

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 **Manchester on November 22, 2016**. This document highlights the high-level summary and common themes from the meeting.

Career Readiness

- We need more collaboration with colleges and industry.
- Trades need to be seen as good career choices (need to celebrate these choices).
- Continuously evolving skillsets are needed and education needs to provide this.
- Industry certification should be part of high school or college curriculum.
- Certifications are more important and have more value than degrees in some industries.
- There should be a focus on information technology (IT) curriculum.
- Kids need to be more involved with local industry.

Special Education Issues

- What is our plan within the state to better support IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act)?
- What can we do as a group to better support expectations and bring more awareness for the need of more resources and funding for students with disabilities?
- Special education teachers need support (help teachers identify student needs or disabilities through nontraditional ways).

English Learner (EL) Issues

- How can refugees/immigrant parents help their children if they haven't had an opportunity for an education themselves?
- Improve parent communication with Non English speakers; need more parent involvement.
- Parents do not know about options (charters, IEP, 504).
- EL students sometimes have to help parents learn English.
- EL parents are not able to be engaged for multiple reasons.
- EL students feel like they need to prove to their teachers that they are worth being taught.
- Language barriers are what people focus on without looking at what refugees do bring. Focus on opportunities instead of challenges.
- What is the true cost associated with educating an EL student?
- There is an unfortunate automatic low expectation of immigrant students.

Equity Issues

- Increasing equity and improvement needs to be a priority.
- What are we doing to invest in students with special needs?
- Manchester has experienced an increase in students living in poverty.
- Need equal opportunity for all students.
- Budget needs to support students' needs.
- Class sizes are too big – here at Hillside, four classes of 31 in 7th grade math.
- Inequity in NH is drastic and properly identified. We need a level set of understanding statewide.
- Comparative analysis is needed in NH towns because opportunities are vastly different across NH.

- Inequities across the state are the same across Manchester. Outcomes across the city are a huge problem. (I academic outcomes, in higher diverse parts of Manchester).
- Public, private, charters = equity = parents looking for right fit for their child.
- Need support from DOE on equity for those outside the public school system.
- Students stuck in “level 1” or “level 2”- It seems like some are automatically put there. More options are needed for students of color to learn at a higher level.

Supporting Low Performing Schools

- There needs to be a follow-up to focus monitoring. There is a two year process, but then what?
- What is Concord and Washington DC doing to help our lowest performing schools?
- We need to leverage resources.

Data on Student and School Performance

- We want more accountability - for teachers and for our kids.
- We need to make good use of existing technology to get data to support increased funding for IDEA to do what is right and what is best for kids.
- Need to educate the effects of poor funding (specifically IDEA).
- Students are not ready for college. We need to help struggling students to be ready for college.
- We need to follow the child. We need to measure student results so we can then compare apples to apples.
- Schools have no control over many of the environmental issues (home environment, attendance rates), which causes lower academic performance.
- Teachers need direction and more resources to help figure out why some students are not progressing when they should be.
- Data states significant problem for Manchester.
- Need to compare kids internationally--- comparing kids across NH or even across US is not good enough.

Instructional Practices – School and Home

- Teachers try to teach doing the same thing over and over again; need more innovation and new practices.
- Parents need to help support students at home.
- NH DOE needs to work more in conjunction with local school boards as to what DOE has control of versus what local has control over (who has jurisdiction over what) – it is currently very unclear.
- Students/teachers have low expectations because what is offered is bad.
- Summer enrichment programs needed to prevent loss of knowledge in summer.

State Issues

- NH DOE should leverage competencies and demonstration of learning to show outcomes.
- Expectation of proficiencies should be the same.
- School to school regulation is not the same.
- Make sure academic standards go with developmental patterns of how students learn.
- More collaboration with city, state, federal is needed.
- STEM (and funding for) is important.