

Nonpublic School Advisory Council (NPSAC) Meeting  
NH Department of Education, Concord, NH  
**December 14, 2011 ( 8 pages)**

Present: Bill Bennett, Brian Bell, Kent Bicknell, Doug Cummings, Claire Doody, Peter Flint, Mary Moran, Linda Johnson, Deborah Krajcik, Lyn Kutzelman, Eileen Mullen, Steve Poirot, Claire Pstragowski, Patricia Tilley, Trudy Wright, Ed Murdough, Leslie Higgins, Marie Morgan

Guests: Gina Rotondi with the Rath, Young, and Pignatelli Law Firm; Terry Hannigan with the Sununu Youth Center

This meeting was held at the Walker Building located at 21 South Fruit St. in Concord.

Ed Murdough opened the meeting at 10:00 am. He introduced the Council's newest members: Peter Flint, Administrator at Trinity Christian School; Deborah Krajcik, Education Consultant in the Department of Education's Bureau of Special Education; and Attorney Linda Johnson with the McLane, Graf, Raulerson, and Middleton, PA.

The NPSAC Meeting Minutes for October 2011 were approved.

Ed distributed copies of the revised Administrative Rule Ed 306.18, School Year, which governs public school hours. The state legislature recently removed the requirement that schools be in session for 180 days, but still requires a public school calendar to include 945 instructional hours for elementary schools and 990 instructional hours for middle and high schools. Additionally, public schools must be closed on Memorial Day and Veterans Day. Ed suggested the Council consider adding similar language to Administrative Rule Ed 401.03, Approval of Nonpublic Schools. Members are encouraged to review the two Rules at Attachment 1 and submit possible changes for a vote at the Council's next meeting in February 2012.

Members had questions regarding approval for a four day week and NEASC approval. Requests for a four day week previously were approved by the Commissioner. NEASC approval allows the Department to approve a private school on a five year basis rather than a three year term.

Ed noted there has been some confusion at public and private schools regarding the "Blizzard Bag Program". Some have assigned additional homework when a professional development day was scheduled for teachers. Ed noted that teacher involvement during the day is a requirement.

Other key aspects of the Blizzard Bag Program include:

- Prior submission of the Plan and approval by the Commissioner;
- Limited to no more than 5 days in a school year; and
- Allowed when school is unexpectedly cancelled.

Only 10 schools/SAUs have submitted a Blizzard Bag Plan for approval.

Trish Tilley's children attend Kearsage schools and she noted their Blizzard Bag Program has evolved. Although high school students can often work independently, younger students need more support. Teachers have revised their expectations. There have been problems when a family has more children than computers. Also, it can be a problem when parents work and children are brought to child care providers' homes or centers.

There was some discussion regarding a Legislative Service Request (LSR) being submitted by a state representative which would tax Pinkerton Academy in Derry, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Several attendees voiced their concern with this action and the impact it could have on other nonprofits. Ed noted that NPSAC members could vote to make a recommendation to the State Board. At this time it appears that other legal groups are addressing this LSR. NPSAC members can go to the nh.gov website to follow the status of all bills and find committee hearing dates.

Another LSR has been submitted which would establish an educational tax credit to offset the business profits tax. These funds would support private schools and homeschoolers. Mary Moran noted that as many as 8 states have done this or are attempting to do this at varying levels.

Gina Rotondi noted that 2 other LSRs have been submitted that address: bullying in schools and Safe School Zones.

The Council members were reminded that not all LSRs become bills and often their wording is changed.

Ed Murdough left at 10:45 to make a presentation at the State Board of Education meeting. Kent Bicknell arrived about 10:50.

Linda Johnson briefed the Council on the International Student Conference held at Rivier College in Nashua on Monday, Dec. 5<sup>th</sup>. The Conference was cosponsored by ISANNE, NEASC, and the McLane Law Firm. Previously it was held in Connecticut and both times it was sold out. Several NPSAC members attended the Conference. Doug Cummings noted that the Conference needs to be repeated and that more work needs to be done to alert public and private schools to the issues surrounding international students. There was some discussion regarding the reliability of the application process. Linda noted that using Skype (an instantaneous video conferencing system) was one way to interview international students and assess their English skills. Mary Moran agreed this was also a good way to "meet" students' parents and cultivate a relationship with them. Mary noted that one of the issues that surfaces is the degree to which a teacher should modify curriculum or grading when an international student is not at the same level as other students. Presently the NH Interscholastic Athletic Association (NHIAA) only allows international students to compete for one year on its sanctioned teams. NH private schools participating in other athletic associations do not have this restriction.

Bill Bennett agreed that the issues regarding international students are not going away. Residential schools have more experience than Day Schools. Additional conferences should be held to help teachers orient and integrate these students in the classroom.

See Attachment 2 for a brief summary of the International Student Conference.

Marie reminded the attendees that the Council has one more nonpublic school representative vacancy. Kent noted that perhaps the Council needs another representative from a K-8 school. Members are encouraged to email or call Ed Murdough regarding any prospective Council members.

*Note: Of the 10 NPSAC members holding NPS Representative Seats, 3 represent various groups of schools (Mary Moran, Trudy Wright, and Doug Cummings). Three are directors of K-12 Day schools (Brian Bell, Kent Bicknell, and Peter Flint). Lyn Kutzleman is founder of a PK-8 school. David Parker is director and founder of a grade 6-8 school approved for Special Education services. Only Steve Poirot is directly associated with a grade 9-12 Residential school. Claire Doody is director and founder of a K-3 Montessori school.*

Leslie Higgins was asked if she could add schools' enrollment numbers to the list of private schools in the Council members' binders. It would also be helpful to note which are for-profit.

Marie asked if there were any nominations for a Council chair. There were none.

Mary Moran remarked on her attendance at a meeting recently held by the NH Center for Nonprofits. She said this is a good resource for nonprofits and the membership fee is on a sliding scale beginning at \$85.00. Their website has valuable information and sample forms. The organization also has grant information and nationally known presenters. For more information visit: <http://www.nhnonprofits.org>.

Linda Johnson shared some of the problems schools have meeting school bus driver requirements. Depending on the weight and seat capacity of the vehicle, drivers may need a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) and/or the "S" endorsement. The DOT also requires numbers on the outside of certain vehicles. See Attachment 3 for a paper she wrote titled: An Overview of School Bus Driver Licensure Requirements for Nonpublic Schools in NH.

Lyn Kutzleman noted problems she has had regarding interstate rules for school vehicles when taking students to Massachusetts on field trips. Besides confusing requirements for drivers, there are also misinterpretations regarding a vehicle's seat capacity and issues based upon the color of the bus.

Kent acknowledged that his staff had tried to overcome these same concerns three years ago.

This is an issue that needs more review and solutions should be shared with the nonpublic school community.

Steve Poirot reported that Peter Saliba has been named the new Head of Tilton School effective July 1, 2012. Peter returns to New Hampshire after most recently serving as the Upper School Director for Berwick Academy in South Berwick, Maine since 2007. Prior to Berwick, Peter was the Assistant Head of School at Sage Hill School in Newport Beach, Calif., from 2003 to 2007.

Tilton's Dean of Student Life Rick Johnson has been appointed the first head of school at Beech Hill School which plans to open in September 2012 in the former Hopkinton Independent School facility. Beech Hill will open with grades six and seven.

Kent noted that ISANNE has helped private schools collaborate on many projects to save money. Perhaps this would be a good agenda item for a future NPSAC meeting.

Peter Flint reintroduced himself and thanked the Council for allowing him the opportunity to serve as a NPSAC member.

Eileen Mullen noted that she would like to share with members how the courts have an impact on the education of some children in NH.

Trish Tilley noted that her Bureau does a lot with early childhood education and suggested this be a NPSAC agenda topic sometime.

Marie explained that the State Board of Education had changed their meeting date to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wed. of the month which could create conflicts for Ed and Judy Fillion in the future if the NPSAC meetings were held on the same dates. Possible changes to the next two meeting dates will be emailed to members for their input.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00pm.

Submitted by Marie Morgan

Attachments:

1. Ed 306.18 and Ed 400
2. International Student Conference Summary
3. Driver Licensing Summary (see email attachment)

**ATTACHMENT 1**

Administrative Rule Ed 400 – Approval of Nonpublic Schools

Ed 401.03 - Standard School Year and Modifications. (eff 1-22-05)

(a) The standard school year shall be 180 days.

(b) A school year other than the standard school year shall be approved by the commissioner of education for good cause. Good cause shall include, but shall not be limited to, a flexible program meeting equivalency through more hours per day to equal a standard school year. Alternative scheduling shall ensure that all enrolled students are included.

(c) The standard school year for seniors may be modified so as to reduce the standard school year by no more than 5 days to make adequate preparation for graduation exercises. In no case shall such modification exceed 5 days.

(d) The commissioner of education shall reduce the required 180 day standard school year for the nonpublic school if:

(1) The nonpublic school is able to represent in writing to the commissioner that by reason of an emergency condition or circumstance the nonpublic school is unable to meet such time requirement; and

(2) The commissioner shall decide that the representation is true.

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Administrative Rule Ed 306.18 - Minimum Standards for Public School Approval.

Ed 306.18 School Year. (Changes effective Dec. 15, 2011)

(a) Pursuant to RSA 189:1 and 189:24 each school district shall maintain a school year as provided below:

(1) The school district shall maintain in each elementary school, a school year of at least 945 hours of instructional time and in each kindergarten at least 450 hours of instructional time;

(2) The school district shall maintain in each middle and high school, a school year of at least 990 hours of instructional time. Districts shall provide at least 990 hours of instructional time for grades 7 and 8 in elementary schools that include grades 7, 8 or both;

(3) The school day of an individual student shall not exceed 5.75 hours of instructional time in elementary schools and 6 hours of instructional time in middle and high schools;

(4) The school shall have in its school year an additional 60 hours in duration to provide for instructional time lost due to inclement weather or unexpected circumstances, staff development, and parent-teacher conferences. At least 30 of the 60 additional hours shall be available for rescheduling hours lost due to inclement weather or other emergencies. Schools shall use these additional hours to reschedule lost instructional time before requesting a waiver of the amount of instructional time under RSA 189:2, unless extraordinary

circumstances exist that would place an unreasonable burden on the school or students such as but not limited to substantial building damage;

(5) A school may have a shortened day when an emergency condition exists which might adversely affect the health and safety of students, provided that the number of hours of instructional time originally planned for the day shall be credited to the number of hours of instructional time in the school year, if:

a. On that day, the school would normally have had at least 5.25 hours of instructional time; and

b. The school remained open for at least 3.5 hours of instructional time;

(6) There shall be no requirement to reschedule instructional time for kindergarten if morning or afternoon kindergarten sessions are cancelled due to delayed opening or early release for students in grade 1 or higher; and

(7) A school district may submit a plan to the commissioner that will allow schools to conduct instruction remotely for up to 5 days per year when the school has been closed due to inclement weather or other emergency. The plan shall include procedures for participation by all students. Academic work shall be equivalent in effort and rigor to typical classroom work. There shall be an assessment of all student work for the day. At least 80 percent of students shall participate for the day to count as a school day.

(b) Lunch time, home room periods, passing time, and breaks shall not be counted toward the required amount of instructional time. Elementary schools may count up to 30 minutes of recess per day as instructional time for pupils in kindergarten through grade 6. Advisory periods in middle and high schools shall be counted as instructional time.

(c) The school year for high school seniors may be reduced by no more than 5 days or 30 hours of instruction, whichever is less, from the number of days or hours of instruction for other high school students.

End of section.

Serving the International Student K – 12 Conference – A Quick Summary

Held December 5, 2011 at Rivier College, Nashua, NH

Sponsored by ISANNE, NEASC, NH Department of Education, and

McLane, Graf, Raulerson & Middleton, PA

1. Suzanne Fox, Fox Intercultural Consulting Services, offered suggestions based upon 20+ years experience in US/China educational programming. Her advice:

- Prepare and include your students, faculty, staff, and community members/police in the preplanning meetings. Also, develop a relationship with the international students' parents/schools.
- Verify the abilities of students through online Skype interviews and spontaneous email exchanges.
- Consider building "sister" school relationships to allow for more integrated and cross exchanges.
- Plan a thorough student orientation upon arrival and a "check up" 6 weeks later.
- Special Issues:
  - Food, Health, Laundry, Dorms
- Understand that the students will face some culture shock since most come from very large cities.
- Continuously review the program

Contact: Intercultural Consulting Services; [www.foxintercultural.net](http://www.foxintercultural.net)

2. Attorney Tom Hildreth, McLane Law Firm, and Robert Lucas, US Department of Homeland Security, spoke on immigration law.

- US schools accepting international students issue them "acceptance" documents and the international students in turn bring them to the US consulate in their country for a visa or other appropriate entry documents.
- The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is a program under the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Agency within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). SEVIS, an Internet based application, facilitates timely electronic reporting regarding nonimmigrant students, exchange visitors, approved host schools and colleges, and program sponsors.
- The Manchester Immigration Contact: [Kevin.clouthier@dhs.gov](mailto:Kevin.clouthier@dhs.gov)

Helpful websites: [www.ice.gov/sevis](http://www.ice.gov/sevis); [www.usembassy.gov](http://www.usembassy.gov);

[www.studyinthestates.dhs.gov](http://www.studyinthestates.dhs.gov); [www.nafsa.org](http://www.nafsa.org); [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)

3. Rick Exton, Director, International Student Program, Cardigan Mountain School, provided an overview of his School's program. Cardigan Mt School has a large number of international students. Rick sees these students as agents of change in their countries who also help develop our own students into "globally aware" citizens. Cardigan Mt School offers the international students a 6 week summer program with intensive English sessions in the morning and sports in the afternoon. During the school year students are assigned to advisory groups. The advisors meet with the students 3 times a week to review their progress. The Director of the International Student program meets with the advisors weekly and with the international students during international student lunches or individually as needed. The Director also visits the international students' families before they arrive here. Cardigan has a daily e-newsletter which is sent to all parents. The advisors are also required to update parents at least once every two weeks. Rick also mentioned the issues which need to be anticipated: food choices; health, immunization records, and unusual medicines students bring with them; placement of students during vacations; and other cultural differences.

4. Linda Johnson, The McLane Law Firm, gave an overview of the many issues schools should review to reduce problems. Some key topics include: screening and orienting host families; emergency contact information and consent forms; host family and staff handbooks, enrollment agreements; confidentiality issues, religious needs and awareness; and helping students understand US laws and customs. Primary safety risk factors include: travel or traffic accidents, sexual harassment or assault, and mental health issues including homesickness and depression.

Contact: [linda.johnson@mclane.com](mailto:linda.johnson@mclane.com)

5. ZJ Chen, PhD - Education Division, North American High-Tech Center (NAHTC). Based in Shanghai, China, NAHTC was established to provide a single – stop platform for North-American companies to successfully enter the rapidly growing markets of Greater China. Organized as a private sector enterprise and headquartered in Massachusetts, NAHTC has started two pathway programs to prepare Chinese students to attend US colleges. The first, Massachusetts International Academy, is a boarding school for Chinese students. The second, a new program in China, hosted by two Chinese high schools. NAHTC also sponsors summer and semester programs for US students in China.

Info: [www.nahtc.com](http://www.nahtc.com)

Other presenters and panel members included:

Susan Grodman, Derryfield School

Tom Weatherby and Harry Burnham, Pinkerton Academy

Bo Xu, Phillips Exeter Academy