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Commissioner of Education
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**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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October 5, 2009

Dear Families and Schools:

Thank you so much for investing your time in distributing and/or completing the Parent Involvement Survey. This survey is so important because the results of the survey are going to help the NH Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education better understand how we can strengthen parent involvement in the special education process. The 2008-2009 Parent Involvement Statewide Survey Results are available on the NHDoe website:

www.ed.state.nh.us/education/doe/organization/instruction/SpecialEd/ParentInvolvement/ParentInvolvement.htm

The March 2009 survey was the second of what will be an annual undertaking. Much was learned in the initial year of the Parent Involvement Survey, and each year the NHDoe, Bureau of Special Education continues to learn more about how to ensure we reach all parents. In moving forward the NHDoe, Bureau of Special Education wish to continually improve both the delivery and the processing of the surveys to make it easier for all involved. 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. We are happy to announce the statewide data is available at this time.

The 2009 survey shows continued efforts schools are making to support parents. For example, 96% of parents said they were given information about their rights and 91% said they were comfortable asking questions and expressing concerns to school staff. The NHDoe, Bureau of Special Education also learned that only 43% of parents had been offered training about special education issues and 47% said they had been helped with finding resources in their community. The survey is an important tool to help us understand where the system's strengths and gaps are.

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The third Parent Involvement Survey will be distributed in March 2010. One important thing we can do at this time is to consider how we can work together to improve communication between home and school. Schools are striving to better assist families in understanding the special education process and the important role parents serve on the team.

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

The State of New Hampshire by his Excellency John H. Lynch, Governor has proclaimed the month of October 2009 as Parent Involvement in Education Month in New Hampshire, and has urged all citizens to recognize and encourage parents for their involvement and commitment to the education of children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Virginia M. Barry". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of a faint, illegible stamp or mark.

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