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## **High School Seniors Rewarded for Completing Rigorous Course of Study**

### **Nearly 200 students recognized as New Hampshire Scholars**

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Students that challenge themselves in high school by taking a more rigorous course of study are better prepared for college and career. This is the message through the New Hampshire Scholars program all incoming freshman at partner high schools receive beginning in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Now over 1,000 students have signed on as participants of the Scholars program in ten partner school districts across the state.

Winnisquam, Gilford, Belmont, Kingswood, Newport, Claremont, Franklin, Newmarket, Merrimack and Litchfield are actively engaged as State Scholars school districts.

In June these seniors will be honored at their schools' senior award nights having completed the required rigorous course of study. They will each receive gold medallions to wear during their graduation ceremony and some will be rewarded with scholarships from local business sponsors.

Students participate in the program by pledging to enroll and successfully complete a challenging course of study. Both students and parents sign the pledge. Once in the program, students receive ongoing support through reinforcement activities and program incentives. Activities range from college planning presentations, career-related outings, and mentoring provided by local business leaders.

“While we recognize students who are already on a rigorous track, the program especially targets students who may need a little more motivation or incentive to go above and beyond high school graduation requirements,” says NH Scholars Director Scott Power. “We have seen a dramatic increase with enrollment in these core courses, especially math and science. This program challenges students and when kids see the relevance in their course work, they accept the challenge. We have an opportunity to change expectations here in the state by encouraging our students to ask more of themselves,” Power added.

Several high schools have seen enrollment triple in courses such as physics and algebra II. The New Hampshire Scholars curriculum is the type of course work colleges and employers are looking for their applicants to excel in.

Partner schools have also developed business advisory councils to collaborate on ways to engage students in 21<sup>st</sup> century learning. Forty-five New Hampshire business partners provide support, mentoring and ideas for workshops to the districts. These mentors work with students by encouraging them to develop a 4-year personalized education plan. In collaboration with their guidance counselor, students maintain a challenging curriculum in addition to learning critical 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

New Hampshire Scholars is part of the State Scholars Initiative, a national program that motivates students, beginning in Grade 8, to complete a rigorous course of study in high school—one that will give them a boost in college and careers. New Hampshire Scholars strengthens the student's ability to gain high level skills by taking four years of English, three years each of math and science, three and one-half years of social studies and two years of a foreign language. Whatever the student's educational or work objectives, this course of study is the foundation of success for post-high school.

The project began in 2007 at six New Hampshire school districts. Today ten districts participate with momentum gaining to expand statewide. New Hampshire is one of 24 states actively participating in the State Scholars Initiative. Visit [www.NHscholars.org](http://www.NHscholars.org) for more information or contact Scott Power, New Hampshire's director at [spower@nhcuc.org](mailto:spower@nhcuc.org).