

HOME EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL
2017 - 2018 REPORT to the
NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
May 10, 2018

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The home education law, RSA 193-A Home Education, Ch. 279 Laws of 1990, relative to compulsory school attendance and to home education, allowed home education to fulfill compulsory attendance (RSA 193:1) and established the Home Education Advisory Council.

The purpose of the original legislation was stated as follows:

“The general court recognizes, in the enactment of RSA 193-A as inserted by section 3 of this act, that it is the primary right and obligation of a parent to choose the appropriate educational alternative for a child under his care and supervision, as provided by law. One such alternative allows a parent to elect to educate a child at home as an alternative to attendance at a public or private school, in accordance with RSA 193-A. The general court further recognizes that home education is more individualized than instruction normally provided in the classroom setting.”

The Home Education Advisory Council consists of six persons representing home education groups organized in New Hampshire, two persons representing the NH DOE, and four persons representing the following education associations: N.H. School Boards Association, N.H. School Administrators Association, N.H. Association of School Principals, and the Nonpublic School Advisory Council; and three non-voting members representing the Legislature: one appointed from the senate education committee by the president of the senate, two appointed from the house education committee by the speaker of the house. A list of the current members of the Council is attached.

The Council was modeled in part after the Non-Public School Advisory Council to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and concerns from both educators/administrators and home-schooling parents over this alternative attendance choice. The duties of the Council are prescribed in administrative rules:

Ed315.10 The Home Education Advisory Council.

(a) The home education advisory council shall carry out those duties assigned to it by the commissioner. The council shall work with home educators and representatives of private and public education to encourage an understanding of home education.

(b) Assigned areas of responsibility for the council shall include the following:

- (1) Developing and maintaining effective communications between home educators and those public, and nonpublic schools and state and local agencies involved in home education;*
- (2) Recommending to the commissioner and state board of education desired changes in rules pertaining to home education;*
- (3) Establishing a grievance committee to hear grievances referred to it by the commissioner,*
- (4) Providing an annual report to the state board on its activities.*

The Council is advisory only and does not create policy, handle fiscal matters, or 2/3
take a position on proposed legislation. The Council has worked to resolve differences of interpretation and opinion regarding the law, the rules, compulsory attendance requirements, dual enrollment opportunities, application of health and labor laws, and other matters. Through the years, the Commissioner has delegated various tasks to the Council, and NHDOE staffers have consulted with the Council in the formation of general policies and in addressing individual situations. The Council meets every two months, September through May. The minutes are posted on the home education section of the DoE website.

With the resignation and retirement of several long serving council members, we decided that having written meeting procedures would make it easier for newer members to become acclimated to council procedures. Also due in part to new membership but also to changes in the Right-to-Know law, the Council invited Assistant Attorney General Nancy Smith to give a presentation on the Law. Invitations were also sent to council members from the Attorney General's office for the annual Administrative Law training workshop held on Friday, March 23. I was able to attend the morning session.

In April, after a review of the NH School Boards Association model policy for home education it was noticed that a section of the policy was not in compliance with RSA 193-A. The School Boards Association was contacted and agreed that the language should be modified. The proposed policy was shared with HEAC at the May meeting. It has been extensively re-worked, and in addition to being in compliance with the law and rules, is easier to understand.

The Council also voted that representatives of the Council request to attend the annual meeting of the NH School Administrators Association to address the administrators concerning the role of HEAC in helping to resolve issues as they arise and before they become serious problems. The Executive director of the association suggested instead the possibility of addressing the executive board as a more practical alternative to the annual meeting since there will be opportunity for answering questions from the board which there would not be at the annual meeting.

The Council has also authorized the chair to contact HHS in order to assist DCYF in better understanding home education and in particular the application of NH home education law and rules. We hope this will enable better communication between DCYF and the Council.

Should you have questions or comments relative to Council meetings, information contained in this report or about home education in general, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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Appended: Home Education Advisory Council Membership List

George D'Orazio, Chairman
Home Educator
Catholics United for Home Education
(603) 623-3377
geolindor@gmail.com 2015-2018

Amy Gall
Home Educator
NH Homeschooling Coalition
amyginnh@yahoo.com 2015-2018

Cara Barlow
Home Educator
Unschooling NH
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Janet Ellis
Home educator
Seacoast Christian Home Educators Association
wakefieldnh@gmail.com 2017-2020

Jennifer Pereira
Home Educator
Catholics United for Home Education
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Kathryn Michelotti
Granite State Home Educators
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Ms. Ellie Riel
Program Specialist
New Hampshire Department of Education
Ellie.Riel@doe.nh.gov N/A

Michael Koski
NH Association of School Principals
mkoski@windhamsd.org 2015-2018

David Parker
Nonpublic School Advisory Council
dparker@parkeracademy.com 2016-2019

Helen Rist
Special Education Director
NH School Administrators Association
hrist@sau16.org 2016-2019

Dr. Amy Fahey
NH Department of Education (higher ed)
aefahey@tds.net 2017-2020

NH School Boards Association (vacant) 2017-2020

Senator Ruth Ward
ruth.ward@leg.state.nh.us *2017

Representative Glenn Cordelli
glenn.cordelli@leg.state.nh.us *2015

Representative Barbara Shaw
beshaw3@comcast.net *2015