

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 **Moultonborough on November 1, 2016**. This document highlights the high-level summary and common themes from the meeting.

Student Success

- *Children need multiple opportunities to do their best – in math and reading but also in other subjects and areas that are important to kids.*
- *Need to maintain rigor and high standards.*
- *High school graduates move to next phase of life able to be independent and reflective... "life-ready."*
- *Develop student self-esteem, ethics and independence.*
- *Students need to have marketable skills; workplace skills.*
- *Students need to be able to engage in citizenship.*

School Characteristics

- *The "factory model" for schools isn't working – system needs to be personalized so that content delivery is varied. Inclusion of technology is also important.*
- *Need to instill in students greater purpose and also provide time to develop their passions.*
- *"Exploratories" should become part of core instruction so that students have broader capacities.*
- *Work in partnership/collaboration with other schools and districts to improve student access to programs and broaden offerings.*
- *Provide strong opportunities for students in math and science no matter if pursuing college or career pathway.*
- *Concern that innovation in instructional opportunities for students can be a disadvantage if higher education isn't keeping pace with what K-12 schools do.*
- *Need to expand public education so that it becomes the knowledge center of the community – serve both k-12 students and older adults – helping them to learn new skills and identify the knowledge and skills they possess that can be offered to the community.*
- *Students have to be able to learn with both their heads and hands – preparing all students for life – not just college – consider local jobs and technical jobs, employment in the trades.*
- *Educate the whole child – help students to see themselves that way.*
- *Minimum standards that are tested can be a wall and limit innovation and multiple pathways that students could pursue toward graduation.*
- *Focusing on credits needed for graduation limit possibilities and are not equal across subjects.*
- *Look for creative alternatives to help schools struggling with limited time to teach content and flexibility.*
- *Shift focus to competency-based education and elimination of grades – can be hard to do but important to create the architecture for change.*

School Success

- *Individuals look at where students are going after graduation – want students to be able to get into good colleges. The benefit of good schools is that it draws people into the community and helps keep property values high and taxes low.*
- *Should conduct exit interviews with seniors and encourage them to return to inform the system.*
- *The quality of the school should not be based on test scores, but on the opportunities available to students.*
- *Successful schools will provide different pathways to students – both career and college – giving students skills to make them ready for either route.*

- *Rural schools are at a disadvantage in what they can offer to students – creates the separation between districts ability to offer similar educational experiences.*
- *Examine where graduates are 5 years and 10 years after graduation to determine “success” – not based on test scores.*

Social Issues & Mental Health

- *Schools can't be expected to be solely responsible for all the issues that kids bring to school – hunger, trauma, other mental health issues – need to partner with the community and other organizations.*
- *Need more trauma resources and trainings as well as mental health resources to deal with the issues in rural areas.*
- *Need for age appropriate PreK – 12 curriculum on “consent”, sexual assault, prevention and awareness.*
- *Need statewide mental health class component to be required – families are struggling.*

Statewide Issues

- *Unique economy – issues facing rural NH – declining enrollments. Need to examine the differences in urban, suburban and rural schools.*
- *Declining enrollments shouldn't lead to fewer services/opportunities.*
- *Graduation requirements and credentialing requirement for teachers in the state are at odds – certification of teachers with minimum standards can be a barrier – need to have more flexibility and multiple pathways.*