New Hampshire State Plan for Equitable Access to Excellent Educators Task Force

Meeting Minutes ~ January 9, 2017

Meeting Attendees:

Helene Anzalone NH Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education
Kevin Bohlin Education Initiative Coordinator, Northeast Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services
Tracy Bricchi SAU 88 Lebanon School District Curriculum Director
Lucy Canotas Assistant Principal - Timberlane School District
Bonnie Dunham Parent Information Center
Julia Emley Interpreter
Rachel Farell Interpreter
Ethel Gaides SAU 48 Asst. Superintendent
Aaron Hughes NH Department of Education, Title III ESOL State Director
Mary Lane NH Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education
Tessa McDonnell Spark-NH
Judy McGann Lin-Wood Interim Superintendent
Michele Munson SAU 71 Superintendent
Nan Parsons Upper Valley Educators Institute
Andrea Reade Northeast Comprehensive Center (NECC)
Karen Soule Lead for Educator Effectiveness, NH Department of Education
Jonathan G. Vander Els New Hampshire Learning Initiative
Susan Wolf-Downes Executive Director, Northeast Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (NDHHS)

Meeting Purpose

To bring together a diverse group of stakeholders and internal Department staff to serve as a task force that will examine the current equity issues in New Hampshire schools as part of the process to develop an Equitable Access to Excellent Educators Plan by June 1, 2015; and, to serve in an ongoing capacity to periodically review the implementation and levels of success of strategies within the plan.

Welcome to Stakeholder Members and Introduction of New Members

Mary Lane provided the group with helpful tips to use during this meeting to communicate with the deaf and hard of hearing. Two interpreters are in attendance that will use American Sign Language. First, please raise hand to announce your name, tell interpreter when you are finished and then give enough time for the interpreter to communicate what was said before the next person begins.

Karen Soule welcomed members and introductions were given. Additional Potential Strategies/Supporting Equitable Access will be first on the agenda.

Review of Agenda and Approval of March Meeting Notes

October meeting notes were approved.

Additional Potential Strategies/Supporting Equitable Access through ESSA

Personalized Learning – New Hampshire Learning Initiative (PowerPoint presentation)

Jonathan G. Vander Els, Executive Director provided an overview of the New Hampshire Learning Initiative. Jonathan has spent eleven years in administration, the last eight as the principal in the Sanborn Regional School District working with staff on Professional Learning Communities and competency education.

The mission of the New Hampshire Learning Initiative is to accelerate innovation in K-12 education to move schools forward in helping our students become competent and confident adults, able to pursue the futures they seek in college, career and beyond.
Resource for competency education: CompetencyWorks is an online resource providing information and knowledge about competency education. CompetencyWorks is supported by private funding. Please visit: http://www.competencyworks.org/

New Hampshire is supporting the following efforts, including, but not limited to:

- **Performance Assessment of Competency Education (PACE)**
  In 2015, New Hampshire was awarded permission from the U.S. Department of Education to pilot an accountability system, PACE. PACE is based on a competency-based educational approach designed to ensure that students have opportunities to achieve critical knowledge and skills. NH PACE is a strategy that offers a reduced level of standardized testing together with locally developed common performance assessments.

  School districts implementing PACE administer the Smarter Balanced assessment once in elementary school, once in middle school and once in high school - in three grades instead of seven. In all other years, the PACE districts administer common and local “performance assessments” developed by the school districts and validated at the state level.

  School districts are invited to participate in NH PACE and can apply throughout the year.

- **Work Study Practices**
  Participating school districts, with over 100 NH teachers involved, are taking part in the Work Study Practices (WSP) of Communication, Collaboration, Creativity, and Self-Direction. Teachers are translating these success skills into curriculum, instruction, and assessment within their schools and classrooms.

- **NG2 (No Grades, No Grades)**
  NG2 is a project of the New Hampshire Learning Initiative in collaboration with the New Hampshire Department of Education. The objective of NG2 is to provide opportunities for all students to reach their goals through competencies. NG2 is supported by private funding.

  Five elementary schools in New Hampshire are taking part in this project by piloting methods for combining competency-based learning and performance assessments in multi-age learning settings. The five elementary schools are Ashland (SAU 2), Pittsfield (SAU 7), Parker Varney (SAU 37), Bakie and Memorial (SAU 17).

- **Supporting School Leadership Resource: School ReTool** is a professional development community that helps school leaders redesign school culture using research-based practices.

- Building a PreK-20 statewide system through personalized, competency-based learning.

Question from Bonnie Dunham, Parent Information Center:

*How will schools ensure that a student with unique learning needs is not left behind?*

Jonathan: School staff (“all hands on deck”) will look at the competencies to determine how a particular student can achieve the competencies through clear, measurable and individualized learning objectives.

Kevin Bohlin, Northeast Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services asked about private funding. Jonathan: Private funding is not federal funding. Private funding is without government involvement. It comes from private organizations, i.e., Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Conversation took place regarding self-advocacy skills. Students should know how to advocate for themselves. Self-advocacy skills are important and teaching these skills should start in Preschool.
Manchester Community Schools PowerPoint
Jaime Hoebeke, Division Head of the Manchester Health Department and part of the Community Schools Team was not able to attend due to a prior commitment. Karen Soule shared the Manchester Community Schools PowerPoint presentation.

Health and social issues are among the factors for high poverty rates within areas of Manchester. Over half of Manchester School District’s children are receiving public assistance. New Hampshire communities need to be aware of the three types of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs): abuse, neglect and household dysfunction (i.e., mental illness, divorce, substance abuse). A child experiencing adverse events in their life has increased odds for adult diseases; number one is depression (mental illness).

The Manchester Community Schools approach is to bring together community partners, by using public schools as neighborhood hubs, to offer a variety of supports to the community (children, families). Goal: To increase student attendance and to get families actively involved in their child’s education.

A resource for attendance issues is Attendance Works - [http://www.attendanceworks.org/](http://www.attendanceworks.org/). Attendance Works is an initiative that promotes better policy and practice around school attendance by partnering with families and community organizations to intervene when poor attendance is an issue for students or schools.

A question came up regarding rural schools and districts not having access to similar resources that more urban districts had available. In more rural communities it is important to reach out to the community members, as well as regional resources and work together to find solutions.

Using Evidence under ESSA to Support Equitable Access
Handout: Using Evidence as a Local Educational Agency to Strengthen Education Investments and Achieve Student Outcomes

Karen Soule talked about using evidence under ESSA. There are four levels for the definition of “evidence-based:

- Level 1: Strong evidence – involves a control group
- Level 2: Moderate evidence – quasi research without a control group
- Level 3: Promising evidence – a practice that is working
- Level 4: Evidence that demonstrates a rationale – new practice

Question from Kevin Bohlin, Northeast Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services: What type of evidence should be used, qualitative or quantitative? Qualitative or quantitative evidence can be used; however, Level 1 must have a control group.


Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Updates
Handout: Regional Listening Tour Questions

Andrea Reade provided an ESSA update. Over the last several of months, the Department held seven (7) Regional Listening Tours around New Hampshire to gather input from citizens on what they value in an educational system. Input was also collected via an online survey. The Listening Tours were held in Moultonborough, Keene, Gorham, Exeter, Merrimack, Concord and Manchester. The presentation and summaries of the feedback received can be found at the following link: [http://education.nh.gov/essa/index.htm](http://education.nh.gov/essa/index.htm).
The online survey had close to 99 responses. The survey results are currently being reviewed and will be posted on the NHDOE website in the near future. Karen Soule will inform the group when the survey results are available.

Andrea Reade and NHDOE representatives have been working with the Manchester schools to help problem solve issues and put resources into place for students and their families in need.

Focus Groups – Over the last year, Andrea Reade and NHDOE representatives have met with four school districts that have been identified as schools or districts that have a large percentage of beginning educators and students in poverty using the last three years of data. The Superintendents from these four districts were asked to convene a representative group of stakeholders to participate in a focus group to share their stories about their school and/or district to determine if there are ensuring equitable access to all their students.

To determine potential next steps, the focus groups examined their data and focused on questions such as “What are they doing well? What do they need help with?” Andrea and the NHDOE are available to follow up and assist schools and districts in developing action plans providing access to resources and supports.

Wrap Up and Next Steps
Ethel Gaides will email Karen Soule the details on the Digital Equity conference coming up in February.

1. The following will be emailed to task force members:
   - New Hampshire Learning Initiative PowerPoint
   - Manchester Community Schools PowerPoint
   - UTube video re: the FCC’s E-rate program (lessening the amount of school funds)

2. Add Kevin Bohlin from Northeast Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services to the email distribution list.

Next meeting date:

Monday, March 27, 2017
NHDOE – Room 15
3:30 – 5:30 PM