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REACHING HIGHER: NH SCHOLARS ADOPTS NEW ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS FOR 2016

*New STEM and ARTS Pathways Offered; College Admissions Predict
More Scholarship Aid for Graduates*

Concord – NH Scholars just raised the bar. The nearly decade-old program, which has helped to send thousands of high school graduates off to college, is offering brand new pathways and options for those willing to take more challenging and rewarding course loads. Starting this fall, students can choose one of three options to pursue a NH Scholars diploma: the traditional NH Scholars path, a newly created STEM emphasis, and a brand new ARTS emphasis.

The new options will require a minimum grade point average (GPA) as well as classes focused on each specific path. These rigorous programs created by NH Scholars will be an incentive program for any student in New Hampshire to realize their dreams of a college education and rewarding career.

“Based on changes and challenges of our economy, along with a focus on STEM-related careers, we are adding to our content and intensity,” explains Scott Power, director of NH Scholars. “We know the business community needs graduates who are skilled in STEM programs. But we also recognize the value of arts to our communities and our culture. Students deserve options.”

Any New Hampshire high school wishing to add the STEM pathway or ARTS pathway can participate this year. STEM, which stands for science, technology, engineering, math can be provided through a variety of different classes.

“This is terrific news for education in New Hampshire, and a wonderful incentive for students to recognize the opportunities they have in front of them,” explains Tom Raffio, chair of the New Hampshire Board of Education. “We have the tools to prepare our young people for the future. The NH Scholars new pathways will offer a compass to help them navigate to their long-term goals.”

“College administrators have made it clear that our schools must encourage students to reach higher and take advantage of the challenging classes that are available at the high school level,” says Dr. Virginia Barry, Commissioner of the New Hampshire Department of Education. “By offering NH Scholars pathways as a new incentive, I believe this will boost overall college acceptance numbers and result in a better trained workforce.”

The NH Scholars STEM emphasis will require four years of English, math and science, with an additional year of a STEM-related course. To receive this recognition, students must carry a 3.2 GPA while also taking social science and foreign language classes.

“This more tightly aligns the needs of the business community with what is available in New Hampshire high schools,” says Jim Roche, President of the Business and Industry Association of New Hampshire. “When our pipeline of young talent stretches from high school through college graduation without interruption, New Hampshire businesses will benefit from a better prepared, properly trained workforce.”

The NH Scholars ARTS emphasis will require the same basic standards as the traditional NH Scholars pathway, but students interested in this option must also take two years from a visual, fine arts, performing arts or graphic design program. Business leaders say they recognize the value of providing different options to students.

The current NH Scholars program will remain. It will continue to require students to take four years of English and math, with three years of lab-science, 3.5 years of social science and two years of a foreign language to qualify for a NH Scholars medallion. There is no GPA minimum requirement for the traditional NH Scholars pathway.

“My career course ran from bank teller to bank president, and I learned that everyone’s path to success is different,” says Dianne Mercier, President of People’s United Bank. “We must encourage our young people to follow their dreams and we must provide the help they need to reach their destination.”

NH Scholars is operated as part of the New Hampshire College and University Council, a coalition of 17-member colleges devoted to student development and quality higher education.