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September 27, 2011

Dear Families and Schools:

Thank you so much for investing your time in distributing and/or completing the Parent Involvement Survey in Special Education 2010-2011 survey. This survey is so important because the results help the NH Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education better understand how we can strengthen family/school partnerships in special education.

The Parent Involvement Survey is a requirement of the United States Department of Education (USDOE), Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that each State measures the percent of parents of children receiving special education services who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities. The process of reporting the results of the survey is similar to how the NHDOE reports data to the Federal Office of Special Education Programs. Typically, results are reported the following year. The statewide data is now available on the New Hampshire Department of Education website:

http://www.education.nh.gov/instruction/special_ed/parent_involv.htm

The 2011 survey continues to evidence efforts schools are making to support parents. In general, statewide results suggest that school and family partnerships overall are strong and parental involvement is being facilitated. Over 90% of parents (both preschool and school age combined) agreed that schools facilitated:

- effective communication between the school and families.
- active engagement as a partner in the IEP process, and
- an open and respectful climate for parents with questions.

The NHDOE recognizes the importance of family involvement as research clearly shows that when families and schools work together, children with disabilities are more likely to experience success in school and achieve their goals. We are also committed to supporting families and schools in working together and have resources and trainings available to support you in your efforts to improve family/school partnerships. During the 2011-2012 school year the NHDOE will be offering targeted technical assistance to schools and families through the NH Connections project funded by the Bureau of Special Education as well as statewide webinars in collaboration with the Data Accountability Center and NH Connections.

Hopefully this is informational for you and helps create a conversation in your community on how we can work together to support children receiving special education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Virginia M. Barry".

Virginia M. Barry, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education