributing to group efforts by sharing ideas, suggestions, and workloads.
- **Information (Use of Technology, Research, and Analysis):** The student will use information-gathering techniques in collecting, analyzing, organizing, and presenting information
- **English Language Arts:** The student will read fluently, write effectively, speak clearly, listen and view critically, analyze literature, and gather, organize, and communicate information in order to succeed in a variety of settings.
- **Mathematics:** The student will attain and use the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to function effectively in a world which is fully integrated in mathematics.
- **Science:** The student will develop the science knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will enable her/him to maintain and improve the quality of life for the future.
- **Social Studies:** The student will develop knowledge, skills, and motivation to become a responsible citizen.
- **Arts:** The student will create original works of art, perform new or existing works of art, and respond to the artwork and performances of self and others.

APPENDICIES

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Appendix A HIGH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP PRELIMINARY REPORT | 26 |
| Appendix B DATA GLEANED FROM NH EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS | 37 |
| Appendix C BRII/NEASC/NHDOE MATRIX | 40 |

High School Leadership

Preliminary Report

March 2005

I. Introduction

Educators, education policy makers, and key stakeholders in New Hampshire are calling for improvements in the overall performance and completion rates of their high school students. This report introduces the New Hampshire Vision for High Schools and represents a compilation of a number of stakeholder workshops, forums, and focus groups that were convened throughout 2004 and early 2005. Over five hundred representatives of nearly every high school in the state and a wide array of stakeholder groups came together in these face-to-face events to offer their perspectives, hopes, and fears about high school in New Hampshire. The purpose of this report is to inform ongoing efforts to improve high schools in New Hampshire.

Why Be Concerned About High School in New Hampshire?

New Hampshire has a great deal that is going right related to its high schools. Graduation rates have increased steadily throughout the 20th century.ⁱ New Hampshire's business and community members have long supported its high schools as they endeavor to ensure quality educational outcomes for their students. New Hampshire's citizens enjoy a relatively positive economic context—the lowest poverty rate in the nation, the fourth lowest unemployment rate, and the 7th highest per capita income.ⁱⁱ New Hampshire added over 65,000 new jobs between 1990 and 1996.ⁱⁱⁱ

That said, New Hampshire's stakeholders also recognize that the skills and knowledge needed to succeed are rapidly changing. Though graduation rates have increased throughout the 20th century, the high schools designed for the 20th century are not preparing students for success in the 21st. Over half of the jobs that New Hampshire added between 1990 and 1996 were for college-educated workers—and at least half of the projected new jobs in New Hampshire will also be for college graduates.^{iv} Despite this reality, New Hampshire's high school graduates are not as prepared for admission to college as they should be. Remediation rates among freshman entering college are significantly high. In addition, New Hampshire is 19th in the nation in the rate of postsecondary enrollments among high school graduates, thus relying on an in-migration of skilled workers to fill the most lucrative jobs.^{v,vi}

High school graduates not planning to go to college immediately

need more from their high school experience. As the American Diploma project states, "Successful preparation for both postsecondary education and employment requires learning the same rigorous English and mathematics content and skills. No longer do students planning to go to work after high school need a different and less rigorous curriculum than those planning to go to college."^{vii} No matter what the level of education that students complete, those with more education earn more than those with less. Yet, New Hampshire is 20th in the nation in its rate of high school completion.^{viii} Even more telling, fifty-two percent of high school students feel only "somewhat prepared" to enter the workforce and twenty-two percent feel "unprepared," while forty-five percent of employers feel students are only somewhat prepared and forty-five percent believe students are unprepared for work.^{ix}

Awareness of these statistics coupled with an ongoing commitment to continuous improvement has spurred the New Hampshire impetus for creating a vision and a blueprint for high school improvement.

What Is Being Done?

The New Hampshire Department of Education convened a High School Leadership Team in 2004. With a small planning grant and technical assistance from the U.S. Department of Education, the leadership team developed a series of activities leading to the creation of a high school vision and blue print that can help to frame local high school improvement efforts. First among these activities was the engagement of education stakeholders.

The Leadership Team is comprised of a representative cross-section of New Hampshire stakeholders and advocates. Membership on the Leadership Team continues to expand as the effort gains momentum.

The data and commentary compiled in this report will be used by the High School Leadership Team as they craft a vision statement for high schools in New Hampshire. The results of this report will also be shared with additional stakeholders at the March 2005 conference on Breaking Ranks II, which is being organized by the New Hampshire School Principals Association and the New Hampshire Department of Education.

Out of these many gatherings of concerned New Hampshire stakeholders, a vision for New Hampshire's high schools is beginning

to take shape. Future forums and reports will continue the process of clarification and engagement so that the resulting vision statement and initiatives can best support local efforts to improve high schools.

II. New Hampshire Education Reform Conference: High School Reform Workshop

On May 17, 2004, the New Hampshire State Board of Education and the Department of Education convened an Education Reform Conference to gain input from stakeholders on a variety of key education issues. The intent of the Conference was to collect and analyze data from stakeholders and use that data in prioritizing the issues that state leaders would focus on to increase the achievement of each student in New Hampshire.

During the conference, participants had the opportunity to choose among seven concurrent workshops, one of which was on high school reform. More than one-quarter of the participants chose to attend the workshop on high school reform, indicating the importance of the topic to the community. The fifty-five participants in the High School Reform Workshop included educators, administrators, policy-makers, higher education personnel, and business people from all over New Hampshire.

In the workshop, participants responded to four sets of questions about high school reform for New Hampshire schools:

- Why does high school reform need to occur? What are the issues?
- What idea or approach could change student learning at the high school level?
- How would these ideas or approaches change the high school?
- If your ideas were implemented, how would it impact cost of education in New Hampshire?

Cross-cutting issues were identified after the conference, as members of the planning committee reviewed a transcript of the sessions and responded to the following two questions:

- What were the priority topics within each of the sessions?
- What was the general sense you got about the topic from reading all of the comments from a session?

Findings

Overall, participants painted a picture of disenfranchised high school students, largely because there is a disconnect in many high schools between learning styles and teaching methods. Workshop participants called for the promotion of student educational plans where teachers become facilitators, managers, and assessors of student learning in an environment where each student drives his or her own learning.

Participants recognized the high short-term costs of high school reform but countered that the long-term costs decline—specifically in remediation, dropout recovery, and juvenile justice—which would outweigh short-term costs.

Comments from participants are summarized below. The bolded and starred items were deemed most urgent or important by the members of the planning committee.

Why does HS Reform need to occur? What are the issues?

1. *Students are disenfranchised both psychologically and academically. a world of possibilities
2. *There is a lack of real-world connections for students.
3. *There is a disconnect between learning styles and teaching styles.
4. Kids don't truly understand where learning will take them in life.
5. It is difficult to bring about change in school and in society.
6. The complexity of life is growing everyday - ie: technology.
7. The decision process for careers and higher education takes place at the wrong time in life - age 16 is too early.
8. Schools need to reach into the community to expand the support network
9. Schools need to engage students by developing exciting and relevant curriculum.
10. Education is repetitious and not relevant to students.
11. Facilities, resources, and buildings are deteriorating (time, parental involvement, etc.)

What idea or approach could change student learning at the high school level?

1. *Student Individual Educational Plans.
2. The Academy model, including work-based-learning, advanced credit classes, and community involvement.
3. Extra-curricular activities for credit.
4. Credit for experiential learning.
5. Student-driven learning with evaluation on performance.
6. Caring connections with adults.
7. Developing more problem-solving and critical skills learning & assessing by multiple means.
8. Increasing choices, including learning environments and matching teachers' styles to students' styles.
9. Funding - investment in education is important.
10. A student-centered environment/personalization.
11. A richer, deeper educational experience - depth in curriculum content areas.

How would these ideas or approaches change the high school?

1. *Teachers would be more like facilitators, managers, and assessors of student learning, and students would drive their own learning.
2. There would be more and shared community involvement.
3. There would be a dynamic learning community invested in the results.
4. There would be fewer dropouts.
5. School would run 24/7, year-round, with a larger menu of opportunities.
6. There would be flexibility in teaching and learning structures.
7. There would be an enthusiastic infusion of resources from the community in time, money, and energy.
8. Time would be used differently.
9. The environment of school and community would include a reduction of negativity and stress.
10. There would be student-designed education (time, structure, products).
11. There would be an energized professional development program for renewal of teaching strategies.

If your ideas were implemented, how would it impact cost of education in New Hampshire?

1. Cost would go up in the short term, but down in the long term as costs of remediation, drop out recovery, discipline, and juvenile justice went down.
2. There would be a redistribution of money towards value-based learning, including tax credits.

- 3 There would be costs up front for professional development and teacher preparation programs.
- 4 In the long term, it would be a prevention model and would result in savings.
- 5 Money would be perceived as an investment in the future.
- 6 There would need to be a culture shift toward valuing education with money.
- 7 Costs could be addressed by reducing social responsibility of schools and eliminating bureaucracy.
- 8 To reduce classroom loads, would need to hire more teachers.

III. New Hampshire Stakeholder Feedback Groups

The New Hampshire Department of Education and the New Hampshire High School Leadership Team convened a series of sessions throughout 2004 to solicit additional input from New Hampshire's stakeholders. On April 13, 14, and 15, 2004, the Department held three forums for a total of nearly 200 high school students and staff. In the late summer and fall of 2004, the Leadership Team organized an additional series of focus groups to solicit the experience and ideas of another 100 stakeholders around high school reform.

Student/Teacher/Counselor Forums

In mid-spring 2004, 143 students, mostly seniors, from 48 of 76 New Hampshire high schools participated in forums in the North Country, the Seacoast, and the South Central areas of the state. One staff person from each high school also participated in the forums, for a total of forty-eight principals, assistant principals, teachers, and guidance counselors. While the volunteer students and staff who were engaged in the forums represent a large percentage of New Hampshire's high schools, this sample was not selected in a manner designed to ensure valid statistical inferences. Rather, the purpose of these forums was to gather descriptive information about teaching and learning methods that work best for New Hampshire from the perspective of students and the adults in their schools.

The Education Alliance at Brown University designed and facilitated the forums. The formulation of the questions posed at the forums was informed by the Breaking Ranks II document researched and published by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the Education Alliance.¹ Data were elicited in directed discussions and via a survey instrument. Results from the survey instrument were tabulated, though not analyzed for statistical significance. It is important to note, therefore, that the statistics presented below are offered as descriptive indicators of the relative importance students and staff placed on the features of high schools that were discussed.

Findings

Among the numerous activities in each forum, students and staff were asked to indicate how important they believed five of the dimensions of effective high schools identified in the Breaking Ranks II document were to them and how common those practices were in their schools.

After rating the importance and actual practice of these features, participants discussed the findings and explained their ratings.

Students, Parents, and Faculty Work Together to Make Good Decisions for the School

86% of students indicated students, parents, and faculty working together was very important, yet only 29% felt it was common practice in their schools. Similarly, 84% of staff felt this should be a very important feature of their schools, yet only 16% felt it was commonly practiced. When the participants discussed the survey questions in a large-group setting, they suggested that while students, parents, and faculty may have decision-making opportunities within their schools, it is rare for the three groups to work together. One participant indicated that students who want to make change sometimes get in trouble for it.

High School Staff Challenge Students as Much as They Can

81% of the students believed it to be very important for high school staff to challenge students as much as they can. However, only 34% felt high school staff actually do challenge students to high levels. Likewise, 90% of staff believed it to be very important that staff challenge students, while 52% believed high school staff actually challenge students as much as they can. In their discussion, students and teachers acknowledged that they have a mutual responsibility to create challenging learning situations, but that the course offerings and instructional strategies within the school make a difference. Forum She taught so differently - participants recognized that not only do schools need more advanced courses, but within every classroom teachers need to understand students' learning styles and unique motivations to effectively challenge students.

Teachers Show a Sense of Caring About Their Students

87% of students and 90% of staff felt it was very important for teachers to show a sense of caring about their students so that students feel their teachers are part of the learning process. Though obviously important, just under one-half (48%) of the students sense that teachers actually care and just under two-thirds (63%) of staff felt teachers show a sense of caring about their students. In their discussions, participants offered some concrete means by which caring relationships can be fostered, such as advisory programs, teacher involvement in school activities and clubs, and smaller classes.

Teachers Teach Differently to Students Who Learn Differently

93% of students and staff believed strongly that teachers should teach differently to students who learn differently, while only 41% of students and 31% of staff believed differentiated instruction was evident in their schools. In their discussion, participants expressed an interest in having options and school schedules that accommodate different learning styles.

Subjects Taught in School are Like the Real World

88% of students and 83% of staff indicated it was very important that subjects taught in school are like the real world so there is a link

¹ National Association of Secondary School Principals and the Education Alliance at Brown University, *Breaking Ranks II: Strategies for Leading High School Reform*, (Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals), www.nassp.org.

between education and the future. As with other categories, student and staff perceptions of actual practice do not match well with their hopes and expectations. Only 27% of students and 22% of staff believed that the predominance of subjects taught in school are like the real world. While some participants wondered how realistic this goal might be, numerous participants offered examples of how these connections are currently made in some high schools for some students. One participant indicated that vocational options such as Career and Technical Education (CTE) Center Programs promote real-world education. Other examples offered for making the link between high school education and the future were college credit and internships in high school and smaller schools.

Ideas for Improvement

In addition to the survey, students and faculty had opportunities to design an ideal high school and to discuss what schools and teachers can do to make the learning environment better in both the classroom and in the school in general. Participants were very creative in designing their ideal high schools, suggesting such innovations as:

- more explicit combinations of academics with athletics, community service, the arts, internships and field trips, practical projects (such as building a house for someone in need), and the natural outdoor environment;
- integrating all subject matter concepts across all courses;
- utilizing guest speakers, mentors, and regular student debates;
- creatively changing the schedule for the school day and school year; and
- smaller classes in larger facilities.

In terms of what teachers can do to improve the learning environment, participants suggested that teachers make themselves available both during and outside of class to review material or get extra help. They also suggested that teachers set up activities that are geared to finding out which ways a student learns best. Other suggested instructional improvements included teachers thinking up fun ways to encourage students to participate, to draw examples from current events, and to emphasize subject learning rather than assessment.

Focus Groups

From August to October 2004, the New Hampshire Department of Education and the High School Leadership Team conducted nine focus groups across the state. The more than 100 participants in the focus groups included representatives of seven stakeholder groups: superintendents; principals; Career and Technical Education (CTE) Center Program directors; special education directors; parents and employers of high school students and business partners; community-based organizations; and higher education personnel. These groups represented a wide range of demographics and a variety of regions of New Hampshire.

Focus group participants were presented with open-ended questions asking them to identify aspects of high school education that were successful and those that were unsuccessful. Participants were then asked to suggest new approaches and immediate next steps. The open-ended nature of the questions was chosen to provide maximum flexibility for participants to identify for themselves key issues of interest

or concern, without being led to any particular conclusions by the way the questions were framed. The resulting comments by focus group participants are reflective of the myriad concerns evident in high school reform nationwide. Where there is overlap among focus groups, state leaders may find the unique foci for New Hampshire's high school reform initiative. Therefore, while there were many well-formed observations and concerns discussed in each focus group, this section of the report documents only those that were common across multiple groups, suggesting that the issues are potentially of concern statewide.

The raw data from the focus group sessions will be available in future reports.

Questions asked:

- What is currently working for high school students that will lead to high achievement?
- What is not working and what are the obstacles to change?
- What new approaches are needed?
- What next steps should be taken?
- What do you see as the role of your group in bringing about the changes needed?

Summary Findings

Focus group participants provided a great many comments that help to describe the expectations New Hampshire stakeholders have of their high school students and schools. Common across multiple focus groups was an interest in learning opportunities that encourage students to think beyond the school walls and that harness the motivating and educational power of learning experiences outside of the traditional classroom. Numerous focus groups acknowledged the important role of teaching practices and curricula based on the latest research about learning and the future needs of students, their employers, and their communities. This suggests that, while the traditional high school in New Hampshire remains organized around subject matter course expectations, schedules that maintain subject matter boundaries, and traditional teaching methods, state leaders might help schools to rethink their expectations, requirements, courses, schedules, and instructional strategies to better reflect the interests of the broader community.

Findings Related to Individual Questions

What is currently working for high school students that will lead to high achievement?

Collectively, participants see value in academic programs that correlate directly to work experience. The common thread throughout responses to the question is hands-on instruction coupled with work-based experience. As was evident among the students and school staff, there was a strong interest across the stakeholder groups in merging students' in-school experience with out-of-the-classroom and work-based learning opportunities.

Participants most commonly identified the following issues as effective in their current implementation:

- Dual Enrollment Programs (6 of 7 stakeholder groups indicated dual enrollment programs as effective. Project Lead the Way was cited as an example.)
- Internships, work-based learning, community service, Career and

Appendix A

Technical Education Center Programs (CTE), apprenticeships, and career academies (5 of 7 groups)

- After-school co-curricular activities (3 of 7 groups)
- Performance- and Project-based learning and assessment (3 of 7 groups)

What is not working and what are the obstacles to change?

Areas identified as requiring improvement included teaching methods and teacher/student ratios. In particular, participants cited a gap between the math, science, and social studies curricula and the knowledge required in today's working world as an area of great concern. Participants also commented on the prevalence of "old style" teaching methods and the disconnect between the latest research on effective learning methods and actual practices in the schools. Also included were practical obstacles that limit opportunities for students to engage in Career and Technical Education Center Programs. As with their responses to the question "What is working...", participants' visions suggested teaching methods and schools need to fit real-world needs.

Coupled with comments about the need for new instructional methods and curricula were administrative issues such as high student/teacher ratios, a lack of cohesion in education decision making, and inadequate funding.

The following issues were often noted as ineffective in their current implementation:

- "Old style" teaching methods (4 of 7 stakeholder groups indicated "old style" teaching methods as ineffective.)
- Size of schools (4 of 7 groups)
- Obstacles to CTE programs (transportation, openings, scheduling, lack of good 9th and 10th grade CTE programs) (4 of 7 groups)
- Teacher-focused teaching instead of student-focused learning (3 of 7 groups)
- Daily schedule and early start not optimal for learning (3 of 7 groups)
- Teacher-student ratios too high (3 of 7 groups)
- Breadth of curriculum over depth (3 of 7 groups)
- Curriculum in math, science, and social studies does not keep pace with the world (3 of 7 groups)
- Students graduate high school without basic math, reading, writing skills (3 of 7 groups)
- Political environment in educational decision making (3 of 7 groups)
- Variable public school funding; money issues (3 of 7 groups)
- Standards for special ed teachers makes finding highly qualified teachers hard; too few: (3 of 7 groups)

What new approaches are needed?

In response to this question, the most commonly suggested new approach was the restructuring of teacher training based on research to accommodate multiple learning styles. A key implication for many participants was that to meet the needs of students with differing learning styles and motivations, teachers should be equipped to introduce real-world skills into the curriculum. Other participants expressed in various ways a desire for a real-world curriculum that stresses relevance while also teaching writing and analytical skills. Some focus group participants described a need for a "fundamental restructuring" of schools and teacher training, though they did not offer specifics about what that restructuring would entail. Finally, participants called for collaborative efforts across all grades.

Participants across focus groups suggested the following new approaches:

- Restructure teacher training (especially in learning styles) (5 of 7 stakeholder groups indicated a restructuring of teacher training as a new approach to explore.)
- Incorporate learning styles (interdisciplinary, experiential, competency-based, real-world) (4 of 7 groups)
- Interdisciplinary, experiential, competency-based and real-world learning (4 of 7 groups)
- Resolve adequacy and equitable funding issues (3 of 7 groups)
- Collaborative, multi-system thinking in P-16 (3 of 7 groups)

What next steps should be taken?

The development of differentiated teaching and individualized education plans, including career guidance, were noted by participants as important next steps. Groups also suggested opening lines of communication with postsecondary educators in order to develop "closer and seamless connections." Participants commonly suggested that immediate action should be taken to resolve funding issues. Comments indicated a need to address these issues at the both state and local levels.

Participants suggested the following specific next steps:

- Adequately fund education (5 of 7 stakeholder groups indicated steps should be taken to adequately fund education.)
- Dialogue w/postsecondary (4 of 7 groups)
- Differentiated teaching for all immediately (3 of 7 groups)
- Define and adopt a state vision for high school reform as Vermont and Maine have done (3 of 7 groups)

What do you see as the role of your group in bringing about the changes needed?

Across the board, groups called for persistence in championing reform and saw their roles as advocates on the state and local levels. There were a great many individual comments related to the integration of schools and communities. Participants called for alliances between schools and communities and between high school teachers and higher-education professionals, as well as a need for teaching businesses how they can benefit from partnering with schools.

Participants most commonly see themselves in the following roles:

- Be more than a voice at the table-policy making, and implementation (3 of 7 groups indicated this is a role they can play)
- We have to keep advocating for change-political, state-level, and local (3 of 7 groups)
- Need to reduce the internal and external high school walls and integrate and allow integration with parents, businesses, and higher education (3 of 7 groups)

IV. New Hampshire High School Leadership Summit

As the first step in 2005 to support the formulation of a vision statement on high school improvement for the state of New Hampshire, the state's High School Leadership Team reviewed the input from the various stakeholder forums in 2004 and determined that while the interests of New Hampshire stakeholders were substantially in line with national trends in high school reform, there were, indeed, issues that were of particular concern to New Hampshire. The Leadership Team decided to convene a statewide

summit on a larger scale to test out potential approaches to the crafting of a vision statement on high school reform.

On January 25, 2005, the High School Leadership Team convened a group of more than 150 additional stakeholders in Concord, New Hampshire. Participating in the Summit were superintendents, principals, teachers, school counselors and directors, high school students, school curriculum coordinators, athletic directors, higher education personnel, at-risk youth specialists, state policy makers including legislators, State Board of Education members, local district school board members, Career and Technical Education (CTE) directors, special education, library media specialists, Tech Prep personnel, Education Union personnel, state accreditation board, state agencies and departments, higher education, members of the non-public school advisory board, and business and community partners, including New Hampshire businesses that employ high school students and/or provide internships.

In preparation for the Summit discussions, the Leadership Team not only reviewed stakeholder input, but also research and promising practices nationwide around high school improvement. The six elements of an effective high school as outlined by the National High School Alliance School & District Innovations Working Group seemed to capture the interests and concerns of New Hampshire's many stakeholders, so they were used to frame, but not limit, the Summit discussions. The six elements include:

- Personalization
- High Standards
- Academic Engagement
- Effective Leadership
- Parent & Community Partnerships
- Professional Learning Communities

After the elements and underlying philosophy of the framework were presented to all the Summit participants, attendees broke into small groups to discuss specifics of each element. The purpose of the small group discussions was to test out how well the topical areas within the framework might describe New Hampshire's vision for high school and to refine the framework to fit New Hampshire's unique context. Small-group facilitators directed discussions toward answers to the following questions:

- 1 How might the explanation of this topical area be refined to more accurately speak to New Hampshire's high school context? What are the most important features of this topical area?
- 2 What would high school in New Hampshire look like if the features of this topical area were evident throughout the state? How would these ideas change the high school experience in your community? What would you see when you visited the schools that embody this topical area?
- 3 What questions or concerns do you have about this concept? What potential challenges do you see in this area of change?

The group as a whole then returned to report out on over-arching topic themes, opportunities, and challenges.

While there were many well-formed observations and concerns discussed in each small group, this report documents only those that were common across multiple groups or that elicited significant discussion with the breakout groups. Further detail on the breakout discussions will be provided in forthcoming reports.

Small-Group Findings

Personalization

The concept of personalization means many things to many different people. For a principal at the New Hampshire Summit, it meant the modification of the curriculum to suit a student's abilities and ambitions; for a student it meant that a teacher remembers his birthday. In general, participants described a school in which personalization was successfully implemented as an environment where every teacher and student feels they have a place and that they are all responsible for the school. Students would have opportunities for personalized learning tied to their post-graduate plans, so that each student would be able to shape his or her own experience. Thus, for Summit participants, a useful definition of personalization would entail at least two key concepts: personalized relationships and personalized learning.

Personalized Relationships

Participants indicated a keen interest in creating an environment that encourages the development and nurturing of relationships between students, advisors, and teachers. A truly personalized school would have an outstanding system of communication between parents and community members. Each student would feel surrounded by a community. Students and teachers would meet voluntarily: groups of students and teachers would eat lunch together because they want to, not because they have to. Advisors would be assigned to students and would work with them from day-one through graduation. Parents would be intimately connected to their child's work. Smaller classes and communities were encouraged.

A significant portion of the discussion around personalization was devoted to the kind of personal relationship that is possible between a student and a teacher. Perception of time was a theme that was brought up repeatedly, the idea being that the time required of staff to make personal connections with students is not an "add-on" but a more productive use of available time. Both staff and students expressed a desire for students to get to know teachers outside the context of their roles as teachers. There was also a belief that all professionals in the school should begin to assume the responsibilities of guiding students through all aspects of their high school experience. To do this well, the knowledge that guidance counselors have about adolescent and youth development must be translated to teachers as a meaningful tool to support their work.

Personalized Learning

It is significant that for the Summit participants, personalization does not deal solely with relationships, but also with individualizing teaching and learning to best meet the needs of each student. Summit participants did not suggest that personalized learning means that the students themselves decide what they will learn in high school, but rather that they will gain access to the knowledge and skills embedded in the New Hampshire standards through instructional methods that work well given each student's unique learning styles and strengths. This will require not only curricular changes, but also changes to the way teaching and the role of teachers is understood. Teachers will need to become mentors and advisors as much as instructors.

In addition, one student recommended students develop their own schedules to create a motive for achievement. Another participant suggested that students will have more at stake if they are allowed to make personal choices in the directions they want to take within a class. The idea of personalization was broadened by a third participant who asked why high school is four years rather than three or five years, depending on the needs of the individual student.

As a result of the combined emphasis on personalized relationships and personalized learning in a high school, Summit participants envisioned a place where students would no longer perceive themselves as subjects of management and instead as competent people with potential. Students would have the opportunity to decipher their own learning styles and would understand what approaches to learning content work best for them. Ultimately, students would graduate with a sense of self-worth and accomplishment.

Potential Challenges

The discussion groups identified challenges to personalization ranging from information overload in this fast-paced age to the time limits of the school day. Others pointed to the responsibility that school leaders have to develop a framework in which a personalized education can thrive. The framework—which includes everything from school cultures, expectations, schedules, instructional strategies, and staff assignments—must transcend the current programs in which teachers and students are expected to accomplish their goals. Here, the student-to-teacher ratio was identified as “one of the biggest impediments.”

The professional preparation of teachers was also identified as a barrier. Recognizing that personalization is not a current expectation of or requirement for teachers, participants called for personalization to become part of the pre-service degree program for teachers and to be acknowledged in negotiations with teacher unions.

Summit participants were quite clear that the qualities of personalization cannot be mandated; the nature of a given faculty must be considered in attempts to create a culture of personalization. Particularly given the nature of local control in New Hampshire, participants were clear that the state must leave the implementation of personalization up to the local schools and school districts. This was as important to the student participants as to the educators. As one student noted, “This can’t be perceived by students as coming from above or it’s doomed to fail.” Participants felt that once the overarching goal of personalization is established statewide, each district can implement the philosophy in its own way.

Summary

Overall, to Summit participants, personalization seems to have promise as a guiding principle for New Hampshire’s high school improvement efforts, but for the concept of personalization to be useful, it must be very clearly defined and left to those at the local level to actually implement.

High Standards

Participants in the small group sessions on high standards went back and forth between a discussion of standards as more general

expectations for students and standards as a driving force in a system of assessment and accountability. Participants felt it important that when thinking about high school improvement in New Hampshire, stakeholders not focus solely on student achievement in the core content areas, but also consider more broadly what it takes for students to be productive members of their communities. This should be incorporated into the standards that define high school teaching and learning. There was a sense that because the current standards are based on Carnegie units, they do not encompass the full range of expectations stakeholders have for students. Specifically, participants cautioned that if standards focus primarily only on mathematics and English language arts, they will be too narrow. Rather, standards should encompass the range of knowledge, skills, and abilities that students need in order to succeed.

Success was primarily defined by participants in terms of employability in a new economy. In this sense, lifelong learning was mentioned as one of the “standards” that would help students to succeed, as were skills in communication, problem solving, time management, and the ability to work in teams.

Some participants also suggested that standards should address other types of goals and expectations. For example, a student participant suggested that “character development, responsibility, respect, curiosity, and creativity need to be cultivated.” Another student suggested that “standards need to address some philosophical concerns. What are we doing to turn these kids into thoughtful, contributing members of society?”

The discussion of higher standards also addressed the question of increased rigor—three rather than two years of a foreign language, for instance. There was some concern that the emphasis on “high” standards might be translated simply into preparation to enter a four-year college or university. Summit participants were concerned that not every student will attend a four-year institution of higher education, thus the purpose of increased rigor should be to ensure students are successful whatever path they choose after high school.

Participants also discussed the means by which students can demonstrate they have met the standards. One participant noted that senior projects allow students to demonstrate a variety of high-level thinking skills as well as communication skills. Yet a curriculum based on Carnegie units and seat time does not encourage such a demonstration. A student suggested that measuring performance ought to become “a culture, rather than a standard.” Participants suggested that students should play a role in deciding what is acceptable evidence for what it means to meet the standards.

When asked to talk about what schools would look like if they successfully implemented high standards, participants described counseling for students to inform them about the standards, cooperation between high schools and higher education to ensure parity in college preparatory work, and hands-on learning, tied to the standards, so that there is a synthesis of high standards and real-world applications. Schools characterized by an effective use of standards would have reward systems that move beyond letter grades and recognize the achievements of non-college-bound students.

Potential Challenges

In terms of implementation, participants felt it would be quite challenging to reconcile the need for higher expectations with the realities of differing learning styles, motivations, and future goals among students. There was a concern among participants that an emphasis on high standards might lead schools to focus on what it takes to prepare students to attend a four-year college, yet the traditional college preparatory high school experience is not necessarily what each student will need to succeed. Participants were concerned that if schools believe they can best demonstrate high standards through the number of Advanced Placement and honors courses they have and how many students with high GPAs are in their schools, it will not translate into high standards for every student. Participants said it was unreasonable to expect high standards in all things for all students. "It feels like we are trying to shove all kids through one tube," noted a participant.

In terms of the practical implications for schools, there was concern that in the almost frantic context of schools driven by federal law, it is difficult for educators to plan a new, more relevant curriculum based on high standards. In addition, if higher standards mean piling on more requirements for students, teachers, and administrators, it will be difficult for every child to succeed. Meanwhile, teachers need more support to help struggling students or to make connections with higher learning.

Summary

The utility of using higher standards as a driver for high school improvement will depend upon how it could be defined and used. Participants very naturally centered their discussion of high standards on how student performance is assessed and how schools are held accountable. In an era of fast-paced change related to the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act, the use of standards in this way as a driver for high school improvement has drawbacks. When the discussion shifted to the broader expectations that stakeholders have for students, however, participants were more likely to see high standards as a useful frame for thinking about high school reform. More thought needs to be given to the purpose and nature of standards in a strategy for high school improvement.

Academic Engagement

In the Summit discussions on academic engagement, participants focused primarily on the question of "engagement" among students. When asked to describe schools characterized by academic engagement, participants portrayed places where students feel challenged; where their schoolwork is meaningful in their lives; and where they are motivated to achieve personal growth.

While some participants noted that students themselves need to increase their commitment to learning—"Students are their own clients"—most of the discussion centered around what teachers, counselors, and administrators can do to actively engage students. Their discussions centered on the kinds of teaching styles, curricula, and school organizations that lead to students being captivated by what they are learning. In a school where students are engaged academically,

participants expected to see instruction that is flexible enough to accommodate different learning styles and that relates academic content areas to real-world experiences, which makes the curriculum come alive. Teachers in schools characterized by academic engagement would help students understand why they have to learn and would present content in creative ways so students respond.

One participant suggested that academic engagement is not primarily about student responsibility versus teacher responsibility, but rather begins when both the student and teacher become part of what is happening in the classroom. In this case, both students and teachers would make choices about curriculum. Teachers and students would communicate openly about academic and personal issues, leading to engagement on the part of both teachers and students.

Potential Challenges

Participants felt there was not yet a clear consensus on the definition of academic engagement. Similarly, while rigor seemed important to the concept of academic engagement, the definition of rigor was also unclear. Until the terms are clearly defined, Summit participants were reticent about the promise of academic engagement as a concept to motivate and inform high school improvement efforts.

Teacher training was further identified as an issue of concern, as there was little confidence that teacher preparation programs were developing among teachers an understanding of how to motivate and engage students as learners. Participants also cited a lack of ownership of the curriculum by teachers as a potential obstacle, as well as the lack of flexibility teachers have to adjust the curriculum to engage individual students.

Economic barriers were cited as another challenge, a concern echoed across numerous topics. Participants also felt that the identification of qualified leaders who are willing and able to engage students could be challenging.

Summary

The concept of academic engagement seemed to hold promise as a way to define the expectations of high school improvement, but that was seen more as a goal of than a strategy for reform. The emphasis on teaching methods and resources and school organizations that excite, motivate, and encourage students to pursue additional learning was a unique way to address the overarching topic, as it focused primarily on the definition of engagement and not the definition of academic. Participants felt a conversation about rigor would more likely lead to questions of the academic side of the concept at hand. Because participants were not clear about the definition of the key concepts, they called for a consensus on the definitions of academic engagement and rigor before they could agree whether or not academic engagement would be a useful concept in a vision for high school reform. Given this, New Hampshire may find more success in focusing this strategy area on "engagement" and subsume questions related to academics under another strategic topic. This could help to clarify how a focus on student engagement could be used to motivate and support high school reform.

Effective Leadership

The Summit's initial discussions on effective leadership focused on the definition of leadership and its application in New Hampshire schools. The point was raised that leadership is not a person; it is a process. Participants made a distinction between leaders and managers, noting that effective leaders make choices that serve the vision and mission of the school.

To Summit participants, effective leadership in New Hampshire is characterized by administrators, teachers, and students being treated as co-leaders. The issue of student leadership was especially important to discussion participants, and to them, student leadership entails not only involvement in school decision making, but also in taking responsibility for their own learning.

There was also targeted discussion about the need to reach out to community members to draw them into a relationship with the schools. Effective leaders help to engage other stakeholders and disperse the responsibility for change.

Participants pictured schools with effective leadership as institutions that not only enjoy the qualities of leadership but nurture them as well. Ongoing training and support would be evident in a school with effective leadership. Clear vision statements that all interested parties understood and embraced would be a sign of effective leadership within a school.

Potential Challenges

Participants expressed concern that the present learning environments are not characterized by long-term commitments to quality leaders. They feared that the many pressures on high school leaders will force those tasked with initiating change to move on before plans took shape. In addition to the concern about turnover, participants mentioned the lack of training and support for effective leadership as a potential obstacle. Finally, participants identified the rigid schedules of typical schools as impediments to change that may frustrate leadership efforts.

Summary

Summit participants were quite comfortable with the notion of effective leadership being included in a vision for high school improvement. They suggested that to be effective, leaders should articulate a clear vision and mission for schools and communities. They should also create environments where others are enabled to lead, as the responsibility for change goes beyond school administrators to include teachers, students, and leaders in the community. They described an immediate need for training programs and forums for community involvement in defining leadership, indicating their comfort with effective leadership as a driver for high school reform.

Parent and Community Partnerships

Summit participants felt that the primary purpose of parent and community partnerships is to enhance learning, yet they also acknowledged that other benefits come from partnerships, such as the benefits students gain from supervision and the belief that partnerships

will help to decrease the dropout rate and resolve suspension problems. Summit participants also felt it important that the partnerships are symbiotic relationships; not only should a community support its schools, but the schools should also give back to the community. Despite the symbiotic nature of the partnerships, Summit participants felt it incumbent upon schools to be the party to initiate relationship building with parents, businesses, and institutions of higher learning.

When asked to describe what parent and community partnerships would look like in schools, participants most often described businesses partnerships with schools. However, some participants also described schools that would serve as community centers even after school hours and school-day hours that reflect typical work-day hours. Several types of relationships were given as examples of effective partnerships, such as mentoring relationships and internships within the community.

Summit participants discussed the particular relationship of parents to the school and recommended that parents partner with teachers at work and at school. Parents need to be involved "in the right way," and their rate of participation is significantly greater when they are provided specific plans and goals. To be most successful, schools need a clarification of parents' roles and the kind of parent involvement that is desired by all. Schools also need to develop methods to support parents.

Potential Challenges

Some of the challenges to parent and community partnerships identified by participants were primarily logistical in nature; participants wondered, for example, how students would be transported to their community positions or internships. Similarly, a student noted that the biggest barrier is his schedule, which does not have the flexibility to accommodate an internship.

Other challenges identified by the participants were partly logistical and partly cultural. For example, a participant posed the question, "What do you do when a student has an internship at a law firm but can't buy the necessary clothing?"

The issue of who would coordinate responsibility for students who had internships was also raised. Participants were concerned that schools would be indirectly responsible for students' work. They also noted the possibility that only those school districts with secure funding would succeed with this model.

Summary

Participants generally accepted the notion that parent and community partnerships will be an important component of a vision for high school improvement. The term "partnerships" captured well the participants' notion that the relationships necessary to high school improvement are two-way. Partnerships are not solely organized to support the schools; in developing a common vision for the state, stakeholders must ask "How can the body of high school students and programs meet the community needs?" and "What will the businesses need students to know in order to work there?"

Professional Learning Communities

When talking about professional learning communities, participants primarily focused on communities of teachers and their learning processes, but they also discussed engaging the broader community, students, parents, and higher education in learning.

First and foremost, participants discussed the features of a professional learning community among teachers in a school. They spoke of the importance of trust and respect to the development of a learning community, such as the need for trust between veteran and new teachers. Trust was considered to be especially important, because many features of professional learning communities that the group valued involved teachers teaching teachers. That is, participants described ideal schools where teachers model continuous learning, observe each other's teaching, periodically switch classes with one another, and engage in mentoring relationships where teachers have a "chance to receive 'secrets' from other teachers who have learned through experience the things that need to be done."

Participants expressed hope that having professional learning communities within schools would help teachers to see their work as a team endeavor, collaborate on common tasks, and become reflective practitioners that think about their own teaching processes.

The group did expand the discussion beyond simply professional learning communities of teachers, discussing the importance of all people who contribute to the success of the students coming together. One participant gave the example of how engaging custodians in new ways that respected their role in the success of the school had tremendous benefits. Others discussed the importance of bringing the broader community into the learning communities within schools. By inviting businesses and members of the broader community into the school community, participants hoped students would see the relevance of the subjects they study to business. When they thought together about opening up professional learning communities to businesses, participants talked about how community members can serve on reviews of student portfolios or visit classrooms to help teachers "keep it fresh." When the relationships go the other direction, teacher externships to businesses can help teachers to learn about the needs of businesses and help understand the community expectations of high schools.

Participants felt a natural extension of the creation of professional learning communities is a curiosity about whether schools are helping students to learn what businesses and higher education believe they need to know.

The question of student participation in professional learning communities was addressed specifically by the discussion groups. Participants felt it would be especially important for students to be a part of the process. Professional learning communities model learning for students. As students are engaged in the professional learning culture, teachers will find that they also learn from students. It was important to participants that students be connected to all the available services, and actively engaging students in the professional learning culture would likely lead to more open lines of

communication that would promote that goal.

Potential Challenges

Participants pointed to a number of potential obstacles, most of which are challenges across the topical areas. Funding was an issue, for example, as was the time required to plan and implement measures for making schools more effective learning communities.

The group was also concerned that schools might resist change or the extra work required to establish and maintain the kind of working relationships they described. While union contracts were offered as an example of a potential hurdle, there was also an example shared of a successful negotiation between unions and schools to build in the needed time to create and sustain professional learning communities.

Other challenges include the limited flexibility that schools and teachers feel they have in their schedules and poor communication between schools and partners, particularly colleges and the business community, which has been known to lead to a resistance to the groups working together.

Summary

The idea of developing professional learning communities as a strategy for high school improvement resonated well among the Summit participants who discussed the topic. By modeling learning, creating relationships that support effective teaching, and engaging the broader community in the learning environment, teachers, students, and the community would all benefit.

V. Conclusion

The New Hampshire High School Leadership Team is in the midst of their efforts to gather collaborative and ongoing input to set the parameters of a useful and compelling vision for improvement among New Hampshire's high schools. Stakeholders have indicated that such a vision statement would provide guidance and information to schools and school districts undertaking the challenging but critical work of high school reform. The Leadership Team will review the feedback captured in this report, as well as continue its collaboration with the New Hampshire School Principals Association in their efforts to disseminate training on the Breaking Ranks II model of high school improvement. It is anticipated that the experience of training and implementing the Breaking Ranks II model of reform will help to clarify not only a statewide vision for high school, but also potential supports that local schools and districts will need over time.

In addition to gathering and analyzing data on effective and motivating strategies for high school improvement, the Leadership Team hopes to garner resources to create a network of excellence. This may include identifying schools willing and able to engage in high school reform and become model schools and mentors for other high schools in the future. The Leadership Team has a specific goal of providing a summer institute for high schools to work on the goals that they determine will lead them to be schools of excellence.

Appendix A

Acknowledgements

The New Hampshire Education Reform Conference was convened jointly by the New Hampshire State Board of Education and the New Hampshire Department of Education.

The Student Forums were designed and facilitated by The Education Alliance at Brown University. The Stakeholder Focus Groups were convened by the New Hampshire High School Leadership Team. The New Hampshire High School Leadership Summit was organized by the New Hampshire Department of Education and facilitated by the High School Leadership Team.

Members of the High School Leadership Team include:

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ⁱ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1960 Census of Population, Vol. 1; Current Population Reports, Series P-20; and Current Population Survey, unpublished data.

ⁱⁱ NHES, 1-3: Vital Signs 1995-1998, as presented at the 2005 New Hampshire High School Leadership Summit.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ross Gittell and Brian Gottlob, BIA presentation, March 14, 2000, as presented at the 2005 New Hampshire High School Leadership Summit.

^{iv} Gittell and Gottlob, 2000.

^v Data presented at the 2005 New Hampshire High School Leadership Summit.

^{vi} Gittell and Gottlob, 2000.

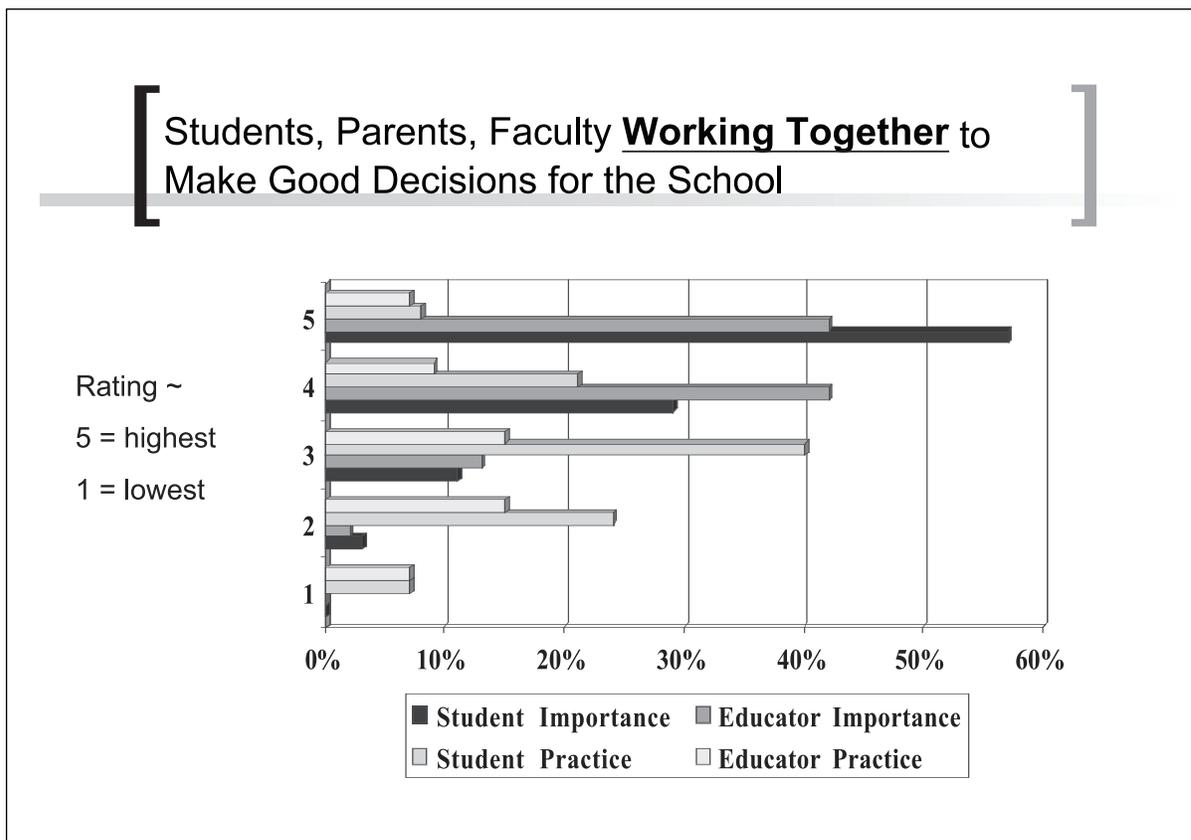
^{vii} American Diploma Project, Ready or Not: Creating a High School Diploma that Counts (Washington, DC: Achieve, Inc.), 2004.

^{viii} Data presented at the 2005 New Hampshire High School Leadership Summit.

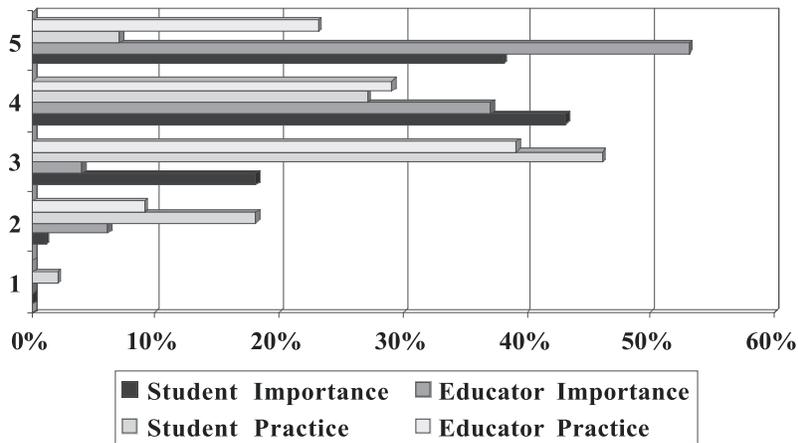
^{ix} New Hampshire School to Work Survey, 1999, as presented at the 2005 New Hampshire High School Leadership Summit.

DATA GLEANED FROM NH EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS AT THE 2004 STUDENT FORUMS

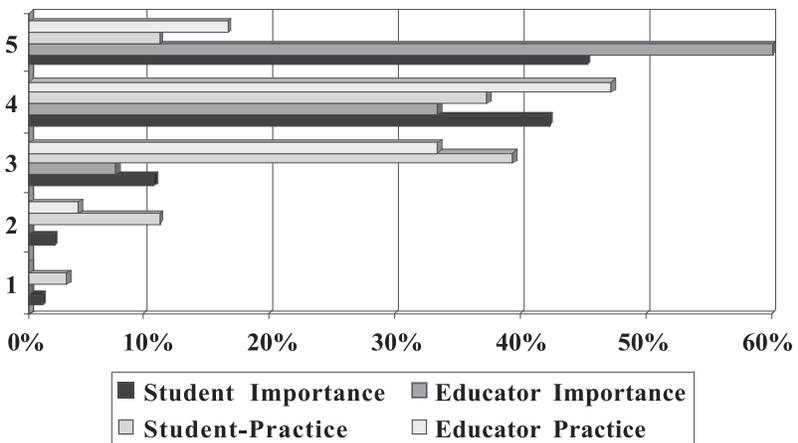
In 2004, the NH Department of Education convened a series of student forums that brought together 143 students and 48 educators (teachers, counselors and administrators) from 48 of New Hampshire’s high schools. The forums were open to all high schools and were held in Merrimack, Plymouth, and on the Seacoast at Pease. The Education Alliance at Brown University, under the director of Joe DiMartino, designed and facilitated the forums. The forums gathered data on, among other things, the perceptions of students and educators on the importance and current implementation of five dimensions of high school excellence, with 5 being the highest score, and 1 being the lowest. Participants were asked how important they thought each of the statements was and how often they saw it in practice in their school.



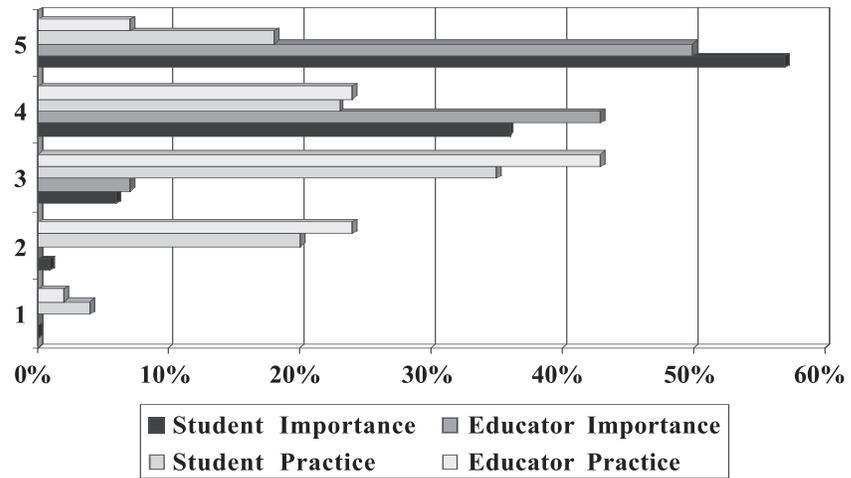
[High School Staff Will **Challenge** Students as Much as They Can...]



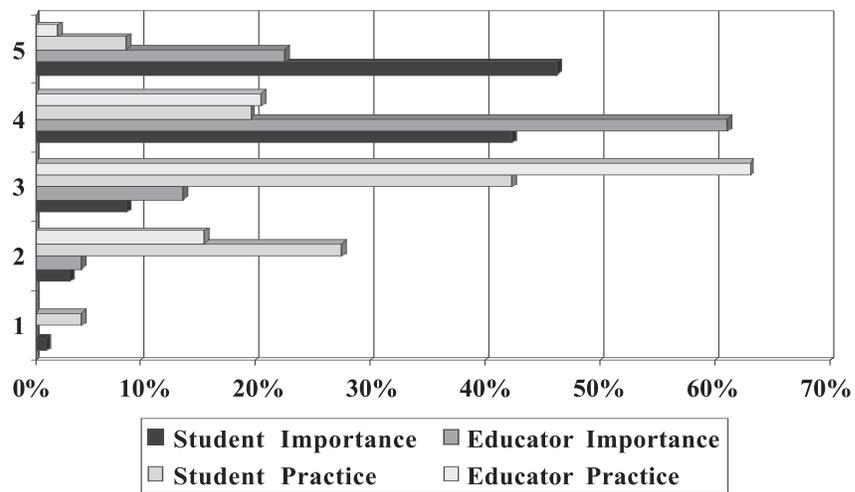
[Teachers Will Show a Sense of **Caring** About Their Students So That Students Feel That Their Teachers Are a Part of the Learning Process]



Teachers Teach Differently to Students Who Learn Differently



Subjects Taught in School Should be Like the Real World so There is a Link Between Education and the Future



BRII/NEASC/NHDOE MATRIX

THE MATRIX FOLLOWING REPRESENTS A CROSS WALK of the New England Association of Schools & Colleges *Standards for Accreditation* with the high school redesign recommendations of the National Association of Secondary School Principals' *Breaking Ranks II*, and with the language from New Hampshire's *Minimum Standards for School Approval* as re-approved July, 2005.

| BR # | Recommendation | NEASC Standard | Indicator | NH Reference | NH Language |
|------|---|----------------|--|--------------|---|
| 1 | The principal will provide leadership in the high school community by building and maintaining a vision, direction, and focus for student learning. | 5.2 | The principal shall provide leadership in the school community by creating and maintaining a shared vision, direction, and focus for student learning | Ed 306.05 | School Philosophy, Goals, and Objectives. The local school board shall direct each school in its district to adopt a written philosophy and a statement of goals and objectives consistent with the rules of the state board of education. Provisions shall be made for the review of the philosophy, goals, and objectives at least every 5 years. |
| 2 | The school will establish a site council and accord other meaningful roles in decision-making to students, parents and members of the staff to promote student learning and an atmosphere of participation, responsibility and ownership. | 7.1 | The school shall engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and shall encourage their participation in school programs and parent support groups. | 306.08(K)(6) | schools shall strive to harness all available community resources including but not limited to organizations, businesses, talented individuals, natural resources and technology to engage each student in achieving the necessary skills and knowledge |
| | | 5.13 | The climate of the school shall be safe, positive, respectful, and supportive, resulting in a sense of pride and ownership. | 306.08(K)(5) | Schools shall promote collaboration among parents, schools, and community on school improvement and student achievement projects; |
| | | 6.5 | There shall be a system for effective and ongoing communication with students, parents/guardians, and school personnel, designed to keep them informed about the types of available student support services and identified student needs. | | |
| 3 | A high school will regard itself as a community in which members of the staff collaborate to develop and implement the school's learning goals. | 4.6 | Teachers shall meet collaboratively to discuss and share student work and the results of student assessments for the purpose of revising the curriculum and improving instructional strategies. | 306.08 (j) | The policy relative to meeting the instructional needs of each student shall require administrators and teachers to consider students' differing talents, interests, and development when planning the educational programs specified in Ed 306. |
| | | 5.10 | The professional staff shall collaborate within and across departments in support of learning for all students. | | |
| 4 | Teachers will provide the leadership essential to the success of reform, collaborating with others in the educational community to redefine the role of the teacher and to identify sources of support for that redefined role. | 5.3 | Teachers as well as administrators other than the principal shall provide leadership essential to the improvement of the school. | 306.08 (j) | The policy relative to meeting the instructional needs of each student shall require administrators and teachers to consider students' differing talents, interests, and development when planning the educational programs specified in Ed 306. |

| BR # | Recommendation | NEASC Standard | Indicator | NH Reference | NH Language |
|------|--|----------------|---|--------------|--|
| 5 | Every school will be a learning community for the entire community. As such, the school will promote the use of Personal Learning Plans for each educator and provide the resources to ensure that the principal, teachers, and other staff members can address their own learning and professional development needs as they relate to improved student learning. | 2.11 | Professional development activities shall support the development and implementation of the curriculum. | 306.16(b)(1) | 1) Each certified educator's individual professional development plan required under Ed 512.03 is aligned with the professional development master plan; |
| | | 3.7 | The school's professional development program shall be guided by identified instructional needs and shall provide opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their instructional strategies. | 306.16(a)(3) | That the professional development master plan guides each professional staff member's individual professional development plan in its design, implementation, and evaluation; and |
| | | 4.7 | The school's professional development program shall provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate in developing a broad range of student assessment strategies. | 306.16(b)(2) | The professional development activities included in the professional development master plan are designed to improve professional knowledge, as measured in its success in meeting students' needs and improving students' learning; and |
| | | 3.4 | Teachers shall be knowledgeable about current research on effective instructional approaches and reflective about their own practice. | 306.06(a)(1) | The school policies adopted by the local school board shall reflect: Shared ownership and responsibility for the success of the school among students, their families, and the community; Student leadership through involvement in decision-making |
| 6 | The school community will promote policies and practices that recognize diversity in accord with the core values of a democratic and civil society and will offer substantive ongoing professional development to help educators appreciate issues of diversity and expose students to a rich array of viewpoints, perspectives, and experiences. | | | 306.06(a)(1) | The school policies adopted by the local school board shall reflect: The acknowledgement of diversity and respect for differences Respectful use of language and behavior by all school members that is void of ethnic, racial, and sexual stereotypes and biases. |
| 7 | High schools will build partnerships with institutions of higher education to provide teachers and administrators at both levels with ideas and opportunities to enhance the education, performance, and evaluation of educators. | 7.2 | The school shall foster productive business/community/higher education partnerships that support student learning. | | |
| 8 | High schools will develop political and financial relationships with individuals, organizations and businesses to support and supplement educational programs and policies. | 7.2 | The school shall foster productive business/community/higher education partnerships that support student learning. | 306.08(k)(6) | schools shall strive to harness all available community resources including but not limited to organizations, businesses, talented individuals, natural resources and technology to engage each student in achieving the necessary skills and knowledge |
| 9 | At least once every five years, each high school will convene a broadly-based external panel to offer a Public Description of the school, a requirement that could be met in conjunction with the evaluations of state, regional, and other accrediting groups | | | | |

Appendix C

| BR # | Recommendation | NEASC Standard | Indicator | NH Reference | NH Language |
|------|---|----------------|---|--------------|--|
| 10 | High schools will create small units in which anonymity is banished. | 5.9 | The school shall be a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult member of the school community in addition to the school guidance counselor who personalizes each student's educational experience, knows the student well, and assists the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning. | 306.04(k)(3) | The policy relative to partnerships among schools, families, and communities shall comply with the following standards: Schools shall strive to involve parents and family members of all ages and grade levels; (3) Schools shall frequently communicate school performance, student progress, personalized learning strategies as adopted by the local school board, and academic opportunities, using both print and online formats |
| 11 | Each high school teacher involved in the instructional program on a full-time basis will be responsible for contact time with no more than 90 students during a given term so that the teacher can give greater attention to the needs of every student. | 5.8 | Each teacher shall have a student load that enables the teacher to meet the learning needs of individual students. | | |
| 12 | Each student will have a Personal Plan for Progress that will be reviewed often to ensure that the high school takes individual needs into consideration and to allow students, within reasonable parameters, to design their own methods for learning in an effort to meet high standards. | 2.2 | The curriculum shall be aligned with the school-wide academic expectations and shall ensure that all students have sufficient opportunity to practice and achieve each of those expectations. | 306.04(k)(3) | The policy relative to partnerships among schools, families, and communities shall comply with the following standards: Schools shall strive to involve parents and family members of all ages and grade levels; (3) Schools shall frequently communicate school performance, student progress, personalized learning strategies as adopted by the local school board, and academic opportunities, using both print and online formats |
| 13 | Every high school student will have a Personal Adult Advocate to help him or her personalize the educational experience. | 5.9 | The school shall be a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult member of the school community in addition to the school guidance counselor who personalizes each student's educational experience, knows the student well, and assists the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning. | 306.04(k)(3) | The policy relative to partnerships among schools, families, and communities shall comply with the following standards: Schools shall strive to involve parents and family members of all ages and grade levels; (3) Schools shall frequently communicate school performance, student progress, personalized learning strategies as adopted by the local school board, and academic opportunities, using both print and online formats |
| 14 | Teachers will convey a sense of caring to their students so that their students feel that their teachers share a stake in their learning. | 5.11 | All school staff shall be involved in promoting the well-being and learning of students. | 306.04(k)(3) | The policy relative to partnerships among schools, families, and communities shall comply with the following standards: Schools shall strive to involve parents and family members of all ages and grade levels; (3) Schools shall frequently communicate school performance, student progress, personalized learning strategies as adopted by the local school board, and academic opportunities, using both print and online formats |
| 15 | High schools will develop flexible scheduling and student grouping patterns that allow better use of time in order to meet the individual needs of students to ensure academic success. | 5.6 | The schedule shall be driven by the school's mission and expectations for student learning and shall support the effective implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. | | |

| BR # | Recommendation | NEASC Standard | Indicator | NH Reference | NH Language |
|------|--|---------------------------|--|--------------|---|
| 16 | The high school will engage students' families as partners in students' education. | 6.3 6.5 7.1 | <p>Student support personnel shall enhance student learning by interacting and working cooperatively with professional and other staff and by utilizing community resources to address the academic, social, emotional, and psychical needs of students.</p> <p>There shall be a system for effective and ongoing communications with students, parents/guardians, and school personnel designed to keep them informed about the types of available student support services and about identified student needs.</p> <p>The school shall engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and shall encourage their participation in school programs and parent support groups.</p> | 306.08(K)(1) | The policy relative to partnerships among schools, families, and communities shall comply with the following standards: Schools shall strive to involve parents and family members of all ages and grade levels; |
| 17 | The high school community, which cannot be values neutral, will advocate and model a set of core values essential in a democratic and civil society. | 1.5 | The school shall have indicators by which it assesses the school's progress in achieving school-wide civic and social expectations. | 306.04 (i) | The policy relative to character and citizenship development shall: (1) Include those elements of character and citizenship to be incorporated in courses of study or instilled, by example, in a caring educational environment, including but not limited to: a. Self-discipline, self-respect, and self-control; b. Pursuant to Part Second, Article 83 of the New Hampshire Constitution, humanity, benevolence, and truth and honesty with self and others; c. Fairness, integrity, and justice; d. Respect, courtesy, and human worth; e. Responsibility to oneself and others; f. Community service; and g. Pursuant to RSA 186:13, the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; and (2) Be developed in consultation with school staff, administration, parents, and other representatives of the community. |
| 18 | The high school, in conjunction with agencies in the community, will help coordinate the delivery of physical and mental health and social services for youth. | 6.7 | There shall be sufficient certified/licensed personnel and support staff to provide effective counseling, health, special education, and library media services. | | |

Appendix C

| BR # | Recommendation | NEASC Standard | Indicator | NH Reference | NH Language |
|------|---|----------------|--|------------------|--|
| 19 | Each high school will identify a set of essential learnings - above all, in literature and language, writing, mathematics, social studies, science, and the arts - in which students must demonstrate achievement in order to graduate. | 1.1 | The mission statement and expectations for student learning shall be developed by the school community and approved and supported by the professional staff, the school board, and any other school-wide governing organization. | 306.27 (d) | By the 2008-2009 school year, the local school board shall require that a high school credit can be earned by demonstrating mastery of required competencies for the course, as approved by certified school personnel |
| | | 1.2 | The school's mission statement shall represent the school community's fundamental values and beliefs about student learning. | | |
| | | 1.3 | The school shall define school-wide academic, civic, and social learning expectations that are measurable and reflect the school's mission | | |
| | | 2.1 | Each curriculum area shall identify those school-wide academic expectations for which it is responsible. | | |
| | | 2.2 | The curriculum shall be aligned with the school-wide academic expectations and shall ensure that all students have sufficient opportunity to practice and achieve each of those expectations. | | |
| 20 | Each high school will present alternatives to tracking and to ability grouping. | 5.5 | Student grouping patterns shall reflect the diversity of the student body, foster heterogeneity, reflect current research and best practices, and support the achievement of the school's mission and expectations for student learning. | | |
| 21 | The high school will reorganize the traditional department structure in order to integrate its curriculum to the extent possible and emphasize depth over breadth of coverage. | 2.5 | The curriculum shall be appropriately integrated and shall emphasize depth of understanding over breadth of coverage. | 30446.27 (p) | The local school board shall adopt a policy relative to counting credits for course work earned in one content area toward meeting any graduation requirements in another content area through the awarding of interdisciplinary credit. Any graduation requirement in a subject area may be earned through interdisciplinary credit |
| | | 2.7 | There shall be effective curricular coordination and articulation between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district. | | |
| 22 | The content of the curriculum, where practical, should connect to real-life applications of knowledge and skills to help students link their education to the future. | 2.4 | The curriculum shall engage all students in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking as well as provide opportunities for the authentic application of knowledge and skills. | | |
| | | 2.6 | The school shall provide opportunities for all students to extend learning beyond the normal course offerings and the school campus. | | |
| 23 | The high school will promote service programs and student activities as integral to an education, providing opportunities for all students that support and extend academic learning. | 2.6 | The school shall provide opportunities for all students to extend learning beyond the normal course offerings and the school campus. | 306.27(b)(4)b.4. | If a district chooses to offer extended learning opportunities, the extended learning opportunities shall consist of activities designed to provide credit or supplement regular academic courses; and promote the schools and individual students' educational goals and objectives; b. Be governed by a policy adopted by the local school board that: 4. Specifies that credits can be granted for extended learning activities, including, but not limited to, independent study, private instruction, team sports, performing groups, internships, community service, and work study; and |

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|------|---|----------------|--|------------------------|--|
| 24 | The academic program will extend beyond the high school campus to take advantage of learning opportunities outside the four walls of the building. | 2.2 | The curriculum shall be aligned with the school-wide academic expectations and shall ensure that all students have sufficient opportunity to practice and achieve each of those expectations. | 306.27(b)(4) b.4.45 | If a district chooses to offer extended learning opportunities, the extended learning opportunities shall consist of activities designed to provide credit or supplement regular academic courses; and promote the schools and individual students' educational goals and objectives; b. Be governed by a policy adopted by the local school board that: 4. Specifies that credits can be granted for extended learning activities, including, but not limited to, independent study, private instruction, team sports, performing groups, internships, community service, and work study; and |
| 25 | Teachers will design high quality work and teach in ways that is of high enough quality to engage them, cause them to persist, and when the work is successfully completed, result in their satisfaction and their acquisition of knowledge, critical-thinking and problem solving skills, and abilities valued by society. | 2.4 | The curriculum shall engage all students in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking as well as provide opportunities for the authentic application of knowledge and skills. | | |
| 26 | Teachers will know and be able to use a variety of strategies and settings that identify and accommodate individual learning styles and engage students. | 3.3 | Teachers shall use feedback from a variety of sources including other teachers, students, supervisors, and parents as a means of improving instruction. | 306.27 (b) (3)45 | 3) The instructional program shall include: a. Procedures for diagnosing learner needs; b. Methods and strategies for teaching that incorporate learner needs; c. Resource-based learning opportunities; d. Techniques for the evaluation of student outcomes; and e. The provision of remedial instruction as needed; |
| | | 3.2 | Instructional strategies shall: personalize instruction; make connections across discipline; engage students as active learners; engage students as self-directed learners; involve all students in higher order thinking to promote depth of understanding; provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge or skills; promote student self-assessment and self-reflection. | | |
| 27 | Each high school teacher will have a broad base of academic knowledge with depth in at least one subject area. | 3.4 | Teachers shall be expert in their content area, knowledgeable about current research on effective instructional approaches, and reflective about their own practices | | |
| 28 | Teachers will be adept at acting as coaches and facilitators to promote more active student involvement of students in their own learning. | 3.2 | Teachers shall provide formal and informal opportunities for students to assess their own learning. | | |

Appendix C

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|------|---|----------------|---|----------------|--|
| 29 | Teachers will integrate assessment into instruction so that assessment does not merely measure students, but becomes part of the learning process. | 3.3 | Teachers shall use feedback from a variety of sources including other teachers, students, supervisors, and parents as a means of improving instruction. | 306.24 (b) (2) | (2) The school supports the authentic assessment of student learning outcomes through multiple formative and summative assessment instruments, including, but not limited to: a. Teacher observation of project-based learning, including off-site learning projects; b. Competency-based assessments; and c. Teacher-designed quizzes and tests |
| | | 4.3 | For each learning activity teachers shall clarify to students the relevant school-wide academic expectations and course-specific learning goals that will be assessed. | | |
| | | 4.4 | Teachers shall base classroom assessment of student learning on school-wide and course-specific rubrics. | 306.24 (b) (4) | |
| | | 4.5 | Teachers shall use varied assessment strategies to determine student knowledge, skills, and competencies and to assess student growth over time | | |
| 30 | Recognizing that education is a continuum, high schools will reach out to the elementary and middle level schools as well as institutions of high education to better serve the articulation of student learning and to ensure each stage of the continuum understands what will be required of students at the succeeding stage. | 2.7 | The curriculum shall be aligned with the school-wide academic expectations and shall ensure that all students have sufficient opportunity to practice and achieve each of those expectations. | | |
| 31 | Schools will develop a strategic plan to make technology integral to curriculum, instruction, and assessment, accommodating different learning styles and helping teachers to individualize and improve the learning process. | 3.6 | Technology shall be integrated into and supportive of teaching and learning. | | |
| | | 6.12 | A wide range of materials, technologies, and other library/information services that are responsive to the school's student population shall be available to students and faculty, and utilized to improve teaching and learning. | | |
| | | 6.15 | Policies shall be in place for the selection and removal of information resources and the use of technologies and the Internet | | |

AFTERWORD

As stated early on, the intent of this document is to support local conversations on high school visioning and redesign. This vision document, a culmination of conversations, leadership efforts, and input from throughout the state, points out and supports concepts that reinforce the need for change and the need to focus on particular issues. The research, the data, and the changes in the state *Minimum Standards for School Approval* all serve as guidance and support for local initiative. We believe that the best changes will happen within a district and that the state will support those changes that lead to each student being an engaged and successful learner.



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