

**AN ACT establishing a committee to study New Hampshire teacher shortages and recruitment incentives, and relative to defining secondary school grades for teacher loan forgiveness programs.**

**SB 236, Chapter 150:1, Laws of 2022**

**COMMITTEE TO STUDY NEW HAMPSHIRE TEACHER SHORTAGES AND RECRUITMENT INCENTIVES**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**MEETING DATE:** Tuesday, October 4, 2022, at 1:00pm in LOB 101

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**Start Time:** 1:03 PM

**End Time:** 3:30 PM

**Members Present:** Senator Jay Kahn, Senator Ruth Ward, Representative Rick Ladd, Representative Oliver Ford, Representative Mel Myler, Director Steve Appleby (NHDOE)

**Members Absent:** None

**Meeting Discussion:**

Senator Kahn opened the meeting at 1:03 PM.

Senator Ward moved the 9/21 minutes and Representative Ladd seconded the motion. The minutes were adopted with Representative Ford absent.

Senator Kahn asked Ava to follow-up with Director Karlon on his attendance for either of the November meetings.

Senator Kahn introduced Superintendent Jennifer Gillis as the superintendent of the largest school district in the state.

Superintendent Gillis greeted the Committee. The Manchester School District has 2,000 plus staff that they employ. Superintendent Gillis did her doctoral research on principal retention which sparked an ongoing discussion on retention.

This year, Manchester has been fortunate to hire over 250 staff members. Paraprofessionals and school nurses are still a struggle area, crossing guards and bus drivers as well. They were able to staff their teacher positions.

They work directly with NHDOE for alternative pathway certifications; they have 49 new alternative pathway certifications, which resulted in 121 alternative pathways.

Some of the hardest positions to fill were middle school science, chemistry, physical science, physics, secondary math and special education.

In their district, their pipelines pull from each other in that paraprofessionals want to be teachers, then, the school district needs to fill paraprofessional voids once that transition happens. Administrator desire to be teachers, too.

As for administrative turnover, the state average is about 3.6 years for a sitting principal. Nationally, it is 4.2 years. The question is how do we interrupt that rotation. Five years and beyond is when educational structure begins to take root.

Director Appleby asked Superintendent Gillis about school nurses and the issue of getting school nurses after the recent certification legislative change. Superintendent Gillis said they just absorbed them into the district this year, they were previously reporting to different locations. They did see some shortages, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. They staff school nurses and nurse supports for IEP driven decisions. Trying to fill both buckets was tough to navigate.

Senator Kahn asked if their district is filling it with a school district oriented contract and not through the city. Superintendent Gillis said that is correct, they brought them in house.

Senator Kahn asked if there is a transitional period. Superintendent Gillis said yes, there is.

Director Appleby asked about the principal turnover rate of 3.6 years as it relates to Manchester. Superintendent Gillis said that is state number, not city level.

Director Appleby said he sees, in his work, district to district changeover.

Superintendent Gillis said it can be broken down by grade level and gender of folks migrating from the profession all together, not just within district. She is happy to review her previous research to get data on the “why” folks have left in this cycle. We want this to be a stable number and for schools to be stable and thriving.

Senator Kahn reiterated that we are, as a Committee, looking at classroom instructors solely.

Representative Ladd asked about instructors and teachers in the classroom, particularly related to CTE, where teachers are coming from alternative pathways.

Superintendent Gillis said yes, across the district, they are not different than any other group. They have 39 new alternative plans in place as of this year. More and more burden on system long-term is what we are trying to avoid.

Representative Ladd asked about the shortages she previously listed as it echoes what we are seeing around the state. Superintendent Gillis agreed. He referenced an issue he heard about of teachers leaving right before the school year starts. He asked if Manchester is seeing this issue.

Superintendent Gillis said he is correct. They looked at how they can maximize incentives. Behind the scenes, folks are looking at various ways to incentive during this competitive time. Their district teams did a really good job of planning deep by having candidates starting the process. While they still have shortages, their folks were strategic in how they conducted their interview process.

Representative Ladd asked if they have flexibility to negotiate a contract with folks to get them closer to the salary they are accustomed to.

Superintendent Gillis said no, they are confined within their collective bargaining agreements.

Senator Kahn noted that she did not mention CTE as shortage areas.

Superintendent Gillis said they did not, however, they often have other qualifications that they can be placed into later.

Representative Myler asked about the open positions and their ability to fill positions in a timely fashion.

Superintendent Gillis said they were able to open without voids in place, however, it takes a lot of stretch to ensure that mitigated plans.

Representative Ladd said their hiring process is unique and he asked how they are cultivating a diverse staff that represents their student population.

Superintendent Gillis said they are not close to where they need to be when it comes to diversifying their staff. They are working to make the hiring process less daunting.

Representative Myler asked about the 20 alternative certification numbers and how they track folks who are completing their certification/retaining them in their staff.

Superintendent Gillis said they have a few staff members that monitor this in coordination with NHDOE. They make sure real time input is available to these folks. They are fortunate to have a large staff.

Representative Myler asked how long does it take to complete once they start it. Superintendent Gillis said three years.

Senator Kahn asked if Superintendent Gillis could provide data on how many folks who begin the alternative pathway process actually finish it. Superintendent Gillis said she is happy to get back to the Committee.

Senator Kahn asked Director Appleby about the survey questions being succinct as there are different understandings by superintendents versus us reading the data when filling positions.

Director Appleby is apprehensive that we will get data that does not reflect the real on the ground vacancies.

Superintendent Gillis said their numbers, at least, would not include positions that they are temporarily working to cover.

Representative Ladd asked if the alternative certification provides for a more diverse list of qualifications.

Superintendent Gillis said she does not disagree with his points.

Senator Kahn inquired about the 49 alternative plan new hires mentioned by Superintendent Gillis and how many of those 49 are on a one-year plan. He also asked about the previously mentioned 121 teachers out of 2,000 on alternative plans.

Superintendent Gillis said those 121 teachers are on track for 1-3 year completion. There are different kinds of alternative certification. She will get back to the Committee on the one-year plan educators.

Senator Kahn noted that if you are to take 121 of the 2,000 total teachers, you will end up at about 5-6% of workforce being alternatively staffed. When thinking about courseload, he asked if their districts considers those numbers as vacancies.

Superintendent Gillis clarified that it is actually closer to 10% due to the 2,000 figure including other staff members. That figure feels a bit high which is probably related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Representative Myler asked how many teachers leave their district due to retirement.

Superintendent Gillis said it varies. The last few years have felt high. She said she look back to 2018 data (past five years) and get back to the Committee, per Senator Kahn's request.

Senator Kahn reiterated the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the number of staff and federal funds. He noted those numbers are going be higher to compensate for learning loss.

Senator Kahn asked about the paraprofessional pipeline as an alternative pathway.

Superintendent Gillis said they are coordinating with universities to understand the different programs available. They are looking forward to seeing the school debt relief program help acquire paraprofessionals. But remember, once you move paraprofessionals along to teachers, you then lose paraprofessionals. They have a good rate of moving paraprofessionals along to teachers.

Senator Kahn asked if they have a partner institution.

Superintendent Gillis said SNHU is one of their partners and they have connected with others as well to find ways they can grow.

Senator Kahn asked how many years this process has taken. Superintendent Gillis said, she believes, 3-4 years.

Senator Kahn asked Superintendent Gillis if there is a staffing implication for their staff who are working on this. Superintendent Gillis said not currently.

Representative Myler asked Superintendent Gillis what are some of the issues she is hearing from teachers that are impacting their desire to stay in this profession.

Superintendent Gillis said this is a high demand role at this time. Teachers are trying to close learning loss gaps while keeping kids on track for graduation. Teachers value their students, that is what she hears most. Getting back into the groove after COVID-19 is a transition. They are feeling the pinch on the demand on them – trying to close this gap, quickly, and with efficacy. The behaviors and presentations students are bringing to school every day can be heavy on the head and heart. Demand and expectations are both high.

Representative Myler noted a conversation he had with a teacher recently on the rate of students falling behind currently.

Superintendent Gillis agreed and used a third grader as a good example of someone who has not been physically in school for their entire educational experience.

Representative Ladd noted the loss of thousands of students since the COVID-19 pandemic. The special education population has historically been around 30,000. However, with the declining population, special education needs are actually increasing. He has heard that the need for special education is increasingly growing. He asked how we address that.

Superintendent Gillis said that is tricky question to answer. There are three variables; they are seeing increased numbers, but they are using their internal systems to address this issue. Remember, everyone is competing for that same pool of folks.

Senator Ward asked Superintendent Gillis about paraprofessionals. She asked if someone would have to go through the whole three years with previous experience.

Superintendent Gillis said they would really have to look at candidates individually to know what a possible certification track may be.

Representative Ford asked about the entire induction process and how it is expanding exponentially. From students to parents to staff.

Superintendent Gillis said his perception is accurate. Now after COVID-19, it is a reintroduction time with added burden. We have a little bit of a perfect storm. Their teams are working masterfully. It is a heavy lift.

Senator Kahn reiterated the importance of ensuring that districts all around the state, especially Manchester and Nashua, prioritize diversity in their staff. The Committee plans to hear from folks on this topic at future meetings.

Superintendent Gillis said she is happy to attend another future meeting on this topic.

Superintendent Gillis concluded her presentation at 1:47pm.

Christina Pretorius of Reaching Higher NH began her testimony at 1:47pm.

Ms. Pretorius noted that this survey was issued in May/June 2022. This was administered through email, social media and other organizations. They received 600 responses with 383 teacher responses. They are happy to provide more information on the other professions at a later date. She wants to emphasize that

this was not randomized, nor did they weigh any answers. This should not be viewed as representative of the entire education population.

Some of these findings echo Superintendent Gillis' testimony – salary concerns, high demand, current climate, etc.

Concerns around consequences on teachers was a main issue cited. The new divisive concepts statute was elicited specifically and was at the top of people's minds when leaving the state.

Support by school board, or lack thereof, was also an issue mentioned.

Senator Kahn asked how many options someone could choose for their reasons for leaving. Ms. Pretorius said they were asked to choose up to three.

The handout provided by Ms. Pretorius addresses the top issues that lead teachers to leaving the state.

They had a number of open-ended responses on this survey.

This was an anonymous survey to encourage folks to feel comfortable to be honest and open with their answers. Questions related to respect was a big one.

There were a lot of calls for mentorship, increased salaries, etc.

This survey was intended for school staff and educators who are leaving. However, the replies came from folks who are not leaving but wanted to be heard.

Representative Myler asked Ms. Pretorius about the specific items that were included under the climate category.

Ms. Pretorius said this was a multiple-choice survey, however, respondents were given a chance to answer open-ended questions. Concerns around student behavior, accountability in a broader sense, etc. were discussed in those answers. A lot of educators are wearing multiple hats. Concerns about the school funding formula and how it creates different opportunities in varying districts arose as well.

Representative Ladd asked if Reaching Higher did a deep dive into this elementary-type districts as some districts are always in an uproar; he asked if they have specifics on where these responses originated. Leadership and climate in the school is reflected on the supervision by that school's principal. NH principal retention being below the national average is concerning for the everchanging environment within these leadership spaces. He asked if they have any data reviewing high turnover rates of leadership in schools.

Ms. Pretorius said they are planning focus groups for the fall/winter of this year to allow for more in depth information. She will get back to the Committee.

Ms. Pretorius concluded her testimony at 1:58pm.

Senator Kahn asked Superintendent Gillis about these additional duties and how she would suggest we ask such a question of other superintendents to get a sense of the scope and permanence of additional duties – what are mitigation plans to address these threats, the span of “additional duties” and the breadth that might include. He hopes to better understand how that intersects with the Committee’s work.

Superintendent Gillis said she would like to sit with that question and get back to the Committee.

Director Appleby noted NHDOE’s administrative rule which permits teachers to teach outside of their endorsed subject area up to 50% of their work week. For example, if a teacher is teaching five periods in their subject, they could teach two additional periods outside of their subject area. This rule has been in place for many, many years and is heavily used around the state; this rule could cloud the answer to Senator Kahn’s previous question. We do not collect period data, so, for example, schools with a sixth period would result in a different dataset when looking at additional duties/time spent. In November, NHDOE will be able to provide how many educators are teaching outside of their subject area.

Superintendent Gillis said it looks like the Committee is looking for hard data and what life actually looks like for educators.

Senator Kahn recessed for a brief moment.

Senator Kahn acknowledged the University System of NH and NHTI for introductions and their testimony:

- Pat Cantor, Associate Provost at Plymouth State University
- Michele Dillon, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at the University of New Hampshire
- Tanya Sturtz, Chair of Education and Director of Educator Preparation at Keene State College
- Kelly Moore Dunn, Chair of Education and Director of Teacher Education Conversion Programs at NHTI



Michele Dillon of UNH thanked the Committee, on behalf of USNH, as they are appreciative of this work as this is a national issue, especially following COVID-19. USNH has been a tremendous asset to the state for decades. They've seen similar data nationwide as presented by the previous presenters.

Senator Kahn asked what creative ideas each of the institutions have had to get folks to pursue education degrees.

Kelly Moore Dunn introduced herself as the Chair of Education at NHTI and Director of Teacher Education Conversion Programs at NHTI.

Pat Cantor introduced herself as the Associate Provost at Plymouth State and an Education faculty member for about thirty years. She started her career as a preschool teacher. She also runs the North Country Teacher Certification program.

Tanya Sturtz introduced herself as Chair of Education and Director of Educator Preparation at Keene State College. She leads all educator prep programs in the USNH. She does a lot of the partnership work in the Monadnock Region. She was a professor with Senator Kahn during his time at Keene State College.

Michele Dillon introduced herself as the Dean of the Education Department at UNH. She is previously a professor of Sociology at UNH.

Senator Kahn asked if Education is the biggest major in UNH's Liberal Arts College. Ms. Dillon said no, it is psychology. They are doing things to expand their majors.

Senator Kahn asked how successful NH is in retaining recent college graduates who are to become educators.

Ms. Dillon said 77% of graduates from UNH have employment in NH. 57 of 74 graduates are employed in NH. Another handful work in MA. This is based on 2021 data.

Director Appleby asked for clarification on where these folks are teaching, i.e. public schools, non-public, etc.

Ms. Dillon said it is not broken out in the data. Her understanding is that most graduates go into public education. Many do internships with public schools as well.

Ms. Sturtz said they have a few different programs at Keene State College. They undergraduate and graduate programs. For special education and education leadership internships, those result in about 10-15 interns per year. They tend to stay in NH more than their undergrad program. From 2021-2022, they had a total

of 186 completers from across educator programs. They stay locally due to field placements. About 50% stay in NH, however, a lot leave due to the cost of living. Students come from all over New England to Keene State College. Due to their large number of graduates, they are working with NHDOE to track graduates which helps get more data on where teachers are working. She recently looked into alumni who are teaching in one specific school district where Keene originally trained them. In the last ten years, she saw people still teaching in the areas where they were licensed originally. She had a recent encounter with a principal who told her that the intern students from Keene are quality educators, who are prepared, and wanted at these schools. This principal wanted these students/interns to stay within his school. The big question is how we can keep these educators in NH.

Ms. Cantor said the types of students preparing to become educators want to stay in NH based on the certain type of certification earned. Plymouth's undergrad student licensures are around 50% since 2018. With regard to more advanced licensures, i.e. school psychology program, etc. is closer to 75%. In specialized programs, like the North Country Teacher Certification program, which has been in place since 2005 in partnership with White Mountain Community College, since 2016, there has been 34 graduates, of which 30 of them work in NH .

Ms. Dillion noted the TRRE Program, Teacher Residency for Rural Education, which is federally funded, has worked well in NH. This five-year program places a cohort of teachers in Coos County and graduated 35 teachers. A lot of them continue in elementary education, not secondary, in the area.

Senator Kahn asked how many teacher educator prep students are graduating now. Ms. Cantor said, in 2021, they had 99 graduates from the undergrad program and 26 from their advanced graduate programs.

Representative Ladd asked how many of them offer speech pathology programs. In his area, they are contracted with folks all the way down in Concord to offer speech pathology assistance.

Ms. Dillion noted that UNH has pathways to get to such a degree, not a specific program. It is important to remember the challenges of staffing these programs and how you need to set such programs up in specialized areas.

Ms. Sturtz said if you have a program, you need full-time staff to assist in meeting state and federal standards as well as the expectations of the university. It is not about just offering a program, but ensuring that resources are in place. The teaching profession culture has affected the students coming into these programs. We need to change the culture. We are hearing less of that which speaks to the stress put on the teacher pipeline.

Representative Ladd said prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 60% of secondary students went outside of NH to seek education. What are we doing to market education programs in this state so that we can attract students. That is one way to attract revenue as well.

Ms. Dillion said all departments and students do this work. UNH started the “Be a Teacher” website to bring folks together to encourage prospective students and social media outreach. They also meet with school counselors on campus and Associate Deans go to schools locally, too.

Ms. Sturtz said incentives associated with financials really help. Money is a huge factor when students choose their education path. Sometimes, the bottom line is what folks can afford.

Senator Kahn asked if USNH has tried to experiment with ideas to get new programs on the roster.

Ms. Dillion said they have a new cohort for their elementary education program at UNH and it is a four-year bachelor’s degree, focused on equity, diversity and inclusion. Prior to two years ago, it had to be a five-year program so an accelerated master’s degree. Now, we can do this kind of program in four years. One of the biggest markers at UNH is the high-quality internships students can have before they work in the classroom. As of September, UNH has 28 first-year students in this program.

Ms. Cantor discussed the partnership with the Littleton School District. The Littleton School District is paying a monthly stipend and providing housing to six interns who will be in their district a whole year for this residential internship. This program is made possible by the district providing this stipend and housing for students, both of which are real obstacles for low-income students. Programs like this, while small in scale, help mitigate the financial hardships facing students. Littleton doesn’t expect all folks to stay in district, however, they hope they will. Other superintendents have expressed interest in a program such as this. The combination of high debt and the low-salary after graduation is what students are struggling with.

Ms. Sturtz said, through their one-year special education masters, all students have been hired by schools to be paraprofessionals. It is hard to say what financial initiatives they offer as a university while they, as a financial institution, have had to cut things down budget-wise. They have been working with their financial aid office at Keene to make sure scholarship funds are available. They have been preparing students for over a hundred years at Keene. SAU 29 recently reached out to see how they could work with the school to help with this educator pipeline issue.

USNH and the Community College System (CCS) work with the school districts and are constantly trying to find ways to get students the help they need.

Ms. Dunn said, for context, they have a very different population than USNH. Their students move on to get an associate degree and then move to a four-year institution. Then, we have folks who are looking to change career paths to the education profession after being in a completely different profession for most of their life. Their post-graduate program is only 14 years old which is aimed to help fill critical shortage areas. They are not huge programs. Last year, their numbers were pretty stable as between 18 and 22 students got post-bachelor's degrees, whereas some have PhDs or masters. This program was innovative at the time for a community college. They focus their CTE relationships with high schools as well. They partner with Concord. In terms of the undergrad student population, there are about 40 students who complete early education and education programs annually. That number doesn't tell whole story as many students transfer before they get their degree. Some students come to the college with six or nine college credits already. Running Start courses also help their students when they get going with credits – as a of last year, out of 23 completers, 9 are in education programs this fall. There are 29 students enrolled with 28 interested in teaching. These partnerships are great to help innovate and focus on the populations that need it.

Senator Kahn asked about the definitions being used for teachers is pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. NH does not have a universal pre-K requirement; however, we know there is a shortage. He asked if their associate degree programs are geared towards early childhood.

Ms. Dunn said it depends on the program and degree. Some students can immediately join the workforce, some then proceed to a four-year institution. It is taking paraeducators longer to get degrees. These folks need a living wage and be able to afford to live. That is a barrier. Another innovative program is the approved apprenticeship program, which won't meet all the needs of paraprofessionals as every 18-year-old is not ready to work that hard just yet. Some folks may have children in their school, this apprenticeship will pay for their tuition, salary, and benefits, which helps folks do the job and afford to live.

Ms. Dillion said the recent UNH merger with Granite State College (GSC) can help with this issue as they provide online offerings.

Senator Kahn asked Ms. Dunn about NHTI offering a certificate degree which would be a one-year experience. She said yes, they do offer it, but it depends on the certificate they are pursuing. CTE experience in high school can also impact their certificate choice.

Senator Kahn asked about the approximate 40 completers each year and if certification students are included.

Ms. Dunn said yes. At some point, 80% of their students become teachers, not always right away.

Representative Myler asked if the certification process is difficult or burdensome.

Ms. Sturtz said there is a financial piece to all of this. The background checks and the \$250 two-time criminal checks are costly. The praxis exams have a cost where students can struggle affording that, too. There are a lot of fees that add up.

Director Appleby noted his experience with the financial piece as his daughter went to UNH. He has heard the number one complaint is that student teaching is unpaid, then, you have to pay the college for such unpaid internships. He knows kids who had to quit their jobs, go unpaid and incur debt to student teach.

Ms. Sturtz and Ms. Dillon said there are issues with folks not being able to get paid while also receiving college credit.

Director Appleby said when you talk about kids in these programs, a lot of folks in different professions do get paid for internships.

Senator Kahn wants to park question and circle back on state examples.

Representative Ford said another big issue is healthcare, particularly for those with families who are going to school. Not just salary issues at play, but the absence of benefits that come from being employed.

Ms. Dunn added that there are student teachers that do get paid, i.e. through apprenticeship programs. Alternative pathway folks are also teaching and getting paid through an approved program.

Senator Kahn asked if the USDOL approved this program and they all said yes.

Representative Ladd referenced the Granite Guarantee Program where you become eligible through your Pell Grants. He asked if it would be helpful to attach language that says if you receive this program, you must remain in NH and teach for at least three years.

Ms. Sturtz and Ms. Dillon said that sounds nice. It would be nice to offer more incentives at low-performing schools. Ms. Sturtz visited Winchester School and it was sad. Ms. Dillon noted that she could see pushback to this idea due to the political climate.

Senator Kahn said, when we look at other states, we may find more information on this.

Representative Ladd noted the need to look at tuition costs.

Ms. Cantor reminded the Committee of the low amount of affordable housing in NH. How could you require folks to stay in NH when no housing is available.

Representative Ladd asked about possible pathways to translate a history major student, not an education major, into this profession track.

Ms. Dillon said UNH has hired someone precisely to work with other social sciences to develop certain pathways in different majors. It must go through internal review.

Ms. Sturtz said, at Keene, they are known for their exemplary departments so they do see that crossover. Allowing for more flexibility through the taking of the praxis opens more doors.

Representative Myler asked about school leadership and how we define it as it is foundational in providing the right kind of climate in a school.

Ms. Dillon said she would follow-up with the Committee on this.

Senator Kahn said we know where the critical shortages are. He asked if it is possible to direct more students into these programs. He also asked if they are having success in navigating these shortages.

Ms. Dillon said of course there is dialogue. When young people are looking at their potential salary starting at \$40,000 annually, that deters people when they hear of their friends getting paid exponentially more in different sectors. USNH is deeply committed to the success of their students and the state of NH.

Ms. Cantor reiterated Dr. Gillis's points regarding the impact of COVID-19 on elementary and high school students. They are seeing similar impacts on college students, especially in mental health. Students may come in and had a very different high school experience and a different view of what education/teaching means. Meeting the mental health needs of their students is on their minds all the time. That is a new factor, or exacerbated at least, which of course influences choices as well.

Ms. Dunn said the adult learner, or career changer, is an important perspective to consider. Keep in mind, mentors in the field are already overworked. NHTI helps fill out paperwork so that school districts don't have to. It is one thing to write your

name on paper as a mentor, but in critical shortage area, career changers are now novice in these fields where they were experts before.

Ms. Sturtz said she appreciates that Senator Kahn invited them before the Committee. She noted it would be great, and important, for the Committee to stop by their campuses to hear from students directly. While they are representing the students today, their experiences and voices are powerful and would add depth to the overall conversation.

Senator Kahn said if they are willing to facilitate, maybe we could take them up on that offer to stop by the campuses.

Representative Ladd said he has already done that which helps bring issues to the surface for understanding purposes.

USNH and NHTI completed their testimony at 3:14pm.

Senator Kahn and Committee Members reviewed the potential agenda for the upcoming 10/19 meeting.

Senator Kahn adjourned at 3:30pm.

**Next Meeting Date:** October 19, 2022

**Report Deadline:** November 1, 2023

AMRH