



NH Scholars Scoop

College Ready, Work Ready, Ready for Life

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Volume 2

Scholars Initiative Gains Strong Momentum

Word spreads quickly in New Hampshire. Scott Power spoke about *NH Scholars* at both the Commissioner's Meeting on November 2nd and the North Country Superintendents Meeting on November 8th. A goal of increasing to a total of 12 school districts this winter seems to have underestimated the interest in the State. Superintendents from across the State have expressed sincere interest in actively participating during this next phase. Potentially, another 11-12 schools will be added to the 6 pilot schools this year. This interest promises to increase momentum throughout New Hampshire. By expanding the program this winter, we take a giant step closer to sustainability. Marketability and visibility will only help *NH Scholars* in its drive for implementation and statewide sustainability.

Course Rigor Impacts Financial Aid

How can we measure the rigor of courses our students take? Here's one way. The most recent Federal grant to be integrated into the financial aid system is called the **ACG** (*Academic Competitiveness Grant*). It combines both demonstrated need through the FAFSA (*Free Application for Federal Student Aid*) with the student's high school transcript. Last year, **\$1,009,072** was awarded to **1,195** New Hampshire students via the ACG. At first glance, one million dollars sounds like a lot of money. However, only **26.9%** of 1st time, full-time Pell Grant eligible recipients in NH received the ACG. This means, of the total number of Pell recipients in NH, only one-quarter (26.9%) followed a rigorous high school program of study (i.e. State Scholars, Dual Enrollment Program, AP courses/scores, etc). Being "Pell eligible" tells us they qualified for *need*, but did not meet the requirements of a rigorous program of study.

And while New Hampshire's numbers were better than the National average (**25.6%**), it speaks volumes to the notion that our students can be challenging themselves more in the classroom.

According to the ED report, the National Department of Education has set a goal to **double the number of students** receiving the ACG by 2010. *The New Hampshire Scholars Initiative* can help in changing the culture by informing students and parents that our potential is not being met.



The New Hampshire report can be seen at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/smart/performance.html>. On aside, \$676,663 in National Science & Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (**SMART**) Grants was awarded to 195 New Hampshire students last year. With increased emphasis on math and science via *NH Scholars*, this number will increase as we convey the importance of these skills and subject material relative to in-demand, high skill careers.

Are New Hampshire Students Prepared for Life After High School?

New Hampshire's economy is changing as quickly as anywhere in the country. According to *Achieve Inc.*, **88%** of the State's fastest growing jobs will require some college or training beyond high school by the year 2012, including an estimated 12,600 jobs related to computer technology. Did you know that **70%** of the careers today's middle school students will be interested in have not even been invented yet? So, how are we to prepare our students for a career that doesn't even have parameters at this time? The short answer is this:

Our job is to provide today's students with all of the tools, resources, support and guidance possible so that our students have ample options to choose from when deciding on colleges, careers and their future.

How does New Hampshire stack up?

NH Freshman graduating from high school in 4 years? **79%**
National Average: **70%**, Top State: **85%**

Are 8th graders ready for high school? Percentage at or above proficiency (NAEP)

Math – NH: **35%**, National Average: **28%**
Reading – NH: **38%**, National Average: **30%**
Science – NH: **42%**, National Average: **29%**

Looking at these figures, many people may wonder why all the concern over course rigor and college readiness. It appears New Hampshire stacks up pretty well. Moving forward, let's look at some numbers that NH may improve upon.

Are 8th graders taking Algebra?

NH: **32%**, National Average: **41%**

Are 11th/12th graders taking AP exams?

NH: **9%**, National Average: **12%**



The last two figures explain why a larger percentage of New Hampshire students are not receiving the Federal grants in the previous segment. By stressing the importance of their high school years and the value of a rigorous core curriculum, all of these numbers will rise. For students to have the opportunity to take upper level/rigorous math courses in high school, the need to complete Algebra in 8th Grade becomes more essential. Heading to high school without it, minimizes the course options they have later on.

Data Collection Update

As you know, WICHE (Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education) requires data from at least **4** of the pilot schools in the state. **Thank you** to Cyndy Currier (SERESC) and Michael Schwartz (NHDOE) for assisting in these efforts. Also, thank you to Gilford (Brenda McGee), Newport (Darlene Dodge), Winnisquam (Suzan Gannett) and Claremont (Charlie Gessner) for providing all of the data we needed for this round. Michael will be completing the necessary demographic information and we will have satisfied WICHE's deadline of November 26th.

I am still in conversation with WICHE as to the deadline for the next round of data collection. Data from the fall grading period is **due sometime in February**. I understand the timeframe of your grading schedules, thus I am working with WICHE in order to provide enough time after the term ends. I might suggest organizing any data you can prior to the end of the term to make your upload of data a bit easier at crunch time.

The *PowerSchool* template is being revised and should be available shortly for any school that might need it.

School Spotlight

Sharing best practices and ideas amongst ourselves will enable us to provide the best possible programs at our individual school districts. Here are some highlights over the recent month.

Winnisquam Regional High School: AUTOSERV of Tilton sponsored a pizza question and answer session/party for over 50 students for current *NH Scholar* participants and interested prospects. Tom Cavanaugh (and his wife) of AUTOSERV organized and presented information to the students regarding the benefits of taking rigorous courses through this initiative. Prizes were given to students who answered educational trivia questions related to program and educational requirements. The Department of Transportation and Franklin Savings Bank were also active. The New Hampshire National Guard and Sgt. Allan Baros will be sponsoring the December meeting.

This is a great example of how business leaders can provide continuous reinforcement to students. Students require instant gratification and rewards. And while we all understand the long-term benefits of NH Scholars, students need constant reminders.

I commend Gary at Winnisquam Regional High School and his entire business partnership committee for their energy and commitment.



All schools are encouraged:

To send me your highlights, activities and ideas so that others can benefit from your success.

Please share.

What Are Other States Doing?

New Hampshire is one of 22 states actively participating. While State Scholars was formalized in 2002 by President Bush, some states already had a model in place since the mid-90s. That being said, New Hampshire can benefit from their successes and implement some of their ideas into ones that also work for us here in NH.



Massachusetts

The Bay State is beginning to implement a model of **graduated exposure to college and career**, increasing as students get older. 9th graders would visit local college campuses hosted by students at the college who are alumni of the high school, 10th graders would participate in a short-term job shadow, 11th graders participate in an internship, and 12th graders partake on work-based or service learning projects.

Indiana

Their State Scholars program has been implemented statewide through a **Governor's mandate**. Their State Scholars curriculum is now the standard to graduate high school. Students actually "sign off" when they choose not to participate. They have a **3-tiered diploma** program in which students can graduate high school (Indiana Core 40, Indiana Core 40 w/ Academic Honors and Indiana Core 40 w/ Technical Honors Curriculum).

Tennessee

Colleges not only recognize State Scholar graduates, but they also reward them with **grant money**. Public colleges in the state provide tuition discounts for State Scholar applicants. This means, not only do State Scholars have more Federal grant options (ACG, SMART), they also receive academic scholarships as well.

Here at Home

As we develop New Hampshire's sustainability plan, these and many other ideas will be discussed to find the right rewards and incentives for our students. The sky is the limit and *New Hampshire Scholars* intends to pursue all opportunities.

In the News

As we continue to address the needs of our students, college access and college readiness remains a hot button topic. *The New Hampshire Scholars Initiative* and the *New Hampshire College & University Council* are pursuing ways to centralize these efforts. Look for increased involvement from *NH Scholars* in the following projects:

- College Ready New England – through the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE). A group of higher education professionals in New Hampshire aim to collaborate on ways students and parents can more easily access the college readiness programs throughout the State.
www.collegereadyne.org
 - Check out the College Readiness Summit in Boston on November 30th. The *NH Scholars* director and *NHCUC* will attend and will report back.
<http://www.nebhe.org/content/view/235/135/>
- Know How 2 Go campaign - A social marketing plan targeting middle school and high school students informing them about their options beyond high school.
www.knowhow2go.org

Please take advantage of these *free* resources:

- Virtual High School (www.vlacs.org) – Free Online Courses to supplement courses in your high school
- Kuder Online Career Planning System (www.kuder.com) – Call me for access
- Early College Planning Presentations for Parents of K-8 – Call me to schedule (*topics include saving for college, funding options, the importance of early awareness, academic preparedness, etc*)

Thank you for all of your hard work involving this initiative. Please call me with any questions or concerns. We will be developing a customized NH brochure and I will let you know when those will be printed.

Please consider the following objectives this month:

- **Connect with your business partners to begin presentations and workshops not only for 8th graders, but also in the high school** (potential workshops may include mock interviews, resume writing, etc).
- **Think about creative ways to motivate and engage your students and parents concerning *NH Scholars*** (activities, lunch meetings, workshops, contests, name recognition board, morning announcements, start a club, school newsletters, school web site, etc).

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Click on "Resources" tab for archived newsletters.