



NH Scholars Scoop

Retreat Sparks Sustainability Discussion

On March 12th, over fifty administrators and business leaders attended the **New Hampshire Scholars Retreat**. Representatives from pilot schools, new districts and interested schools engaged in valuable discussion concerning academic rigor, core courses, data collection, project sustainability and best practices.

State Representative and Chair of the House Education Committee, Emma Rous, energized the audience with opening remarks. She stressed the importance of **working together across grade levels** in the best interest of students.

Senator Iris Estabrook, the Chair of the Senate Education Committee urged all of us to **engage students as early as possible**. She

said, early awareness, both in terms of career exploration and college planning is essential to preparing today's students for tomorrow's challenges.

We heard examples of the great work that Winnisquam School District has done. The commitment in this project starting with the superintendent, principals, guidance, school to career and business partnerships is remarkable.

Paul Leather, NH Department of Education, cited that academic rigor is so important because the magnitude of our competition is changing and the nature of work is changing. He also echoed the sentiment that the **single greatest predictor of post-high school success is the**



Attendees learned that NH Scholars are recognized by all states.

quality and intensity of the student's high school curriculum.

Clearly the work our schools are doing to increase rigor is an important one and NH Scholars is making an impact on this issue in districts across the state.

Interested in learning more about college readiness? Attend the **Rigor, Relevance, Curriculum Alignment, and P-16 Collaboration** on April 25th in Worcester

<http://professionals.collegeboard.com/prof-dev/regions/new-england/symposium>

Showcase Addresses Access Issues in NH

On March 31st NHCUC and Campus Compact for NH hosted the first ever **College Access Showcase** at The Event Center at CR Sparks in Bedford.

Over 130 administrators from the K-12 and Higher Ed community convened to discuss the issues of college

access and readiness.

Attendees learned about various access programs in New Hampshire and shared best practices on ways we collaboratively can work together.

Scott Power (NH Scholars) and Deb Connell (Department of Education)

presented on ways we can encourage students to take rigorous courses.

To learn more about the Access Initiative and to view all presentations from the event, visit <http://www.nhcuc.org/index.asp?page=access>

Inside this issue:

School Spotlight on Franklin School District 2

The Importance of Longitudinal Data 2

NH's Loan Market Impacts Students 2

What is the Definition of Academic Rigor? 3

Granite State Scholars - Aid for USNH Students 3

Community Colleges Launch New Names 3

Dropouts Impact the Economy in NH 4

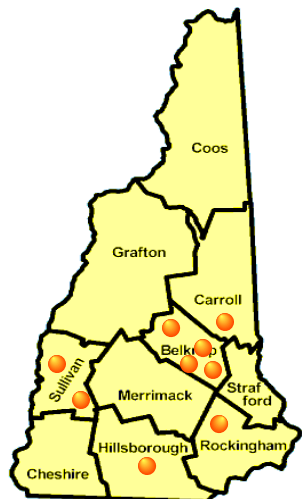
Resources on the web in New Hampshire

- www.NHscholars.org
- www.VisitNHcolleges.org
- www.intern2careerNH.org
- www.nhcuc.org
- www.compactNH.org
- www.NHfuture.org
- www.collegeaccess.org
- www.collegereadyne.org
- www.vlacs.org (Virtual HS)
- www.ed.state.nh.us/i4see



School Spotlight

Hello Franklin School District!



There are 9 active Scholars districts. A handful of other districts are expected to sign on this spring.

Last month, Merrimack and Newmarket joined the six pilot schools. This month, we welcome the **Franklin School District** into the fold.

An introduction to the program was presented to current eighth graders and their parents at freshman orientation night.

There, Michele Niese-Mrak from the University of New Hampshire admissions team, spoke about the importance of a student's high school

transcript. She urged students to begin thinking about their future now. The types of courses, grades they receive and course level help set apart applicants in the very competitive college admissions environment.

Having heard this, students and parents easily saw the importance of New Hampshire Scholars and its impact both on college preparation and college acceptance.

As the number of schools

interested in participating grows, momentum builds towards sustainability. All of the partners including NHCUC, CCNH and the Department of Education are committed to supporting an effort of long-term statewide reach.

Superintendents and school boards have been consistent in their desire to include all students in this project. It is critical to customize the core courses to ensure that all districts and all students can participate.

Data Collection

The next round of data is for the Spring 2008 school year.

Schools are encouraged to begin using *Performance Pathways* on the i.4.see data system.

We encourage new schools to upload data in this next round. We can provide support for your data upload and help you get started.

Next month there should be some analytical results we can share from this first year of data retrieval. The more data we have, the more ways we are able to analyze and evaluate trends.

Longitudinal data follows the performance of individual students over time. It enhances snapshot data and provides an opportunity for

greater mining of information. Most states are still simply using **snapshot data**. NH is fortunate to have a longitudinal system now in place.

Visit www.NHscholars.org/Article.cfm for ways schools can use longitudinal data to help better prepare teachers for incoming students.

Your next State Scholars Initiative submissions are due this summer (Date TBD soon)

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High school seniors entering college next fall are encouraged to secure student loans early. Those waiting until the summer may find themselves with limited loan options. For loan options visit www.simpletuition.com

Rough Economy Impacts Student Loan Access

Banks and lenders whom students turn to help fund their college education, are feeling the crunch of the slow market. Many lenders, including the NH Higher Education Assistance Foundation (NHHEAF) will not offer alternative student loans this year.

WMUR-TV reports that

4,800 students relying on the alternative *LEAF@* loan are left scrambling for other alternatives for Fall 2008.

Many lenders are unable to raise the capital needed because investors have been scared away by the sub-prime mortgage crisis.

The Federal Reserve seems to be taking steps to bolster

the economy in order to ensure that financial markets remain viable.

Financial aid offices at colleges in New Hampshire are working with accepted students to assist them in their search for loan resources.

Students should file the FAFSA to ensure the maximum aid. www.fafsa.ed.gov



What is Academic Rigor?

New Hampshire Scholars has come a long way since it's inception last year. In recent months, the momentum has risen as more and more superintendents look to bring the program to their district.

In collaboration with the NH Department of Education, the NH College & University Council and Campus Compact for NH, steps are being taken to ensure this project continues to grow.

As was reiterated at the retreat, the need to customize the program to fit our state is critical. This means we will continue to work in terms of providing a flexible, yet rigorous **core course of study**.

In a recent survey from The Center for Governmental Studies at NIU, it was found that State Scholar Directors' definition of "rigor" revealed considerable variation in their thinking, variations that were mirrored to a degree by employers who did not

believe that the business community agreed on a definition of educational rigor.

New Hampshire's goal is to develop a core course of study that provides more **flexibility of courses**, especially in math and science. Working with K-12, Higher Ed and business leaders we aim to customize New Hampshire Scholars to provide additional flexibility without diminishing academic rigor.

What is your definition of academic rigor?

- Courses that challenge students to work harder
- Adequate college prep
- Emphasis on math/science
- Work-based or extended learning components
- GPA or high level courses
- Well-rounded program of study
- Acquiring 21st century skills needed in the workplace

These are only a few definitions from various State Directors. We need your feedback. Send your definition to spower@nhcuc.org

Confused Over SSI and Granite State Scholars?

You know what *New Hampshire Scholars* is, but what is Granite State Scholars?

The purpose of **Granite State Scholars** to provide the incentive for highly qualified NH residents to pursue study at NH public institutions and to provide an incentive for NH public institutions to establish endowments for the purpose

of providing need-based scholarships to eligible students.

The NH Department of Education requests a list from all NH high schools (both public and private) of their students who are in the **top 10%** of the graduating class **and have combined SAT I scores of 1200** (currently math and reading

comprehension) or an equivalent ACT score.

Keene State, Plymouth State and UNH have established endowments for this.

Eligible students must be designated as a Granite State Scholar; **demonstrate financial need as determined by the federal formula**; and be a NH resident.

Guidance offices must have submitted names by February 22nd.

Visit www.nh.gov/postsecondary/financial/G_S_Schol.html or contact Mary Mayo for more information. mmayo@ed.state.nh.us

Community Colleges Earn New Names

The community colleges of New Hampshire are running full steam ahead in their drive to meet the growing demand for a two-year education in the state.

The name change reflects the system's aggressive plan to enhance education at the colleges. In addition, major construction projects

throughout the system, including new classroom buildings, health education facilities, student centers and renovations of existing structures, continue to march towards completion.

The campaign comes as colleges throughout the system continue their work to provide **affordable ac-**

cess to college and career training, **strengthen ties to New Hampshire's four-year colleges** to ensure a smooth transfer from the community colleges, and enhance their mission to prepare a skilled workforce for the state's economy.

Visit them today at www.ccsnh.edu



New Names are:

White Mountains Comm. College, Lakes Region Community College, Great Bay Community College, River Valley Community College, Manchester Community College, Nashua Community College, NHTI—Concord's Comm. College



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College Ready, Work Ready, Ready for Life.



New Hampshire Scholars is part of the State Scholars Initiative, a national program that uses business leaders to motivate 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 encourages and motivates **ALL** high school students to complete a rigorous course of study that prepares them for college and careers.



This is a Federal grant-funded program developed and administered through a partnership between the New Hampshire College and University Council, Campus Compact for New Hampshire, the New Hampshire Forum on the Future, the New Hampshire Department of Education and the National State Scholars Initiative Network.

Visit www.NHscholars.org for more information.
Click on the "Resources" tab for archived newsletters.

Poorly Prepared Students Have A Negative Impact On The Economy

Approximately **4,400** students did not graduate from New Hampshire's high schools in 2007; the lost lifetime earnings in New Hampshire for that class of dropouts alone are more than **\$1.1 billion**.

New Hampshire would save more than **\$63.6 million** in health care costs over the lifetimes of each class of dropouts had they earned their diplomas.

If New Hampshire's high schools graduated all students ready for college, the state would save almost **\$13.1 million** a year in community college remediation costs and lost

earnings.

New Hampshire's economy would see a combination of crime-related savings and additional revenue of about **\$15.4 million** each year if the male high school graduation rate increased by just 5%.

According to the NH Department of Education, there were 2,344 dropouts during 2004-2005 compared to 2,500 one year earlier.

Commissioner Lyonel Tracy said "Although even one dropout is cause for concern, this slight reduction in the dropout rate is a step in the right direction. With the Governor's proposal to in-

crease the compulsory attendance age from 16 to 18, and the accompanying commitment to offer alternative education and more learning options, we will see more dramatic decreases."

The numbers translate to an annual dropout rate of 3.5%, down from 3.8%. The cumulative rate declined from 14.4% to 13.3%.

Although public high school enrollment hit an all time high of 66,800, up 1,300 from last year, the number of dropouts was down.

Source: *Alliance for Excellent Education 2007 and the NH Department of Education*



By providing incentives and constant reinforcement, **New Hampshire Scholars** aims to decrease drop out rates and increase postsecondary attendance rates.