

For immediate release

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## **New Board Supports More Rigorous K-12 Education for NH New Hampshire Scholars Leadership Board is Formed**

**Manchester** – A new advisory board of business, higher education, and K-12 leaders has been created to support the work of New Hampshire Scholars, a collaborative project of the New Hampshire College & University Council, community partners and the New Hampshire Department of Education. The new board convened on June 8, 2009 at Southern New Hampshire University to discuss the importance for high school students to attain high-level skills necessary for college and the workplace.

New Hampshire became the twenty-fourth state in the nation to join the State Scholars Network in 2007. The program encourages students, beginning in eighth grade, to enroll in a challenging, rigorous core course curriculum. Volunteers called “Champions,” provide classroom presentations and support to local school districts. Students realize the relevance of their daily coursework when they hear the importance of them from local professionals.

A New Hampshire Scholar student must complete the prescribed core courses including English, Math, Lab Science, Social Science and Foreign Language requirements. According to Achieve®, research shows that students who take more rigorous courses are significantly more likely to succeed in postsecondary education and the workplace than other students. Sixteen participating school districts in New Hampshire have already realized increased enrollment in the core courses, particularly science and math. Students are accepting the challenge.

Members of the Leadership Board will endorse the initiative as an important aspect of a student’s academic development. In an effort to achieve statewide sustainability, members will encourage colleagues and other constituents to get involved and welcome other school districts to join the network. The goal of the New Hampshire Scholars program is for every school district in the state to participate. The short-term objective is to expand to 40 school districts by the end of 2010. Sixteen districts actively participate including Belmont, Claremont, Fall Mountain, Franklin, Gilford, Hillsboro-Deering, Kingswood, Laconia, Lin-Wood, Litchfield, Manchester, Merrimack, Nashua, Newmarket, Newport, and Winnisquam.

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“From the higher education perspective, we know how important it is to have incoming students prepared for college-level work. We also know that there are defined 21<sup>st</sup> century skills learned from rigorous core courses that today’s students are expected to have entering the workforce,” says Paul LeBlanc, president of Southern New Hampshire University and chairman of the New Hampshire Scholars Board.

LeBlanc says, “This initiative provides us with the opportunity for the four stakeholders (K-12, higher education, the business community and policy makers) to work together. I think we all recognize the need to better align expectations between the groups and through this venue we have the opportunity for dialogue on ways to do so.”

The Board consists of:

**Chair:** Dr. Paul LeBlanc, *President, Southern New Hampshire University*

**Members:**

- Tom Raffio, *President/CEO, Northeast Delta Dental*
- Jim Roche, *President, New Hampshire Business & Industry Association*
- Douglas Wenners, *President, Anthem Blue Cross & Blue Shield of NH*
- Dr. Richard Gustafson, *Chancellor, Community College System of NH*
- Rep. Emma Rous, *Chair Education Committee, NH House of Representatives*
- Sen. Amanda Merrill, *Vice Chair Education Committee, NH State Senate*
- Dr. Thomas Brennan, Jr., *Superintendent, Manchester School District*
- Dr. Elaine Cutler, *Superintendent, Litchfield School District*
- Marjorie Chiafery, *Superintendent, Merrimack School District*
- Dr. Virginia Barry, *Commissioner, NH Department of Education*

**Ex Officio Members:**

- Tom Horgan, *President/CEO, NH College & University Council*
- Deborah Scire, *Executive Director, Campus Compact for NH*
- Scott Power, *Director, New Hampshire Scholars Initiative (NHCUC)*

For more information, contact New Hampshire State Scholars at (603) 225-4199 x300, [spower@nhcuc.org](mailto:spower@nhcuc.org) or visit [www.NHscholars.org](http://www.NHscholars.org)

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