

January 28th, 2019

New Hampshire State Board of Education
101 Pleasant Street
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Dear Members of the State Board of Education;

As a public school educator with over two decades of experience, I wholeheartedly support personalized learning and extended learning opportunities for students. Now more than ever, learning experiences that occur beyond brick and mortar school buildings and traditional classrooms are an integral part of developing the skills it takes for the students of today to succeed in the 21st century – and beyond.

As I walk through schools across the state, I see many examples of the myriad ways in which our educators have blended classroom learning with more global opportunities. Online learning is one such option, and is accessible to students of all grade levels. My own daughter, who is in the third grade at Peterborough Elementary School, engages regularly in school and at home in many different valuable learning experiences through a variety of online tools. Whole class opportunities that allow students to explore the world around them – colloquially known as field trips – can take on a whole new dimension thorough interactive casting applications through the internet. For students in secondary grades, virtual online learning can assist with credit recovery, enrichment, and meeting graduation requirements. These opportunities, and so many more, are in place and flourishing in public schools across the state of New Hampshire.

It is not just online that our educators and students are finding exciting learning opportunities. In our middle schools and especially our high schools, educators have recognized the need for an embraced the potential of extended learning opportunities (ELOs). Many schools have dedicated ELO coordinators, and many others have educators who coordinate ELOs for students as part of their overall responsibilities. Internships are just one type of ELO – each experience can be unique. In Monadnock, a group of students took part in an ELO led by a retired teacher in which they studied the Ashuelot River in Swanzey. Their research and findings on macroinvertebrates and Biotic Index calculations were posted on the NH Fish and Game Watershed Education Program website. This ELO encouraged collaboration and community by incorporating training and partnerships with the Ashuelot River Advisory Board, NH Fish and Game Department, NH Department of Environmental Services, NH EdGIS Specialist Team, Ersi, and Keene State College. Students participated in activities that had real-world implications, which highlighted and emphasized the role of our resource agencies and how they work to protect our environment.

Additionally, students at the high school level have access to 30 high school career and technical centers across the state of New Hampshire. These centers offer a wide range of opportunities to students – from training and certification in trades such as construction or welding to professions such as health science, graphic design, or information technology (to name a few). These centers offer state-of-the-art, hands-on learning opportunities that prepare many students to enter the workforce after graduation, if they choose, or attend a two or four-year post-secondary program (1).

The types of personalized learning and extended learning opportunities that our public schools in the State of New Hampshire offer to students are, simply put, numerous and of very high quality. As such, I am unclear how the Learn Everywhere program will foster and support these programs at our public schools.

How will the Department of Education implement and monitor this program? Specifically, what resources will be needed (and where will they come from) in order to:

- Support the personnel necessary to evaluate applications from non-educational entities for compliance with local school district competencies
- Conduct site visits to ensure safety and appropriate supervision
- Coordinate with labor officials to ensure compliance with labor laws
- Conduct on-site observations of students

- Evaluate the cooperating non-educational entity's adherence to the credit-granting requirements
- Review completed student portfolios for the purpose of granting credit

This school year, our District received the attached letter regarding the school approval process. In short, while the Department was able to conduct the facility review, '*...due to a lack of resources, the department will not be completing the content review at this time (2).*' It concerns me that the Department of Education would allocate resources to developing an entirely new program that would permit non-educational entities to grant local high school credit. This is especially concerning given that a lack of resources is preventing the Department from fulfilling its obligation under RSA 186:8 to ensure that existing public schools meet the minimum standards set forth in Ed 306.

I would encourage the Board of Education to first look to ensure adequate resources exist to support existing public schools – including current personalized learning and extended learning opportunities already offered - before venturing into the creation of an entirely new program that frankly seems as though it would parallel, and potentially negatively impact, existing programs.

Respectfully,



Lisa A. Witte
Superintendent of Schools
Monadnock Regional School District
600 Old Homestead Highway
Swansey, New Hampshire 03446
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603-352-6955 x6977

(1) <http://nh-cte.org/>

(2) Attachment



Frank Edelblut
Commissioner

Christine M. Brennan
Deputy Commissioner

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
101 Pleasant Street
Concord, N.H. 03301
TEL. (603) 271-3495
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August 27, 2018

Principal [REDACTED]

Subject: School Approval Facility Review for School Year 2018-2019

Dear Principal [REDACTED],

Pursuant to RSA 186:8, II, the Department of Education is responsible for ensuring schools meet the minimum standards for public school approval, as outlined in Ed 306. This verification process is completed through school approval visits. This school year, your school has been selected for a school approval review.

The school approval process includes two reviews: a content review and a facility review. This letter is to coordinate completion of the facility review. **Due to lack of resources, the department will not be completing the content review at this time.**

The facility review will include a site visit as well as examination of submitted documents. Your site visit has been scheduled for:

Monday, October 1, 2018 from 11:00 - 1:00 pm

The visit will be led by Marjorie Schoonmaker, our safe and healthy schools educator. Ms. Schoonmaker will need to walk around the facility with your facility director so it is helpful if he or she has keys to spaces that may be locked (boiler room, elevator, etc.). The visit typically takes between 1 and 4 hours, depending on the size and condition of the school. Ms. Schoonmaker will be reviewing similar items to those found on the School Facility Self-Assessment Checklist which is available on our public school approval website (https://www.education.nh.gov/program/school_approval/public_approval.htm or select 'P' from our A-Z list and click on the Public School Approval link). It is our experience that schools

that regularly self-assess their facility not only are more likely to provide a clean and healthy learning environment but they are also well prepared for a school facility visit.

The documents necessary to complete the review are listed below. Most of these items can be downloaded from our public school approval website.

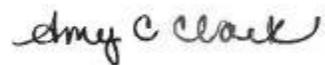
1. **Floor plans** - a week prior to your visit, please provide a copy of the floor plans to aid in the site visit. Standard letter size or 11" by 17" is suitable.
2. **Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)** - by September 1st, please submit your EOP plan via the secure EOP portal: https://prd.blogs.nh.gov/dos/hsem/?page_id=3910. Never include EOP information in an unsecured email or post it online. [RSA 189:64]
3. **Fire Inspection Report** – by December 15th, please submit your report to the State Fire Marshal's Office *and* provide a hard copy to DOE. [Ed 306.07, Ed 403.01(c) and RSA 153:14II(b)]
4. **Health Inspection Report** – by December 15th, please submit a hard copy of your report to DOE. [Ed 306.07 and EDD 403.01(c)]
5. **Fire drill schedule** – by December 15th, please submit your fire drill schedule for the previous school year, as well as this year's proposed schedule. Please keep in mind that *monthly* fire drills are required, as well as, two emergency response drills. Drills may be deferred in severe weather provided that you meet the requirements in Saf-C 6008.c. [Saf-C 6008.c, RSA 189:24, and RSA 189:64]
6. **Playground inspection** – by December 15th, if your school's liability and property insurance company performed an inspection of your playground in the last 5 years, please submit a copy for review. If the insurance company did not perform an inspection, please complete the Playground Safety Self-Inspection Checklist located on our public school approval website and submit a hard copy to DOE. [Ed 306.07]
7. **Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Checklist** – at the end of each school year principals or their designees complete an annual IAQ checklist provided by the department. A review of the past 5 years of submissions will be completed. Please continue to submit your required IAQ checklist each year. [RSA 200:11a]
8. **IAQ policy** – by December 15th, please submit a copy of your indoor air quality policy and indicate the date it was last reviewed by the school board. [RSA 200:48 and Ed 306.07]

Excluding the EOP, you can either hand deliver these documents at the time of your site visit or email them to Ms. Schoonmaker by **December 15th**. If more time is needed to submit a specific item, please contact Ms. Schoonmaker prior to December 15th.

If you have any questions concerning your facility review, please feel free to contact me at (603) 271-2037 or amy.c.clark@doe.nh.gov or Marjorie Schoonmaker at (603) 271-3620 or marjorie.schoonmaker@doe.nh.gov.

We look forward to our visit with you.

Sincerely,



Amy C. Clark
Administrator
School Safety & Facility Management Bureau

cc: Lisa A. Witte, superintendent #93
David Lapointe, facility director
Lisa Steadman, school board chair