

Regional Listening Tour

What is Your Vision for New Hampshire Schools?

Note takers recorded stakeholder feedback during the NH Department of Education's Regional Listening Tour in **Keene on November 3, 2016**. This document highlights the high-level summary and common themes from the meeting.

Student Success

- *Kids need to be prepared to be adults – core personal responsibilities (finance).*
- *Develop non-cognitive skills of perseverance and other basic foundational skills – not just content knowledge.*
- *There needs to be meaningful inclusion for special needs students so that they are prepared for life after school.*
- *Engage students in leadership and service to the community in a meaningful way – help them develop as citizens.*

School Characteristics

- *Looking for schools that the community supports – level of parent involvement.*
- *Having a rating schedule to compare schools would be helpful.*
- *Commitment to universal kindergarten. Need to have a pre-K to pre-first readiness component.*
- *Need to offer pre-K program and attend to transportation issues to make it accessible.*
- *Offer civics education.*
- *Need Smarter Balanced Assessment results sooner.*
- *Need to look more at longitudinal data and see how teaching has influenced student success.*
- *Need to have alternatives to Smarter Balanced Assessments and high stakes testing - (such as PACE).*
- *Instructionally offer more tech programs.*
- *Allow teachers to be more empowered to instruct/assess as they know is best – not just focus on standards being met/not met.*
- *Need to spend less time on standardized testing and more time on hands-on opportunities.*
- *Need to have a larger emphasis on environmental education.*
- *Make sure that there are offerings for kids who are both in the middle and gifted – need to challenge them more.*
- *True flexibility for kids to engage in different pathways of learning – allowing kids to really prepare for things other than college.*
- *Need a greater emphasis on science education (and social studies) not just high stakes tested subjects of math and English language arts.*
- *Give more attention to CTE pathways – including financial support for post high-school training.*
- *Schools need to be able to focus on their purpose – academic education – let teachers teach – not be social workers.*

School Success

- *Our system is set up on a factory model – trying to examine each product for quality – not effective – we need to look at the system – how are teachers teaching – interacting with kids in the classroom – best practice will lead to best results.*
- *Can't measure student success the same for every student - every student is not the same as the other. Need to take accountability standards out of the equation and let districts determine what accountability looks like at their district.*

Social Issues & Mental Health

- *Need more support services for students. More social workers needed at the high school (not just the alternative school).*
- *Too much is falling on the shoulders of the teachers – need a bigger support system – home, community and school. Need to be partnering with mental health agencies to address the needs of kids who are falling through the cracks. Many children are seriously at risk.*

Statewide Issues

- *The state needs to look at research on start times for high school – later start better for students – do not let athletics dictate local schedules.*
- *Funding issues need to be addressed to make things happen in our schools.*
- *School leaders and teachers have to be given flexibility to do things differently – need to be supported to try new ideas and innovative approaches.*
- *We need to be able to balance ability to innovate with steady comparable data of student/school learning and success.*
- *Need to get test results in a timely manner – can't use them if they come too late to influence and help kids instructionally.*
- *College Board requirements of the administration of the SAT adds an unnecessary layer of stress.*
- *We need to address issues of unfunded mandates – funding needs to match the populations.*
- *Rating systems need to compare “apples to apples” – recognize demographic differences of schools and communities.*
- *State law shouldn't mandate curriculum – recognize the expertise of teachers – “let the plumbers do the plumbing”.*
- *Need to look at issues of teacher certification – get potential teachers into the classroom sooner and more often to work with kids.*
- *More centralized programs are needed to meet the needs of the deaf/hard of hearing that are spread out across the state – student currently aren't getting the level of services they need.*
- *We need to be having conversations and thinking about what the jobs will be 25 years from now and planning student education accordingly.*