

Location: Granite State College 25 Hall St., Concord

In physical attendance: Amanda Weeden (presiding), Tim Carney, Jen Pereira, April Villani, Heather Barker, Rep Glenn Cordelli, Senator Ruth Ward, Michelle Levell (member of the public)

In remote attendance: Sarah Cheek, Jon Daley (member of the public)

Meeting called to order at 2:33pm

Motion for Amanda to be acting chair by April, seconded by Heather, all in favor.

Jen suggested June minutes corrections. April moved to accept June minutes as amended. Tim seconded. All in favor.

Mike Koski resigned from representing the Principal's Association. Cate McLaughlin resigned from representing the Christian Home Educators of NH and Southern ME. Mike Koski has been nominated to fill Cate's seat.

Chairperson's report:

Amanda and Jen gave the year end report to the State Board of Education in August which was positively received.

Amanda reviewed quorum calculation, council member terms, and the Home Education law 193-A and the Home ed rules regarding council purpose and duties. She asked the question, "How can we measure the effectiveness of the Council?" Discussion followed. Annual report to State Board of Education should reflect accomplishment of duties listed in the rules. Glen offered that the council may be more effective now that the meeting dates have been changed to allow participation of the representatives and senators assigned to HEAC. Discussion regarding council communication with the Dept. of Ed and the Commissioner. Suggestions: For awareness, place information regarding some council functions, such as grievance conferences, on HEAC page of Dept of Ed's website. Post policies and procedures developed for the council on its webpage.

NH Education Dept report:

Tim gave Nate Greene, the Bureau Administrator, initial comments relative to Ed 315 rules changes needed due to the passage of House Bill 1663. Information on the rule-making process and timeline will be shared with HEAC.

Tim reported that Adult Education rules 700 are being revised. As recommended by HEAC, Ed 704.02(f) has been proposed to be modified to remove the requirement that a home education participating agency "attest" that a home education student may sit for the HiSET exam. The proposal also removes the requirement that the student needs to pass the GED official practice test in order to take the HiSET.

The Dept has contacted the NH School Boards Association, the NH Association of School Principals, and Rep Glen Cordelli regarding nominations to fill vacant council seats. The Nonpublic School Advisory Council will also be asked for a HEAC nomination when they next convene. The department is now accepting nominations for the home educator seat vacant after Cate's resignation.

Tim reported that advertising for the position of NH Education Dept Education Freedom Account (EFA) Administrator, both internally and externally, closed this week. The Children's Scholarship Fund should be contacted for any questions about the EFA program until a new administrator is hired.

Tim has reached out to the administrator of the YES Scholarship website to ask for correction to "Eligible Students" listed. Tim is working on FAQs for HEAC webpage.

Regarding the now passed HB 1663 relative to Equal Access to public school programs by nonpublic, public charter, and home educated pupils, Tim reported that a draft technical assistance advisory is being developed by the NH Education Dept. It has been requested that HEAC be given the opportunity to review and comment on this document.

Member reports:

Sarah reported that 10 families backed out of a wait list for Acton Academy due to financial reasons, and the other Acton academy is seeing a similar thing happening. The NH Homeschooling Coalition will host a talk at the Fiske Free Library in Claremont on Sept 29th at 5:30pm about homeschooling in NH, legal requirements, how to get started, EFA participation, and meeting other homeschoolers. Jen reported that Catholics United for Home Education is seeing increases in membership and just held their annual statewide Homeschool Mass and gathering. Granite State Home Educators (GSHE) reported regarding their conversations with Keene State College to clarify current NH home education law and facilitate the college's improvement of the admission process for home education families. They also reported on their conversations with NH's Virtual Learning Academy Charter School (VLACs) to clarify their part-time versus full time status definition. GSHE said that they were told VLACs will allow students to be considered "part-time" even when enrolled in six or more of their courses. Students become "full-time" when they go through the VLACs process to become fully enrolled at VLACs. GSHE also made everyone aware of the many homeschool activities their group is offering. Heather reported that she has been relaying home education information learned through her participation on the council to the NH School Administrators Association. Rep Glen Cordelli said he participated in a panel on homeschooling in Ossipee and addressed EFA questions. Senator Ruth Ward reported that a bill was passed to employ a NH Special Education Advocate. A search is underway to fill this position with someone familiar with special education and the legal system.

Old Business:

Equal Access – all SAUs must have a policy as of 8/31/22 according to passed HB 1663.

Prenda Program currently falls under RSA 193-A, although the Council has recommended that it not fall under this pathway. Prenda contract was extended through Sept 2024 as of Dec 8, 2021 at the exec council meeting. GSHE reports pathway notification confusion for those trying to register for Prenda. Amanda reports families complaining to GSHE about difficulty communicating with the managing organization of the EFA including regarding how to end their EFA program participation.

New Business:

Voting on HEAC Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary postponed. HEAC policy development to continue.

Public Comment: Jon Daley of Hillsboro says he participates in the EFA program, and Kate Demers is quite responsive. He experienced trouble with class wallet and was able to get it working with Kate's

assistance. Seems like there's a lot of money involved with the 10% for the EFA program. Communication with the EFA program, especially via email, can take months. Phone calls are better. EFA staff seem overworked and understaffed. He doesn't see any difficulty with the EFA application. He tried the Yes! Scholarship and couldn't figure out how he could spend the money on anybody; it's very restrictive.

Motion to adjourn at 4:20pm by April, second Tim, all in favor.

Minutes by Jen P