



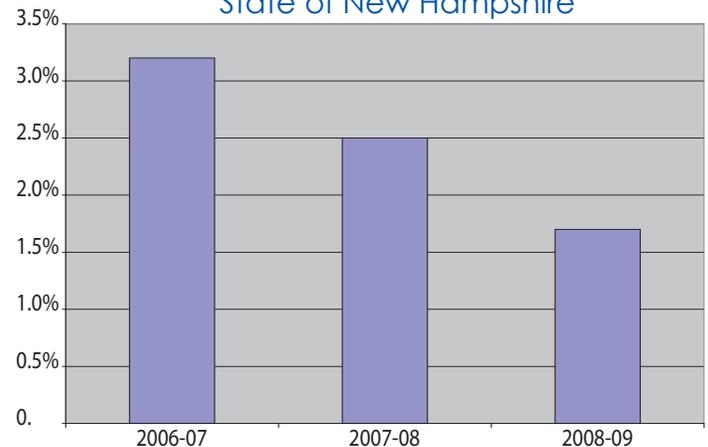
# NH Dropout Prevention and Recovery Oversight Council

## Annual Report 2010 Executive Summary



- “Raising the minimum age for school attendance, if accompanied by real support for the wavering students, would do a lot to end ‘the silent epidemic’” – David Broder, *Washington Post*, February 26, 2006
- In their overview and survey of research on the importance of compulsory school ages, Hoor Bhanpuri and Ginger Reynolds find that raising the age is an important component of confronting the dropout problem. In their study, “Understanding and Addressing the Issue of the High School Dropout Age,” the authors find evidence that raising the compulsory school age is gaining support across the United States in part because doing so helps reduce dropout numbers. The paper also provides a sampling of evidence-based interventions that help reduce the dropout rate. This study can be found at: Hoor Bhanpuri and Ginger Reynolds, “Understanding the Issues of the High School Dropout Age.” Learning Point Associates (2003). – *Raising The Compulsory School Attendance Age: The Case for Reform.* Civic Enterprises, John Bridgeland. 2008
- Each state's legislative initiatives move according to its unique needs, interests and history. Some of the states' bills under consideration merely raise the age to 18, while others provide additional provisions. Elements of more comprehensive legislative approaches include:
  - An increase in the compulsory school age to 18;
  - Exceptions “with teeth,” namely express permission from school authorities and parents to be exempted from the legal age requirement;
  - Alternative schooling options for students needing extra help, and
  - Sanctions or penalties for failing to attend classes.
- The Department of Education's biennium funding request was approved to provide \$3.5 million. In FY10, \$1.75M was awarded and FY11, legislative funding was reduced to \$1,667,859. Contractors were awarded in FY11 level funding to FY10 expenditure rate and the addition of another site, NH-JAG at Laconia previously funded with WIA Youth ARRA funds.
- Regularly scheduled meetings of alternative education contractors have occurred. Focus has included contractors providing program updates, issue resolution, and technical assistance from Department of Education staff.
- NH Legislation approved House Bill 154 - Bill Relating to Student Truancy. The primary changes in the

Annual Dropout Percentage for State of New Hampshire



truancy law included definition and school board requirements and reduced the number of days a student could be absent.

- NH Legislation approved House Bill 1523 - Bill Relating to Bullying, an act revising the pupil safety and violence prevention act by definition and requirements of school boards and Department of Education.
- National Governor's Association: A grant application was funded on behalf of the state for technical assistance and subsequent capacity development of state and district personnel for more effective data analysis. The focus has been on Manchester School District and a presentation of NH's efforts was shared at the October, 2010, NGA meeting in Boston. The grant will include the funding for the Third New Hampshire Governor's Summit on High School Graduation: Getting to Zero in 2012 – Early Warning Indicators and Interventions.
- A Third Extended Learning Opportunities Network Institute was held in summer, 2010. This Institute is a result of Nellie Mae Foundation Follow the Child Grant to support the development and piloting of an Extended Learning Opportunities Network and training in the use of competencies to assess student progress.
- Response to Intervention, (RtI): The Department of Education has formed a NH-RtI Task Force to provide leadership through the State Response to Intervention (RtI) plan for NH school districts that supports the understanding and effective implementation of an RtI model for all NH children. A second training session was held for interested districts.

The following are highlights of programs funded with State Alternative Education funds:

**Concord High School's Diploma Academy** created a variety of resources addressing alternative student needs with the following results:

- A reduction in the dropout rate to 20 students during the 2009/2010 school year
- 307 alternative educational opportunities were offered to students pursuing high school completion:
  - 31 students received their GED through the Options program (which now has a history of 80 "completers" since 2008)
    - 26 Concord students
    - 5 out of district/regional students
  - 82 credits were recovered through our in-school Independent Learning Center (ILC) utilizing Plato and VLACS programs
  - 99 credits were earned by 85 students through the afternoon Academic Core and Technology Application Program (TAP) classes
  - 4.5 credits were earned through individual and small group Brigham Young University correspondence course support
- 48 students who received a type of high school diploma (Concord High School, Concord School District and Hopkinton High School) had participated in some form of Diploma Academy program.

**Kearsarge Regional High School:** Program components included summer school serving 48 students. The program helped students in 3 different ways. The biggest group included students who failed a graduation requirement and needed to recover it so they could move on and stay on track. The second largest group was the incoming freshmen. These students did not do well in the middle school and needed extra time to get used to high school teachers, curriculum, and rules. The third group was the smallest but the most important. They were students from the class of 2010 who did not receive a diploma in June because they needed to make up a failed course. Every student in that group graduated and has a diploma!

**Manchester School District** provided a variety of services to support the diverse needs of students:

- Program Alternative to Secondary School (PASS) served 107 students (21 graduated in June 2010, an increase from 2009). By offering a third block, the average number of credits attained by students increased from four to five per year; participation in third block programs is having a positive affect on the program's climate.
- The three high school outreach coordinators

contacted over 350 students and referred many of them to programs within their schools, other district programs, as well as programs offered by community-based organizations.

- PLATO Credit Recovery served 256 students with a 91% credit recovery at Central High School.
- Dropout Prevention Consultant efforts included capacity building through GO-West, the ELO District Wide Roll-out Plan, and partnering with Granite State Independent Living to win a Walker fund grant that created ELOs during summer 2010 for 12 Manchester Special Education students.
- Data discovery, mapping, and mining occurred through the efforts of Keith Burke to: ascertain attendance policies and reporting policies; initiate work in attendance standardization; review student information system; develop a prototype dropout early warning system; develop and implement a system that will monitor key performance indicators across the district.

### **Nashua School District**

- *Hired (2) Outreach Coordinators*—served approximately 100 students at both Nashua North and Nashua South. Their duties include those of a typical guidance counselor such as scheduling, staffing for students who are coded, crisis counseling, college preparation, and career planning.
- *5th Block Programming* – Hired two (2) 5th Block Coordinators – registering students in afternoon classes
  - Last year, there were 290 students enrolled in 5th block classes. 75% of those students earned academic credit after the traditional school day.
- *GED Testing – Pre-Test* – Remedial Math and Literacy Course Work Contractual Services with the Adult Learning Center on Lake Street.
- *Truancy Officer – Dropout Prevention monies allowed Nashua district's truancy office to do home visits during evening hours and weekends. The approach was one of caring and understanding letting the kids know that their guidance counselor and Assistant Principals have been trying to reach them without success. This has proved successful in Nashua.*

**New Hampshire Jobs for America's Graduates** funded sites were Kennett, Raymond and Winnacunnet High Schools. During the 2009-2010 school year, 113 non-seniors and 19 senior students participated in a program of study focused on 37 competencies comprised of career development, job attainment, job survival, basic skills, leadership and self-development and interpersonal skills. The students are involved in a highly motivational student-led organization - the JAG Career Association. Through the Career Association students are able to attain leadership, social, civic, and vocational skills. Of the 132 students served, 113 students were in grades 9-11 and are represented in

the outcomes listed below. All 113 students achieved positive outcomes: 110 students returned to high school or entered a GED program and 3 students graduated ahead of their class. Of the 19 seniors, 17 successfully graduated on time with their class, 1 has returned to high school and the other is in a GED program.

**North Country Charter Academy** served a total of 113 students. Sixty graduated of which 28% (17 students) were formerly official dropouts, 33 students are scheduled to return to NCCA in the fall, six withdrew themselves, two were incarcerated, and 13 returned to their district. 46% of students received free or reduced lunch, 12% were parenting or pregnant and 8% were homeless. NCCA maintained a 91% attendance rate average between its two sites.

**Pinkerton Academy's** Evening School helped 79 students earn a diploma in 2009-2010. GED options enrolled 41 students of which 23 earned their GED. Skill courses enrolled 21 students in three tutorial settings. Additional highlights include:

- "Reteaching policy" whereby students must attend a makeup lesson held by the teacher when they are absent. Students then have 1/2 absence deducted from their attendance record.
- Raised expectations about attending further education by field trips to neighboring colleges.
- Implemented a FAFSA coaching system to help students and parents apply for financial aid.
- Implemented new career software package.
- Increased involvement of the PACE counseling in encouraging further education plans.

**Rochester School District** focused on restructuring and redesigning the Bud Carlson Academy to establish and create alternative pathways to high school

graduation. Expansion efforts increased enrollment at the BCA from 40 at-risk students to 125 at risk students increasing opportunities for students to remain on track educationally. One hundred and twenty-two (122) students have graduated from the BCA in the past two year helping reduce the district dropout rate by 54%. Program highlights include:

- *BCA Extended Hours Program*
- *PBIS/RENEW Facilitator*
- *Project Granite State*
- *BCA Extended Learning Opportunities*
- *BCA Community Connection*

**Stevens High School** – Ombudsman Program, a nationally recognized computer-based educational program with small group instruction, was developed and served 47 youth. Sixteen (16) students graduated and remaining 31 students returned to school in September, 2010.

**Virtual Learning Academy Charter School** - Since the development of more than 200 competencies in over 30 of its courses, the Virtual Learning Academy Charter School has partnered with high schools to offer competencies to New Hampshire high school students through its Personalized Pathways program. To date, 50 students have participated in the program. Additionally, VLACS has developed systems that allow students to earn core academic credits through Experiential Learning Opportunities, which blend hands-on experiential opportunities with the online coursework VLACS offers. Under the supervision of a highly qualified VLACS instructor, a student participating in an Experiential Learning Opportunity will earn high school credits, gain authentic real-life experience, and develop an electronic portfolio that will chronicle his/her learning along the way.

## Potential Economic Impacts of Improved Education on New Hampshire

- New Hampshire would save more than \$63.6 million in health care costs over the course of the lifetimes of each class of dropouts had they earned their diplomas.
- New Hampshire households would have over \$216 million more in accumulated wealth if all heads of households had graduated from high school.
- More than \$51 million would be added to New Hampshire's economy by 2020 if students of color graduated at the same rate as white students.
- 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 savings and revenue of about \$15.4 million in reduced crime spending and increased earnings each year if the male high school graduation rate in-creased by just 5 percent.

*From Alliance for Excellent Education – Issue Brief – August 2009*

# Who Does Not Graduate From High School?

- Only about 55 percent of Hispanic students and 51 percent of black students will graduate on time with a regular diploma, compared to 79 percent of Asian students and 76 percent of white students.i
- Among all races and ethnicities, females graduate at a higher rate than do their male peers — 72 percent versus 65 percent.ii
- Graduation rates are significantly lower in districts with higher percentages of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches (a measure of poverty).iii
- High school students of low-income families drop out of high school at six times the rate of their peers from high-income families.iv
- The lowest-achieving 25 percent of students are twenty times more likely to drop out of high school than students in the highest achievement quartile.v

i Editorial Projects in Education, "Diplomas Count 2009: Broader Horizons: The Challenge of College Readiness for All Students," *Education Week* 28, no. 34 (2009).

ii Ibid.

iii C. Swanson, *Who Graduates? Who Doesn't? A Statistical Portrait of Public High School Graduation, Class of 2001* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, Education Policy Center, 2004).

iv U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *The Condition of Education 2004* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2004), Indicator 16, p. 61.

v A. P. Carnevale, *Help Wanted ... College Required* (Washington, DC: Educational Testing Service, Office for Public Leadership, 2001).

*College Board and the Alliance for Excellent Education Fact Sheet*

Decrease in Dropout Rates in Alternative Education Funded Schools

