Bill as Introduced

HB 139 – AS INTRODUCED

2003 SESSION

03-0140
04/09

HOUSE BILL ***139***

AN ACT establishing a committee to study the collection and reporting of school drop-out, suspension, and expulsion data.

SPONSORS: Rep. Naro, Graf 15; Rep. Carson, Rock 75; Rep. Bleyler, Graf 17; Sen. Cohen, Dist 24; Sen. Estabrook, Dist 21

COMMITTEE: Education

ANALYSIS

This bill establishes a committee to study the collection and reporting of school drop-out, suspension, and expulsion data.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics.***
Matter removed from current law appears [~~in brackets and struckthrough.~~]
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

HB 139 – AS INTRODUCED

03-0140
04/09

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Three

AN ACT establishing a committee to study the collection and reporting of school drop-out, suspension, and expulsion data.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 Committee Established. There is established a committee to study the collection and reporting of school drop-out, suspension, and expulsion data.

2 Membership and Compensation.

I. The members of the committee shall be as follows:

(a) Three members of the house of representatives, appointed by the speaker of the house.

(b) Three members of the senate, appointed by the president of the senate.

II. The committee may solicit information from any group or individual with relevant expertise in the subject of the committee's study.

III. Members of the committee shall receive mileage at the legislative rate when attending to the duties of the committee.

3 Duties. The committee shall study:

I. Methods for collecting school drop-out, suspension, and expulsion data.

II. Whether school drop-out, suspension, and expulsion rates vary among different groups of students, including special education students, learning disabled students, and students from differing racial or ethnic backgrounds.

III. Whether such data collected can be used to develop corrective strategies to reduce school drop-out, suspension, and expulsion rates statewide.

4 Chairperson; Quorum. The members of the study committee shall elect a chairperson from among the members. The first meeting of the committee shall be called by the first-named house member. The first meeting of the committee shall be held within 45 days of the effective date of this section. Four members of the committee shall constitute a quorum.

5 Report. The committee shall report its findings and any recommendations for proposed legislation to the speaker of the house of representatives, the senate president, the house clerk, the senate clerk, the governor, and the state library on or before November 1, 2003.

6 Effective Date. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

Speakers

SIGN UP SHEET

To Register Opinion If Not Speaking

Bill # HB 139 Date 1/21/03

Committee ED

**** Please Print All Information ****

Name	Address	Phone	Representing	(check one) Pro	Con
Joy Phinizy	Sullivan 23			✓	
Ruth Blalock	Lyons	795-9912		✓	
~~Doug Hall~~					

Hearing Minutes

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

PUBLIC HEARING ON HB 139

BILL TITLE: **establishing a committee to study the collection and reporting of school drop-out, suspension, and expulsion data.**

DATE: **January 21, 2003**

LOB ROOM: **207** **Time Public Hearing Called to Order:** **2:00 P.M.**

Time Adjourned: **2:54 P.M.**

(please circle if present)

Committee Members: Reps. L'Heureux, Alger, Dearborn, Flint, Carson, Colcord, Balboni, Leone, McHugh, Naro, Laurent, Tufts, M. Carter, Hagan, Ingbretson, Snyder, Claire Clarke, Jean, Rush, Scovner and J. Dunn.

Bill Sponsors: Rep. Naro, Graf 15; Rep. Carson, Rock 75; Rep. Bleyler, Graf 17; Sen. Cohen, Dist 24; Sen. Estabrook, Dist 21

TESTIMONY

* Use asterisk if written testimony and/or amendments are submitted.

Rep Naro: District 15
* Written Testimony included

Rep Ingrebretson- Where is amend? **Answer**- In executive session.

Rep Estabrook – Dist. 21 Support and need to strengthening reporting. We need to take action. Data doesn't take into consideration students who have transferred. S.C. needs to address this.

Rep Alger – What is difference between Rep Naros and Sen. Cohen's bill? **Answer**: Don't really know

Sen. Cohen – Dist 24
- Address need to look at reasons and causes as to why students dropout and hopes S.C. will look into this also.

Richard Cohen – Against bill. (hand outs) Ex. Director disability rights center. Presented language for amendment and argues of strengthening of current laws. Don't need to study further. Already have framework to gather any information. Need to change existing RSA – for changes to strengthen outline in handout.

1. Collect
2. Verify
3. Don't supply data, enforcement
4. Cum. Drop out rate from 9th grade
5. Perm. Indication to include in house suspension
6. Create system to collect analyze

7. Are there sub groups with greater problems, aggregate info by sub groups.

We feel these opinions will strengthen bill.

Rep Carter – Do you agree with Rep Naro? **Answer** – Yes

Doug Hall: (handout) Center for public policy. Question of drop out data problem of school districts, not DOE. Spoke to changes in how NH has changed how it collects data. Refutes idea that transfers are counted as dropouts. Dropouts are dropouts. Spoke at handout. Where did 3k and students go? Transfer to home school, transfer to private school, out of state (net flow)

Dept has tried to collect info. Thy tracked 19% drop out compared to 24%. The problem is tracking transfers to other districts. Some students say they transferring out of the system but never transferred in.
Difference between annual and cumulative dropout See pg2 of handout
Incoming class of 266 graduates 204 students. The cumulative rate of generally less than 4 times.
See page 3+ for report form.

Rep Rush – What happens to freshman? **Answer** – More students in 9th grade do not go forward. They may be counted two times. Its..... that we count them one time.

Rep Rush – How any students take 6 years to graduate? **Answer** – ask Sally

Sally Fellows – DOE DOE is happy to cooperate in any way. The committee wishes to approach this issue, tomorrow @ 9 am. The DOE will release the '02 dropout data Problem with data with 12 to 14 districts not having complete data, this time, everyone complied.

Rep Rush – How man students take 6 years to graduate? **Answer** - Done by class, ie 01, 02, to see wen they dropped out, but I don't have an answer to your question. Need definitions- biggest challenge to data collection.

Rep L'Heureux – Can we get data before press conference? Can you send a report? **Answer** – Yes, also on the web. Have in Am. – 21 copies. **Question**: Change from study to implementation does it cost money? **Answer** – It could... 2 things could add:

1. Audit of records.
2. No child left behind. We do race and gender. NCLB calls for more by desegregation.

Rep L'Heureux – Re: Handout #2. Does this mean that DOE has to go to rules to implement these changes.

Sarah Browning – Normally goes to state board. The board will consider amending rules concerning data collection. **Question** – Money will needed for this? **Answer**- Fed. Money will not pay for this. No language around verification in NCLB- will require state funds. **Question** – Are there penalties in rules? **Answer**: No, rules need to change. **Question** – Will this give DOE some teeth in this matter? **Answer** – Data ADM needs better monitoring but no info relating to this.

Rep. Alger – Is this a 28A issue? Can we get money from the ADMR? **Answer** – Dates need to be re-aligned with our existing dates.

Rick Trombley – NEA-NH Sounds like a good idea. NEA-NH would support. People support schools with test scores (success measured), drop out rates published in newspapers. Info needs to be complete. Public has false conclusions and laws are created based on inaccurate info. Perception is important.

PINK CARDS.

Rick Trombly- Supports the bill. 103 No State ST Concord, 224-7757. Representing NH-NEA

Sally Fellows – Supports the bill. Dept. of Education.

Rep Deb Naro – Supports the bill. Prime sponsor. 536-3789. Representing Plymouth/ Helron

Sen. Iris Estabrook – Supports the bill. Senate Dist. 21

Sen. Cohen – Supports the bill

Richard Cohan – Opposes the bill. Disabilities Rights 18 Low Ave. Concord NH 03301. 228-0432. Represents Disabilities Rights Center

Douglas Hall – Has no testimony. 49 Lane Rd. Chichester, NH. 798-5579. Representing NH Ctr. For Policy Students.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon M. Carson

Rep. Sharon M. Carson
Committee Clerk

Sub-Committee Minutes

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

SUBCOMMITTEE WORK SESSION ON HB 139

BILL TITLE: **establishing a committee to study the collection and reporting of school drop-out, suspension, and expulsion data.**

DATE: **January 29, 2003**

Subcommittee Members: Reps. Carson, Clarke, and Naro

Comments and Recommendations: Minutes attached. Representative Naro typed herself.

Amendments:

Sponsor: Rep. OLS Document #: Adopted/Failed

Sponsor: Rep. _____ OLS Document #: _____ Adopted/Failed

Sponsor: Rep. _____ OLS Document #: _____ Adopted/Failed

Motions: OTP, OTP/A, ITL, Interim Study (Please circle one.)

Moved by Rep. _____

Seconded by Rep. _____

Vote: _____

Motions: OTP, OTP/A, ITL, Interim Study (Please circle one.)

Moved by Rep. _____

Seconded by Rep. _____

Vote: _____

Respectfully submitted,

Rep. Debra A. Naro
Subcommittee Chairman/Clerk

HB 139 Sub-Committee
Minutes

1/29/03

Attendance: D.O.E. Representatives: Sarah Browning, Sally Fellows, Mary Ford
Reps. Carson, Clarke, and Naro

The focus of this meeting was data management and collection practices. Mary Ford, Director of Special Education, shared that a Data Management RFP will be issued changing the current Special Education Spedis System to a new data management system that dovetails with NCLB. It was unknown how long the timeframe will be to implement. One objective is to create a data base that is user friendly.

One advantage of this legislation is a cooperative effort between D.O.E. and the Legislature identifying State needs and aligning information in the proper federal format. A question was raised if HB139 passes, when will system be ready to go? It was recommended by S. Browning that language of bill be changed to include a stepping process. The first step could be implemented in 60 days.

It was recommended that information on data compilation gathered (by this sub-committee) be shared with 193-C Accountability legislative committee.

Current practice: Suspensions—Out-of-school suspensions are tracked and published under Safe Schools initiative. Expulsion data is currently collected and reported. However, "In-School Suspensions" may prove problematic due to lack of uniformity in definitions.

Data Collection: Current statewide practices utilize different data collection techniques. Superintendents have ultimate responsibility to sign off on two page drop-out report. There are five pages of instructions that accompany the document. The form requires another signature beyond the superintendent. This may be a contact person, perhaps the superintendent's secretary, a guidance counselor or a representative from the principal's office. Data from the current year is compared to previous year outcomes. In the event of questionable data, a representative from D.O.E. Information Services follows up with a telephone call to SAU contact person.

NCLB: The federal act will require disaggregation of performance indicators including economically disadvantaged, racial and ethnic groups, students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency and gender.

HB139: Under NCLB reporting of Expulsion and Suspension (In-House, Partial Day, and Out of School) is optional. HB 139 seeks to mandate reporting of these indicators.

Fiscal Note: S. Browning believes additional reporting of Expulsion and Suspension and the verification component may require an auditing function and additional staffing and felt this may require adding a fiscal note. Rep. Naro spoke with OLS Educational Attorney, Anthony (Last name?); he did not anticipate a need for a fiscal note.

Next meeting: February 5, 2003, 9:00 a.m., LOB 207

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

SUBCOMMITTEE WORK SESSION ON HB 139

BILL TITLE: **establishing a committee to study the collection and reporting of school drop-out, suspension, and expulsion data.**

DATE: **February 5, 2003**

Subcommittee Members: Reps. Carson, Clarke, and Naro

Comments and Recommendations: Minutes attached. Representative Naro typed herself.

Amendments:

Sponsor: Rep.	OLS Document #:	Adopted/Failed
Sponsor: Rep. _____	OLS Document #: _____	Adopted/Failed
Sponsor: Rep. _____	OLS Document #: _____	Adopted/Failed

Motions: OTP, OTP/A, ITL, Interim Study (Please circle one.)

Moved by Rep. _____

Seconded by Rep. _____

Vote: _____

Motions: OTP, OTP/A, ITL, Interim Study (Please circle one.)

Moved by Rep. _____

Seconded by Rep. _____

Vote: _____

Respectfully submitted,

Rep. Debra A. Naro
Subcommittee Chairman/Clerk

HB 139
Sub-Committee Minutes
February 5, 2003

Attendance: Sally Fellows, Sarah Browning, Patty Parento, Barbara Munsey
Reps. Carson, Clarke, and Naro

The scope of the sub-committee expanded beyond Drop-Out data to include discussion on risk indicators and prevention strategies. Several risk factors were identified:

- Homelessness
- Family Barriers: lack of support/unstable family environments
- Personal Barriers: High Risk Behaviors—drug and alcohol abuse
- Transitions from Elementary to Middle School begins failure cycle
- Bullying
- Poor Peer Relations
- Below grade level academic performance
- Learning Disabilities/Special Education
- Mid-Year Transfers: students fall through the "cracks" as there is less ownership for "new kids."
- Suspensions: some schools only have in-school which prohibits "opting out"; student still needs to complete work assignments.
- Poor attendance
- Home-Schooling may be used as an alternative mechanism to drop out.

D.O.E. does not have a Drop Consultant/Coordinator on the staff. Committee members asked the DOE to compile a list of indicators. Two or three indicators should serve as red flags for drop-out risk and begin intervention process. DOE acknowledged their lack of enforcement authority over schools that are non-responsive to intervention and prevention practices. Lack of funding was identified as a key factor for many districts. NCLB funding is insufficient to cover prevention as most New Hampshire high schools do not have Title I classification.

Representative Carson indicated she would contact Michael Sentence, New Hampshire NCLB representative, for his input.

Discussion surrounded future legislation and the consideration of mandating the development of District Drop-Out Prevention Plans.

Next meeting: February 11, 2003, 9:00 a.m., LOB 207

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

SUBCOMMITTEE WORK SESSION ON HB 139

BILL TITLE: **establishing a committee to study the collection and reporting of school drop-out, suspension, and expulsion data.**

DATE: **February 11, 2003**

Subcommittee Members: Reps. Carson, Clarke, and Naro

Comments and Recommendations: Minutes attached. Representative Naro typed herself.

Amendments:

Sponsor: Rep. OLS Document #: Adopted/Failed

Sponsor: Rep. _____ OLS Document #: _____ Adopted/Failed

Sponsor: Rep. _____ OLS Document #: _____ Adopted/Failed

Motions: OTP, OTP/A, ITL, Interim Study (Please circle one.)

Moved by Rep. _____

Seconded by Rep. _____

Vote: _____

Motions: OTP, OTP/A, ITL, Interim Study (Please circle one.)

Moved by Rep. _____

Seconded by Rep. _____

Vote: _____

Respectfully submitted,

Rep. Debra A. Naro
Subcommittee Chairman/Clerk

HB 139
Sub-Committee Minutes
February 11, 2003

Attendance: Gary Tirone, Director of Curriculum Development, Epping School District, Barbara Munsey, Business Manager, SAU#145, Cathy Zelinski, Director of Special Services, Epping, Paul Leather, D.O.E., Sally Fellows, D.O.E. Reps. Carson, Clarke, and Naro

G. Tirone shared that Epping's drop-out rate ranked 10% annual and 20% cumulative. He mentioned that some collection methods led to inaccurate reporting such as one student who re-enrolled was counted three times in the data.
Rep. Carson spoke on SB55—which seeks to lower the drop-out rate by raising the eligibility age from 16 to 18. She stated that parents must re-invest prior to high school years and the importance of teacher engagement in this prevention effort. She also pointed to Raymond High School as an example of a school invested in offering creative solutions by implementing alternative and flexible time programming.

The group shared several prevention programs in place around the state. Cathy Zelinksi discussed Epping High Schools "Freshmen in Transition" program which contracts with New Hampshire Technical College providing counselors for students through Professors adopting a school. "The Running Start Program" provides college credit, one course paid by the college and the second paid for by the district is another incentive. Competency Based Transcripts implemented in the 11th grade for career technical students looks at developing real world skills. This option helps to connect the relevance of school to real life learning. "Jobs for New Hampshire Graduates" was scheduled to do a presentation at a legislative luncheon on February 12. "Real Gains," a Vermont k-12 curriculum-based model, introduces students to the world of work at a cost of $100 per student. As of September 2002, D.O.E. began compiling a listing of alternative programming.

Cathy Zelinksi spoke on the higher incidence of drop outs occurring in the special education student population. She stated that early discouragement is hard to overcome. She has seen that young men coded with emotional handicaps or Attention Deficit Disorder are prone to dropping out; they often leave for high paying construction jobs. Gary Tirone stated that some students needed to work full time; perhaps flexible scheduling and hybrid diplomas might be a strategy to keeping students in school.

Several prevention strategies to overcoming the drop-out culture were discussed and included helping parents make the connection and commitment to learning earlier in the elementary school years. Improved transition planning was highlighted as a strategy to address special education students. A comment about financial disincentives was shared, "If schools write expensive transition plans, they then own it." The NCLB testing in 8th grade will be a good opportunity to red flag students at risk for dropping out. A comment was made that 8th grade is too late as 6th graders are already exhibiting risk indicators. One early indicator is literacy: if a third-grade student is reading one grade level behind, they are at-risk for dropping out. "Project Read" was cited as a pre-referral strategy. The group agreed that early intervention was the key. However, it was cautioned that there is no magic bullet. A holistic approach, serving the entire study body with intensive remediation and guidance available to core risk groups, along with planning and drop-out prevention programming is the best practice.

Next meeting: February 19, 2003

HB 139 Sub-Committee
Minutes
2/19/03

Attendance: **D.O.E. Sally Fellows; Disabilities Rights Center, Dick Cohen**
Reps. Carson, Clarke, and Naro

Discussion surrounded available funding for satisfying federal reporting requirements for data collection and the potential need for a fiscal note attachment.

Members questioned the D.O.E. assessment that additional staff would be needed to comply with bill as being purely speculative. Sally Fellows felt that a fiscal note may be necessary because an assumption was being made that NCLB is covering the costs of data compilation. She stated there is much disagreement and debate over the funding of this federal mandate. She further stated that D.O.E. does not have current staff in place to comply with NCLB or reporting requirements of HB139. NCLB is looking for graduation rates not dropout rates. There are two D.O.E. positions being funded through NCLB: one researcher and a data analyst who will go to local districts to serve as an educational consultant (the focus will not be on data collection). She estimated that disaggregation may require 1-2 additional D.O.E. personnel. However, she stated the Department has not reviewed the details on the disaggregation process. The question remains who owns the data burden, local districts or the State: will local districts accomplish the disaggregation on their own and report percentages or will D.O.E. collect the data and then break it down? Dick Cohen stated this requirement should be included in local school district improvement plans. It was stated that a computerized statewide database would produce more reliable tracking and verification of data, however, this provision is not included in short-term planning. It is clear that guidelines are needed.

Rep. Carson stated the disaggregated data needs to be collected and HB 139 will provide a baseline for the development of a plan. It should be noted that Office of Legislative Services agreed with Reps. Carson, Clarke and Naro on the necessity for a fiscal note. Furthermore, federal funding is available to help states improve their data-collection systems. Title VI, Part A, Section 6111 of the NCLB legislation provides that the U.S. Department of Education may fund sates to "improv(e) the dissemination of information on student achievement and school performance to parents and the community, including the development of information and reporting systems designed to identify best educational practices based on scientifically based research or to assist in linking records of student achievement, length of enrollment and graduation over time."

Sally Fellows submitted proposed changes to 189:28 and 193-E:3. Rep. Naro will have amendments drafted for review at the next sub-committee meeting scheduled for March 12. Note: sub-committee rescheduled to March 19 at 9:00 a.m. in LOB 207.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

SUBCOMMITTEE WORK SESSION ON HB 139

BILL TITLE: **establishing a committee to study the collection and reporting of school drop-out, suspension, and expulsion data.**

DATE: **March 19, 2003**

Subcommittee Members: Reps. Carson, Clarke, and Naro

Comments and Recommendations: Meeting of March 19th was to review amendment 2003-0849h. The subcommittee unanimously moved to adopt the above mentioned amendment and recommend OTP.

Amendments:

Sponsor: Rep. Clarke, Carson, Naro OLS Document #: 2003-0849h (Adopted)/Failed

Sponsor: Rep. _____ OLS Document #: _____ Adopted/Failed

Sponsor: Rep. _____ OLS Document #: _____ Adopted/Failed

Motions: (OTP), OTP/A, ITL, Interim Study (Please circle one.)

Moved by Rep. Debra Naro

Seconded by Rep. Sharon Carson

Vote: 3-0

Motions: OTP, OTP/A, ITL, Interim Study (Please circle one.)

Moved by Rep. _____

Seconded by Rep. _____

Vote: _____

Respectfully submitted,

Rep. Debra A. Naro

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

SUBCOMMITTEE WORK SESSION ON HB 139

BILL TITLE: **establishing a committee to study the collection and reporting of school drop-out, suspension, and expulsion data.**

DATE: 1-25-03; 2-5-03; 2-11-03; 2-19-03; 3-19-03

Subcommittee Members: Reps. Carson, Clarke, Nano

Comments and Recommendations:

See attached minutes.

Mtg of 3/19/03 revised amendment of 2003-0849H
The sub-committee unanimously moved to adopt the above-mentioned amendment and recommend OTP.

Amendments:

Sponsor: Rep. Clarke, Carson, Nano OLS Document #: 2003-0849H (Adopted)/Failed

Sponsor: Rep. _____ OLS Document #: _____ Adopted/Failed

Sponsor: Rep. _____ OLS Document #: _____ Adopted/Failed

Motions: (OTP) OTP/A, ITL, Interim Study (Please circle one.)

Moved by Rep. Debra Nano

Seconded by Rep. Sharon Carson

Vote: 3-0

Motions: OTP, OTP/A, ITL, Interim Study (Please circle one.)

Moved by Rep. _____

Seconded by Rep. _____

Vote: _____

Respectfully submitted,

Rep. Debra Nano
Subcommittee Chairman/Clerk

Testimony

Testimony—Representative Debra Naro HB 139 House Education Committee Hearing 1-21-03

As prime sponsor of HB 139, my aim is to make sure that we have an effective and comprehensive system on the state and school level to identify and address the problem of student dropout, and suspension and expulsion. HB 139, as introduced, establishes a committee to study (1) methods of collecting dropout, suspension, and expulsion data, (2) whether dropout and suspension/expulsion rates vary amongst children from different backgrounds and children with educational disabilities, and (3) whether data collected can be used to develop corrective strategies in these areas.

While this bill came out of legislative services as a study bill, my real intent was to sponsor legislation, which more immediately began addressing these critical problems rather than just studying them. I am therefore proposing that this committee consider a forthcoming amendment of HB139. The principle reason why legislative study is not necessary is that we already have a system or framework for data collection, outlined in RSA 193-E:3. Passed in 1998, this law requires school districts to report certain data to the Department of Education. The Department in turn formats the data as required by the statute and reports it to the public. The reported data is supposed to show how schools and the state as a whole are doing in regard to the following "performance indicators."

1. Attendance and drop out rates
2. School environmental indicators, such as safe-schools data.
3. Proportion of students going on to post-secondary education, military, and the workplace.
4. Performance on NHEIAP assessment tests.
5. Locally developed indicators and assessment measures

While not a full accountability system, this system was and is conceptually sound. However, experience with the law over the past four years, coupled with new developments and studies, suggests that several changes to the law are in order—again not more or new legislative study. For example, while RSA 193-E:3 (attached with proposed changes italicized) requires that all schools districts report school drop out rates; the N.H. Center for Public Policy Studies found that for school year 2001-2002, 18% of N.H. high schools did not report dropout data to the state. Of those that did, there were several methodological problems that tended to understate the problem. Also the way the data was collected and reported--on an annual rather than a cumulative basis--gave the impression that 1 in 20 students were dropping out rather than the true figure, which was 1 in 4 students who started 9th grade.

There are collection/enforcement and methodological problems in some of the other performance indicator areas as well. Suspension and expulsion rates are not even included as data elements even though they are clear indicators, or correlates, of how well schools are doing in educating all students and a forecaster of student drop out rates and current and future anti-social or criminal activity.

The changes to RSA 193-E:3 (attached) which I am now proposing, are designed to ensure that DOE receives complete and accurate dropout data and suspension and

expulsion data, as well as data in the other performance indicator areas of the law. The changes also add, in lieu of my study bill, a provision for disaggregation of data by student subgroups beginning in the school year 2004-2005. The subgroups are low income students, ESL students, and students with disabilities. They are the ones listed in the Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2002: the No Child Left Behind Act. The 2004-2005 school year was chosen based on advice from DOE as this is the date in which the state has to begin reporting disaggregated data under No Child Left Behind.

To achieve my goal, and one I think most share, we do not need to set up a study committee but instead strengthen our current system to ensure it produces complete and accurate performance or outcome data, broken down by schools, school districts, and by the state as a whole. Only with complete and accurate data will schools themselves, the state, parents and the public know how its schools are doing. And it is only with complete and accurate data, that will we be able to pinpoint and correct problems. There are already many well-documented approaches to reducing drop out, suspension and expulsion rates many of which have the additional benefit of improving test scores and post secondary placement rates. DOE has in fact a number of pilot initiatives or projects in these areas. The merit of these programs, along with others, will be studied in Senator Burt Cohen's bill establishing a committee to study methods to prevent or reduce the high school dropout rate. The point is that without accurate and complete data there is no baseline or impetus to adopt these programs. There is also no measure to determine whether or not programs are working or, whether the public's investment in schools is paying off.

Mr. Chair, I ask you to give consideration to an amended version of HB139 by setting up a subcommittee who will deliberate on the proposed amendment and also receive input from stakeholders through work sessions. Subsequent testimony from the Department Education and the Disabilities Rights Center will speak more specifically to the changes in the proposed amendment and Doug Hall, Executive Director of New Hampshire Center for Public Policy will discuss his report: *One in Four*, which provided hard data for needed policy changes. Thank you for your consideration.

HB139 proposed amendment
AMENDING RSA 193-E:3
Amended language in italics or strike out
1/18/03

193-E:3 Delivery of an Adequate Education. –

I. By April 1, 2000, each school district shall report to the department of education its data for the previous 12 months on its school and district performance indicators *in a uniform manner.* The requirements for data keeping and the form of the report shall be established in accordance with rules adopted by the state board of education. *Such rules shall also establish the methods by which the state board of education shall ensure that the data is accurate and complete, including but not limited to the use of verification or reliability checks and penalties or other enforcement sanctions. The state board shall have access to all student record information to carry out the aforementioned activities.*

(a) Performance indicators shall include the following areas:

(1) Attendance and *the annual* drop-out rates *and cumulative drop-out rates of eighth graders that do not graduate from high school.*

(2) School environment indicators, such as safe-schools data

(3) Proportion of graduating students going on to post-secondary education, military service, and the workplace.

(4) Performance on state tests administered pursuant to RSA 193-C and other standardized tests administered at local option.

(5) *Expulsion and suspension rates, including in-house suspension and partial day suspension, reporting to begin on December 1, 2004 for school year 2003-2004.*

*(*b) In addition, local districts shall report on locally developed performance indicators and assessment measures.

II. No later than December 1~~, 2000~~ *of each year* the department of education shall issue a report on the condition of education statewide and on a district-by-district and school-by-school basis, *in the aggregate for all students and beginning December 1, 2005 for the previous school year, disaggregated by the student subgroups specified in the Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2002 and in accordance with the provisions of that act.* This report shall include demographic and student performance data including, but not limited to, school and district performance on state tests administered pursuant to RSA 193-C, other standardized tests administered at local option by at least 25 percent of school districts, data provided under paragraph I, as well as other relevant statistics. Comparisons with state averages and with the condition of each district and school in comparison with previous years shall be provided, including, but not limited to, statewide rankings of each district and school on the state tests administered pursuant to RSA 193-C and on other standardized tests administered at local option by at least 25 percent of school districts. The report shall be organized and presented in a manner that is easily understood by the public and that assists each school district with the identification of trends, strengths, and weaknesses and the development of its local education improvement and assessment plan.

#2

ALTERNATIVE TO HB 139--AMENDING RSA 193-E:3

Amended language in italics or strike out
1/18/03

193-E:3 Delivery of an Adequate Education. –

I. By April 1, 2000, each school district shall report to the department of education its data for the previous 12 months on its school and district performance indicators *in a uniform manner.* The requirements for data keeping and the form of the report shall be established in accordance with rules adopted by the state board of education. *Such rules shall also establish the methods by which the state board of education shall ensure that the data is accurate and complete, including but not limited to the use of verification or reliability checks and penalties or other enforcement sanctions. The state board shall have access to all student record information to carry out the aforementioned activities.*

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(2) School environment indicators, such as safe-schools data

(3) Proportion of graduating students going on to post-secondary education, military service, and the workplace.

(4) Performance on state tests administered pursuant to RSA 193-C and other standardized tests administered at local option.

(5) *Expulsion and suspension rates, including in-house suspension and partial day suspension, reporting to begin on December 1, 2004 for school year 2003-2004.*

*(*b) In addition, local districts shall report on locally developed performance indicators and assessment measures.

II. No later than December 1~~, 2000~~ *of each year* the department of education shall issue a report on the condition of education statewide and on a district-by-district and school-by-school basis, *in the aggregate for all students and beginning December 1, 2005 for the previous school year, disaggregated by the student subgroups specified in the Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2002 and in accordance with the provisions of that act.* This report shall include demographic and student performance data including, but not limited to, school and district performance on state tests administered pursuant to RSA 193-C, other standardized tests administered at local option by at least 25 percent of school districts, data provided under paragraph I, as well as other relevant statistics. Comparisons with state averages and with the condition of each district and school in comparison with previous years shall be provided, including, but not limited to, statewide rankings of each district and school on the state tests administered pursuant to RSA 193-C and on other standardized tests administered at local option by at least 25 percent of school districts. The report shall be organized and presented in a manner that is easily understood by the public and that assists each school district with the identification of trends, strengths, and weaknesses and the development of its local education improvement and assessment plan.

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RATIONALE FOR ALTERNATIVE VERSION OF HB 139—AMENDMENTS TO RSA 193-E:3

Background

While the intent or motivation behind HB 139 is good, a study bill is unnecessary. The bill, as it is currently fashioned, would study methods to collect dropout, suspension, and expulsion data, whether dropout, suspension/expulsion rates in these areas vary amongst certain student subgroups, and whether data collected can be used to develop corrective strategies to reduce school drop-out, suspension, and expulsion rates.

A study committee is unnecessary for a number of reasons. Chief among them is that these areas have been previously studied, and in large part have formed the basis for existing federal and state law. In fact, New Hampshire already has a system or framework for data collection, principally incorporated in RSA 193-E:3, which was passed by the legislature in 1998.

It requires the Department to collect data from the school districts and then report on it publicly, by schools, by school district and statewide in the following "performance indicator areas:"

- Attendance and drop out rates
- School environmental indicators, such as safe-schools data.
- Proportion of students going on to post-secondary education, military, and the workplace.
- Performance on NHEIAP assessment tests
- Locally developed indicators and assessment measures

RSA 193-E as a whole, that is sections 1,2 & 3, was enacted after the Claremont II decision. It was also passed to further the state's policy of providing "all" New Hampshire's students the opportunity obtain a quality education to prepare them for successful participation society and education which is consistent with New Hampshire's curriculum frameworks. While not a full-fledged accountability system, this law is consistent with the great body of education reform literature and sound government practices of gathering and looking at indicators and outcomes, not just processes and inputs such as student teacher ratios or the amount of square footage in a school building, etc.

RSA 193-E:3 also calls for the use of the data by school districts in the "development of its local education improvement ...plans" detailed in RSA 193-C. This provision in effect makes the need to study whether data should be used for corrective purposes moot. Again, current law already provides for it.

However this is not to say that RSA 193-E:3 is perfect. Based on experience with the law, and in particular the data reporting sections, several changes are required in order to fulfill its purpose and meet the aims of the sponsors of HB 139. Several developments since the passage of the law also provide a basis for some revision.

For example, a June 2002 study by the NH Center on Public Policy Studies[1] revealed several serious collection and methodological problems with the way in which the drop out data is reported to the Department of Education (DOE). Fourteen districts did not report the data. It is believed that DOE did not take any enforcement action against these districts' violations of state laws. The manner in which the data is collected and reported gives the impression of a drop out rate of about 5%, rather than the true "cohort" rate of at least 20%. That is, at least 1 in 4 students who enter the 9th grade in New Hampshire do not finish school. DOE in its federally required self assessment process and material it has generated[2] has described additional problems in the collection of drop out data for students with disabilities, which has the result to understate the true problem. DOE has also indicated better means are necessary to track graduation data.

Suspension and expulsion, a well-established performance indicator, does not have to be collected under this law. While DOE must collect it for other purposes (e.g. to comply with IDEA and to accordingly develop corrective strategies), there are collection and enforcement problems in those areas as well. DOE has candidly admitted its self-assessment that suspension and expulsion data has historically not been collected for all children as required by law, and the suspension rates for children with disabilities is of questionable accuracy and likely understates the true problem. DOE has in fact indicated that they need to establish "reliable baseline data' in this area and in for drop outs, to be able to measure improvement.[3]

Proposed Amendments to RSA 193-E:3

To address these and related problems and to better achieve the underlying purposes of HB 139 as well as RSA 193-E, in lieu of the current study version, four changes are proposed to RSA 193-E:3. **Attached is RSA 193-E:3 with the proposed changes in italics or strike out.**

The first change is to Section I. It requires the DOE to make sure that data is accurate and complete. It does this by requiring DOE to perform reliability checks and take enforcement action when districts fail to produce accurate data. While arguably the Department may have general authority to do this, see e.g. RSA 186:5,[4] it has not exercised it. The proposed language would mandate that they do so. Much time and energy is spent collecting data. It has an important purpose to alert parents, schools, the state and public on how well schools are doing and where improvements are needed. It is unfair to all of these stakeholders and to the schools who do report fully and in good faith, if some schools fail to live up to their obligations. All

---

[1] This study is available at http://www.unh.edu/nhcpps/dropouts.pdf.

[2] NHDOE Special Education "Continuous Improvement Plan For OSEP of USDOE, August 2002, Nicholas Donohue, Commissioner; NHDOE/DHHS OSEP Self assessment Report March 2001.

[3] Ibid.

[4] RSA 186:5 provides: The state board shall have the same powers of management, supervision, and direction over all public schools in this state as the directors of a business corporation have over its business, except as otherwise limited by law. It may make all rules and regulations necessary for the management of its own business and... and to secure the efficient administration of the public schools... It shall be the duty of school boards and employees of school districts to comply with the rules and regulations of the state board.

schools should welcome more clarity and uniformity which is another requirement inserted in this section.

Data and obviously accurate data is important at every level. First and foremost schools must know how they are doing in order to see if programs are working and what to do if they are not. A uniform system across districts is essential so districts can compare themselves with state averages. Parents, other stakeholders and the public at large have a need and right to know how schools are doing in educating society's children. The performance indicators are important measures of how schools are doing. This legislature has already determined it. These changes just better assure it.

The second change requires that drop out data, which already must be collected, be reported in a cumulative as well as in an annual format for the reasons discussed above and elaborated on in the NH Center of Public Policy Studies June 2002 report.

The third change adds suspension and expulsion rates to the law. Actually the state is currently under an obligation to do this under other laws. By bringing suspension and expulsion under this law, it is recognized as an important indicator of how schools are addressing children's needs. This change also makes clear that so-called in-house and partial day suspensions are to be reported. These types of suspension or exclusions are important to know. They often "fly under the radar screen," but can result in much missed instructional time and have many of the same consequences as conventional suspension. This change is not to say that some students should not be suspended, but rather that it is important to track it. As with the other data categories, if a school is suspending 10% of its students and the state average is 3%, and some schools are as low as .05%, the 10% rate at the very least raises a red flag for the school, parents and the community to investigate more and determine whether corrective strategies are needed. Without data in this category, the discussion may not even begin, or begin too late. It is well documented that suspension and expulsion leads to or correlates to low performance, drop out, and anti-social or criminal activity.

Finally, the proposed amendment calls for disaggregation of all data beginning with the 2004-2005 school year for certain subgroups of students. Consistent with the Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2002, the No Child Left Behind Act, the subgroups are ESL and low income students and students with educational disabilities. Much of the federal and state education reform initiatives and legislation around country places heavy emphasis on these groups of students. The discussion of targeting some of the adequacy aid toward poorer towns in New Hampshire is a recognition of the importance of this issue.

By disaggregating, schools and the state have a way to measure progress of the neediest groups. A school could perform well on these indicators for most of its students, but poorly for a subgroup. Without disaggregation, neither the school nor others may see the subpar performance of the subgroups thus making it less likely that corrective strategies will be implemented. This is the currently the problem with students with disabilities In most schools (though significantly not in all) students with disabilities perform poorly on the NHEIAP relative to the rest of the student population. This is the case even for students with learning disabilities and orthopedic impairments, where a large gap would not be expected. However, currently DOE does not display disaggregated on the website with its aggregated data,and the disaggregated data is not

otherwise widely distributed. Thus little light is shed on this problem and insufficient corrective action taken.

In sum, the changes proposed to RSA 193-E:3, while for the most part not major and consistent with the intent of the legislature in enacting the law in 1998, will better aid schools and the state in fulfilling its obligation to provide an opportunity for each and every student in New Hampshire to acquire a good education.

Richard Cohen, Esq., Executive Director
Disabilities Rights Center 1/19/03

ALTERNATIVE TO HB 139--AMENDING RSA 193-E:3

Amended language in italics or strike out
1/18/03

193-E:3 Delivery of an Adequate Education. –

I. By April 1, 2000, each school district shall report to the department of education its data for the previous 12 months on its school and district performance indicators *in a uniform manner.* The requirements for data keeping and the form of the report shall be established in accordance with rules adopted by the state board of education. *Such rules shall also establish the methods by which the state board of education shall ensure that the data is accurate and complete, including but not limited to the use of verification or reliability checks and penalties or other enforcement sanctions. The state board shall have access to all student record information to carry out the aforementioned activities.*

(a) Performance indicators shall include the following areas:

(1) Attendance and *the annual* drop-out rates *and cumulative drop-out rates of eighth graders that do not graduate from high school.*

(2) School environment indicators, such as safe-schools data

(3) Proportion of graduating students going on to post-secondary education, military service, and the workplace.

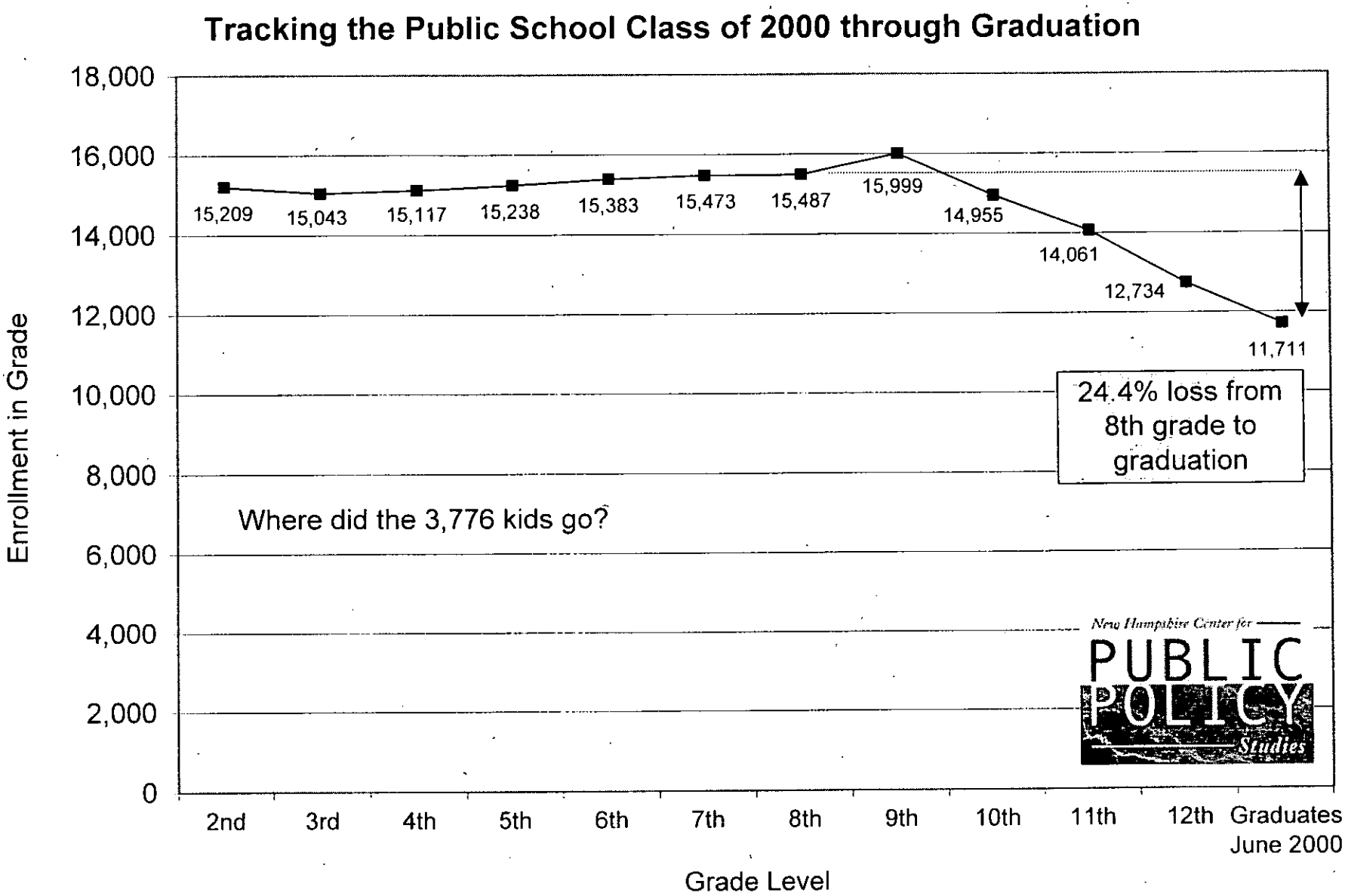
(4) Performance on state tests administered pursuant to RSA 193-C and other standardized tests administered at local option.

(5) *Expulsion and suspension rates, including in-house suspension and partial day suspension, reporting to begin on December 1, 2004 for school year 2003-2004.*

*(*b) In addition, local districts shall report on locally developed performance indicators and assessment measures.

II. No later than December 1~~, 2000~~ *of each year* the department of education shall issue a report on the condition of education statewide and on a district-by-district and school-by-school basis, *in the aggregate for all students and beginning December 1, 2005 for the previous school year, disaggregated by the student subgroups specified in the Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2002 and in accordance with the provisions of that act.* This report shall include demographic and student performance data including, but not limited to, school and district performance on state tests administered pursuant to RSA 193-C, other standardized tests administered at local option by at least 25 percent of school districts, data provided under paragraph I, as well as other relevant statistics. Comparisons with state averages and with the condition of each district and school in comparison with previous years shall be provided, including, but not limited to, statewide rankings of each district and school on the state tests administered pursuant to RSA 193-C and on other standardized tests administered at local option by at least 25 percent of school districts. The report shall be organized and presented in a manner that is easily understood by the public and that assists each school district with the identification of trends, strengths, and weaknesses and the development of its local education improvement and assessment plan.

#3


Tracking the Public School Class of 2000 through Graduation
Enrollment in Grade
18,000
16,000
14,000
12,000
10,000
8,000
6,000
4,000
2,000
0
15,209
15,043
15,117
15,238
15,383
15,473
15,487
15,999
14,955
14,061
12,734
11,711
24.4% loss from 8th grade to graduation
Where did the 3,776 kids go?
New Hampshire Center for
PUBLIC POLICY Studies
2nd
3rd
4th
5th
6th
7th
8th
9th
10th
11th
12th
Graduates June 2000
Grade Level

Pembroke Academy

				Total enrollment	964
Incoming class	266				
	dropout to sophomore	-2			
	remaining	264			
		dropout to junior	-6		
		remaining	258		
			dropout to senior	-20	
			remaining	238	
				dropout to graduation	-34
				remaining	204
			cohort graduation rate		**76.7%**
			cohort dropout rate		**23.3%**
			annual drop-out rate		**-6.4%**

Franklin High School

				Total enrollment	514
Incoming class	169				
	dropout to sophomore	-16			
	remaining	153			
		dropout to junior	-3		
		remaining	150		
			dropout to senior	-26	
			remaining	124	
				dropout to graduation	-37
				remaining	87
			cohort graduation rate		**51.5%**
			cohort dropout rate		**48.5%**
			annual drop-out rate		**-16.0%**

New Hampshire Center for PUBLIC POLICY Studies

Education Week

American Education's Newspaper of Record

January 16, 2002

Graduation Statistics: Caveat Emptor

By Jay P. Greene
Education Week

As the pundits have recently reminded us, honesty is an early casualty of war. Alas, it also appears to be a frequent casualty of K-12 education data. Graduation statistics reported by federal, state, and local school districts are especially confusing, misleading, and implausibly optimistic.

Lack of candor about our educational problems produces the most serious problem of all: the minority students whose shockingly low graduation rates we are failing to admit, let alone address.

Even the federal government's normally reliable National Center for Education Statistics is wont to inflict such casualties. That agency recently issued its annual report on dropouts and high school completion rates, and again we find that it paints a blurred and falsely cheerful picture of how U.S. schools are performing. According to "Dropout Rates in the United States: 2000," 86.5 percent of young Americans are completing high school, up from 85.9 percent the previous year.

Would that it were so. By my calculations, however, U.S. rates of high school graduation are considerably lower. Using a transparent and easily checked method of comparing 8th grade enrollments in 1993-94 with high school diploma counts in spring 1998 (and adjusting for student-population changes), I put the national graduation rate at about 74 percent. The situation for minority students is far bleaker. I find that only 56 percent of African- American students and 54 percent of Latino students graduated from high school in 1998. This contrasts with claims by the NCES of a 83.7 percent completion rate for African-American students and a 64.1 percent rate for Latino students.

For More Information

The author's report, "High School Graduation Rates in the United States," Nov. 2001, is available from the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research. Read also the National Center for Education Statistics report he cites, "Dropout Rates in the United States: 2000." (Requires Adobe's Acrobat Reader.)

Why are the NCES numbers so much higher than mine? The main reason is that the federal report includes among high school completers those who have passed an "equivalency" test, such as the General Educational Development exam. This is misleading for several reasons, beginning with the fact that recipients of a GED credential are not graduates of the public high school system. They have received their diplomas with the assistance of community colleges, the prison system, or vocational schools, or through their own, independent efforts. Since most people view the NCES completion data as attesting to the performance of our high school system, we should not include people who dropped out of that system and later received diplomas from some

other system. (In computing a physician's cure rate, we would not want to count patients who had transferred to the care of another doctor.)

A considerable body of research also suggests that the life outcomes of GED recipients are more like those of dropouts than those of regular high school graduates. Economists James Heckman and Stephen Cameron find that "exam-certified high school equivalents are statistically indistinguishable from high school dropouts." Other researchers find moderate benefits for GED recipients, but no one claims that they are truly "equivalent" to regular high school graduates. To lump GED holders with regular graduates, therefore, is to combine fundamentally dissimilar groups while misleading people about the school system's ability to produce high school graduates.

In previous years, NCES reports included data (in small print) that distinguished regular-diploma recipients from those with "equivalency" certificates. The latest report, however, does not provide this information at all. But we can compute the difference using the 1999 report and removing GED recipients. We find that the NCES calculates the "true" high school graduation rate at 76.8 percent, a little higher than my (1998) finding of 74 percent. The Latino rate drops to 54.9 percent, close to my finding of 54 percent. The education statistics center's African-American graduation rate, sans GED holders, however, was 72.9 percent for 1999, considerably higher than my (1998) estimate of 56 percent.

A considerable body of research suggests that the life outcomes of GED recipients are more like those of dropouts than those of high school graduates.

That discrepancy probably has to do with the different methods by which the information was collected. My method simply involves a comparison of 8th grade enrollments with diploma counts five years later, adjusting for enrollment and population changes. The NCES figures come from the Current Population Survey of the U.S. Census. The survey, known as CPS, tries to phone a representative sample of households to ask a number of questions, including whether young people in the house have finished high school.

While the CPS is a well-run survey, this methodology may inflate the graduation-rate estimate for young African-Americans. For example, the survey excludes prison populations. To the extent that young black dropouts are disproportionately likely to be incarcerated, the CPS will overstate African-American graduation rates. Second, households containing minority dropouts are particularly difficult for phone surveys to reach. Deep in Appendix D of the new NCES report, we learn that this "coverage bias" could overstate black graduation rates by 9 percent to 18 percent. Third, the Current Population Survey depends on people forthrightly describing their own levels of educational attainment. Such self-reporting could significantly distort graduation rates for groups that may overstate their educational achievement to compensate for workforce discrimination. One of the advantages of my simple method of calculating graduate rates is that it requires only enrollment and diploma counts, which tend to be reliable and easily checked figures.

Yet for all their flaws, the NCES graduation statistics are light years ahead of the numbers

usually reported by states and school districts. Rather than relying on surveys or enrollment counts, most states and school districts calculate graduation statistics by trying to track individual students over time. Few, however, have either the resources or incentives to track individual students successfully. Faced with ambiguous or missing information about the whereabouts of individuals, districts may be prone to provide the most benign explanation for a student's absence. This tendency to produce rosy results is exacerbated by the bizarre definitions of dropouts that many districts use, commonly excluding not only GED-seekers but also students who leave high school to go to jail or join the military.

The sad fact is that the misreporting of dropout statistics is all too common across the country.

While it sounds more precise to track individual students, the failure of districts to do so successfully and the inability of outsiders to check district accounts of student whereabouts can lead to graduation statistics that are grossly in error. Take, for example, the Dallas school district, which reports an annual dropout rate of 1.3 percent. Presenting dropout rates in annual terms is like reporting credit card interest rates in monthly terms; it just makes the number feel smaller. If we convert the annual rate into a cumulative rate (which is how everyone thinks about dropouts), we would expect about 8 percent of an 8th grade class to drop out before graduation. Yet, according to my calculations, only 52 percent of 8th grade students in Dallas manage to earn diplomas. The 1.3 percent rate reported by the district has to be a fantasy in a district with half as many graduates as 8th graders and a growing student population.

Not to pick on Dallas; the sad fact is that the misreporting of dropout statistics is all too common across the country. And at least Dallas is aware that its numbers are off and that the district truly has a serious problem. As a spokesman for the district told the *Dallas Morning News*, "[Superintendent Mike] Moses has said the dropout problem is probably a lot bigger than what any of the other figures report. We know it's a major problem, and we're trying to do something about it."

Most school officials are not so candid. This lack of candor about the extent of problems in U.S. education produces the most serious casualty of all: the minority students whose shockingly low graduation rates we are failing to admit, let alone address. If people only realized that we graduate barely more than half our minority students, there would be demands for dramatic efforts to remedy the situation. Instead, the problems are being glossed over and the failures of the status quo maintained.

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One in Four:

School Drop-Outs in New Hampshire

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June 2002

One in Four: School Drop-outs in New Hampshire

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS 1
SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS 2
I. AGGREGATE HIGH SCHOOL ATTRITION 3
ANNUAL RATES AND CUMULATIVE RATES 3
TRACKING CLASSES OF STUDENTS 3
LOSS OF STUDENTS FROM 8TH GRADE TO GRADUATION 5
LOSS OF STUDENTS FROM 9TH GRADE TO GRADUATION 6
Do some move out of state or enroll in schools outside of New Hampshire? 7
Do some remain in high school for more than 4 years? 7
Do some transfer to and then graduate from a private high school? 7
CALCULATING A DROP-OUT RATE 9
RECENT DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DROP-OUT DATA 9
II. CALCULATED CUMULATIVE RATES BY HIGH SCHOOL 10
GRADUATION CREDIT REQUIREMENTS AND DROP-OUT RATES 13
SCHOOL SIZE, SCHOOL SPENDING, AND DROP-OUT RATES 14
III. RECOMMENDATIONS 17

TABLES

Table 1: NH public school classes dwindle through the high school years 4
Table 2: Approximately 26 percent of 8th graders don't graduate 6
Table 3: Approximately 23 percent of 9th graders don't graduate 7
Table 4: New Hampshire's parochial schools show similar attrition 8
Table 5: There is no net transfer to other private schools 8
Table 6: Annual and cumulative drop-out rates by high school 12
Table 7: High schools grouped by size 14
Table 8: High schools grouped by spending per pupil 15
Table 9: Drop-out rates by school size and spending 15
Table 10: High schools by size and spending with calculated cumulative drop-out rates 16

FIGURES

Figure 1: Annual declines occur in each class's enrollment after 9th grade 5
Figure 2: New Hampshire high schools sorted by calculated cumulative drop-out rates 13
Figure 3: No relationship between graduation credit requirements and drop-out rates 14
Figure 4: Drop-out rate is inversely related to school spending 17

Introduction

Approximately 25 percent of New Hampshire's high school students drop out, yet few parents or policy makers in New Hampshire seem aware of the magnitude of the problem. Imagine, though, the impact that a little honesty might have, if every high school graduation ceremony this spring included empty chairs among its graduating class for those students who had dropped out along the way. In Nashua and Milton and Somersworth, every third chair would be empty. In Pembroke and Lincoln-Woodstock and Winchester, every fourth chair would be empty. Every seat in Hopkinton would be occupied with a graduating student, but in Franklin, *every other* seat would be empty.

To succeed economically and socially in New Hampshire today, virtually every individual needs at least a high school diploma. For New Hampshire to prosper as a society, we need a skilled and well-educated workforce. It is not enough for just 75 percent of our young people to make it through high school. There are myriads of statistics that show how diminished the future earning power of drop-outs is when compared to those who complete high school, to say nothing of the relationship between drop-outs and criminality, welfare dependence, and other social ills.

This paper starts with data collected and published annually by the New Hampshire Department of Education and then does something the department has not done: estimates how many students have dropped out of each high school class in the state between the eighth grade and graduation. The first part of this paper presents all of the assumptions and equations needed to develop that bottom-line estimate and also specifies the type of data schools and the state Department of Education ought to be collecting to produce exact counts of drop-outs. The second part of the paper investigates the differences in drop-out rates among schools.

Summary of Findings

1. Approximately 25 percent (plus or minus 1 percent) of New Hampshire's public school students drop out; 61 percent of drop-outs are boys, 39 percent are girls. These numbers shock people—including educators and policy makers—because most of us are accustomed to seeing the published "annual" drop-out rates which do not show the cumulative effect of drop-outs on the size of a high school class over its four years in high school. This paper estimates the cumulative drop-out rate, the percent of students in any given eighth grade class that do not graduate from high school some years later. (In the jargon of statistics and education, this is known as the "cohort" drop-out rate).

2. The Department of Education's most recently announced annual drop-out rates for schools underreport the true annual rates because school districts have not provided complete data. Specifically, school districts report that hundreds of high school students each year transfer to another district but many of those students evidently never do enroll in the new districts.

3. The percent of students who drop out before graduating varies considerably from high school to high school, from zero to 50 percent.

4. There is no relationship between drop-out rates and credits required for graduation. Schools with higher graduation requirements do not have higher drop-out rates.

5. There is a strong relationship between school spending and drop-out rates. Students in lower spending schools, on average, are almost twice as likely to drop out as students attending higher spending schools.

Summary of Recommendations

1. Each school board in the state should establish a goal that it determines is an acceptable drop-out rate among the students for which it is responsible. Any difference between that goal and the actual rate should be a cause for local concern, planning, and action. Schools should involve students, business leaders, and other civic organizations in keeping more students in school and on a path toward a diploma.

2. Reducing drop-out rates, especially in those districts with high rates, should be given the proper priority by the executive and legislative branches of state government in their efforts to improve the quality of public education in New Hampshire.

3. The New Hampshire Department of Education should continue its laudable process of tightening the reporting of drop-outs from school districts. The 14 school districts that have failed to count the number of students who dropped out over the summer vacation should do so this summer and in future years.

4. Each school district should confirm that each student that it reports to the NH Department of Education as "transferred *to* another public school district in New Hampshire" has been reported by the other district as "transferred *from* another public school district in New Hampshire." Transfers not so confirmed should be counted as drop-outs.

5. The department should publish cumulative rates for each district or high school as well as annual rates.

I. Aggregate High School Attrition

Annual Rates and Cumulative Rates

The U.S. Department of Education and the NH Department of Education have traditionally issued reports that contain *annual* drop-out rates. The February 2002 report for New Hampshire high schools stated a state average drop-out rate of 5.4 percent for school year 2000-01. The public's general understanding is that this is a measure of how many students in a given class do not graduate. For example, a *Portsmouth Herald* editorial, reacting to the announced rate of 3.8 percent for Portsmouth High School, condemned that fact that "about one out of every 25 students (leave) school before graduation."[1] This is incorrect. The editorial should have alerted readers to the fact that about one out of every *six* students at the high school drop out before graduation. In a similar manner, a New Hampshire high school principal and a key state lawmaker separately expressed concern about the announced drop-out rate for their local high schools. Both were appalled when shown that the rate that had concerned them was only a quarter of the true cumulative rate.

The attrition over four years of high school, termed the *cumulative* rate, is approximately four times the *annual* rate.[2]

The confusion in New Hampshire is typical of other states as well, as an article in the national *School Board News* illustrates:

> "Traditionally, school districts, states, and the U. S. Education Department have reported annual drop-out rates, defined as the percentage of students who quit school in any one year. What many school administrators know, but aren't required to report, is the percentage of ninth graders who fail to graduate with their class three years later. The difference between the two accounting methods is dramatic, since the four-year span, referred to as a cohort rate, is usually at least four times higher than the annual rate."[3]

The NH Department of Education and individual school districts need to report this cumulative drop-out rate, because it is the number that the public cares about—and mistakenly assumes that it is getting from education officials. This paper estimates that rate for New Hampshire as a whole and presents a cumulative-rate equivalent for each high school based on the department's announced annual rate.

Tracking Classes of Students

On October 1 of each year, all public and private schools in the state record the number of students enrolled at each grade level and then report those figures to the New Hampshire

[1] "Education debate obscured by money, money, money," *Portsmouth Herald*, February 17, 2002.
[2] What we term the "cumulative" rate is usually referred to in statistical and education reports as the "cohort" rate.
[3] National School Board Association, "Taking a more accurate – and more dismal – look at drop-out rates," *School Board News*, February 22, 2000, www.nsba.org/sbn/00-feb/022200-5.htm.

Department of Education. Annually the department prepares statistical summaries from those reports.

Table 1 displays the count of students at each grade level from 2nd grade through 12th grade and the number of June graduates for each graduating class as it moved through the state's public school system.[4] Figure 1 displays the data in graphic form.

Table 1: NH public school classes dwindle through the high school years

Count of Students Enrolled and Graduating from the Public Schools												
Grade -->	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	Graduates
Class of 2003	16,262	16,237	16,352	16,480	16,627	16,785	16,848	17,520	16,160			
Class of 2002	15,490	15,523	15,630	15,678	15,805	15,955	15,967	16,566	15,297	14,492		
Class of 2001	15,515	15,404	15,611	15,614	15,732	15,798	15,738	16,336	15,149	14,317	13,024	
Class of 2000	15,209	15,043	15,117	15,238	15,383	15,473	15,487	15,999	14,955	14,061	12,734	11,711
Class of 1999	14,778	14,629	14,594	14,724	14,874	14,997	14,926	15,420	14,315	13,354	12,148	11,087
Class of 1998	13,457	13,749	13,826	13,855	13,951	14,189	14,118	14,564	13,597	12,872	11,656	10,653
Class of 1997	12,601	12,626	13,069	13,232	13,299	13,567	13,537	14,039	12,969	12,387	11,158	10,376
Class of 1996	11,899	12,028	12,215	12,625	12,705	12,974	12,881	13,477	12,499	11,965	10,996	10,046

These data demonstrate the following points.

1. Each class has been somewhat larger than the one of the prior year. When the graduating class of 1996 was in 2nd grade in 1985 it had 11,899 students. When the graduating class of 2003 was in 2nd grade in 1992, it had 16,262 students. This was 36.7 percent more 2nd graders than only seven years earlier.

2. As a class of students proceeds from 2nd grade through 8th grade, there is a slow and relatively consistent increase in total enrollment. By the time a class is in the 8th grade it has, on average, 3.7 percent more students than it did in 2nd grade. This 0.6 percent annual growth is consistent with (and probably the result of) the net in-migration of families to the state over those years.

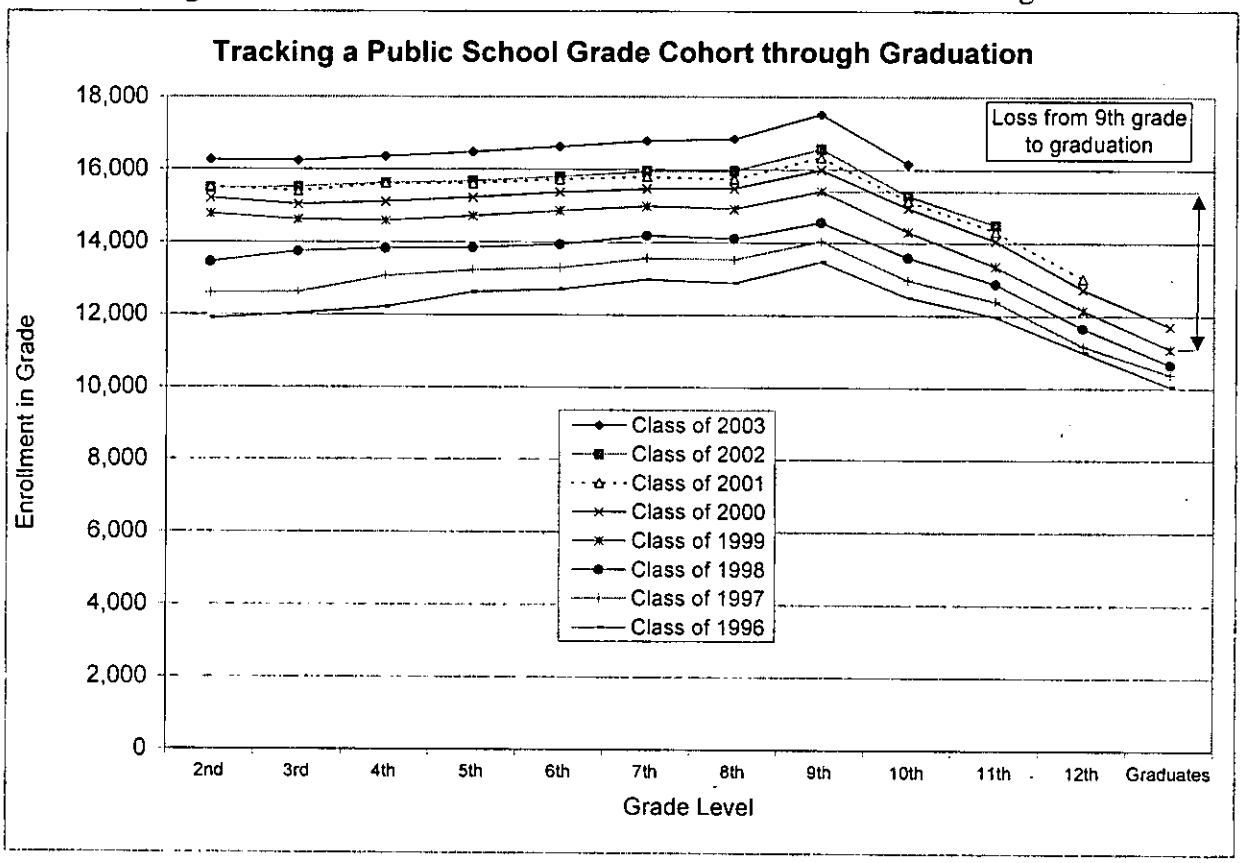
3. Each class sees a larger increase when it moves from 8th grade to 9th grade than at any other time. This is the move from middle schools to the freshman year of high school and the increase averages 3.7 percent of the 8th grade enrollment. This is caused by a combination of the net movement of students from private schools or home schooling into the public high schools and the fact that about 8 percent of all freshmen are retained (not promoted) in 9th grade.

[4] Enrollment data for the public schools is taken from "State Totals – Fall Enrollments 1991-92 through "2000-01," dated April 10, 2001, "State Totals – Fall Enrollments 1985-1994," dated May 8, 1995, and the 10 annual "State Totals – Fall Enrollments" for school years 1991/92 through 2000/01, NH Department of Education, various dates. Importantly, the enrollments in each grade do not include students who are identified as in "ungraded" and "special education – ungraded" classes. Graduation data is taken from "Class of 2000: An Informational Study of New Hampshire Public High School Graduates," NH Department of Education, July 2001, and the comparable reports for the classes of 1996 through 1999. Enrollment and graduates of the two public academies (Coe-Brown Northwood and Pinkerton) are included.

4. The count of students remaining in the public schools declines each year after 9th grade. And the number who actually graduate at the end of their senior year is smaller still than the number who were enrolled in the October before graduation.

5. The patterns are remarkably consistent from class to class, indicating that there is no statistical aberration or unusual set of circumstances that affected one year or one class.

Figure 1: Annual declines occur in each class's enrollment after 9th grade



We estimate the cumulative attrition rate in two ways: (1) based on 8th grade enrollment and graduation 4½ years later and (2) based on 9th grade enrollment and graduation 3½ years later.

Loss of Students from 8th Grade to Graduation

For this calculation, the graduation rate is the number of graduates divided by the enrollment in 8th grade with some adjustments. The adjustments that must be made to the enrollments in Table 1 are the following:

- Addition of students over 4½ years due to net migration from outside NH.[5]
- Addition of a portion of students counted in "ungraded" classes.[6]

[5] This is estimated as an increase of 0.6 percent per year based on the actual average growth rate from grade 2 through 8. Over the 4 ½ years from October enrollment in 8th grade to June graduation in 12th grade, this amounts to 2.7 percent of the 8th grade enrollment.

- Subtraction of those students who were repeating 8th grade.[7]
- Addition of net flow of students from private schools after 8th grade.[8]

Table 2: Approximately 26 percent of 8th graders don't graduate

	Enrollment in October of 8th Grade	Adjustments	Adjusted Count	Graduates	Loss from 8th grade	Percent Loss from 8th Grade
Class of 2000	15,487	+363	15,850	11,711	4,139	26.1%
Class of 1999	14,926	+367	15,293	11,087	4,206	27.5%
Class of 1998	14,118	+347	14,465	10,653	3,812	26.4%
Class of 1997	13,537	+344	13,881	10,376	3,505	25.3%
Class of 1996	12,881	+398	13,279	10,046	3,233	24.3%
Total	70,949	+1,819	72,768	53,873	18,895	26.0%

This method of calculating the attrition of students indicates an average of 26 percent who do not graduate.

Loss of Students from 9th Grade to Graduation

For this calculation, the graduation rate is the number of graduates divided by the enrollment in 9th grade with some adjustments. The adjustments that must be made to the enrollments in Table 1 are the following:

- Addition of students over 3½ years due to net migration from outside NH.[9]
- Addition of a portion of students counted in "ungraded" classes.[10]
- Subtraction of students who were repeating 9th grade.[11]

This method of calculating the attrition of students indicates an average of 23 percent who do not graduate. This result is somewhat lower than using the 8th grade enrollment. That should not be surprising as some students leave school even before being counted in the 9th grade enrollment.

What happens to the large number of students in each class who do not graduate? We have investigated a number of possibilities.

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[6] "Ungraded" students are not included in the enrollment figures in Table 1 but are among those eligible to graduate. The adjustment is equal to 1/8 of the number of the reported ungraded students in elementary schools of grades 1-8 plus one third of the ungraded students in middle schools.

[7] This is calculated as 2 percent of the 8th grade enrollment. This estimate is based on the fact that 512 students were repeating 8th grade in 1999/2000, 195 in 1998/99, and 194 in 1997/98. This is an average of 1.8 percent of the enrolled 8th graders in those years. If students repeating a grade are not subtracted, they will be counted twice in this multi-year analysis but can only be counted as graduates once.

[8] This estimate is based on the data from Table 5 in the main text.

[9] The estimated 0.6 percent per year increase for 3 ½ years is 2.1 percent.

[10] This is calculated as one quarter of the reported number of ungraded students in grades 9-12.

[11] This is calculated as 8.3 percent of the 9th grade enrollment. This estimate is based on the fact that 1,666 students were enrolled in 9th grade for a second year in 1999/2000, 1,271 were repeating in 1999/98, and 1,129 were repeating in 1998/97. This is an average of 8.3 percent of the enrolled 9th graders in those years.

Table 3: Approximately 23 percent of 9th graders don't graduate

	Enrollment in October of 9th Grade	Adjustments	Adjusted Count	Graduates	Loss from 9th grade	Percent Loss from 9th Grade
Class of 2000	15,999	-852	15,147	11,711	3,436	22.7%
Class of 1999	15,420	-813	14,607	11,087	3,520	24.1%
Class of 1998	14,564	-761	13,803	10,653	3,150	22.8%
Class of 1997	14,039	-684	13,355	10,376	2,979	22.3%
Class of 1996	13,477	-471	13,006	10,046	2,960	22.8%
Total	73,499	-3,581	69,918	53,873	16,045	22.9%

Do some move out of state or enroll in schools outside of New Hampshire?
There is no statistical or anecdotal evidence that large numbers of New Hampshire high schoolers are enrolling in schools outside of New Hampshire (for example, at out of state boarding schools) after having been enrolled in a New Hampshire public school for eighth or ninth grade. The net migration of youth is *into* New Hampshire, not *out*. In fact, as noted above, this in-migration results in an increase of approximately 0.6 percent per year in each class.

Do some remain in high school for more than 4 years?
Certainly. The number of students who take five (or more) years to graduate from high school is not insignificant. However, students in the class of 1998 who stayed in school and graduated in 1999 (or later) would be almost exactly offset by the students of the class of 1997 (or earlier) who remained in school and graduated in 1998. That is, only the *net difference* from one year to the next in the number of students taking more than 4 years to complete high school can account for an apparent loss of students. There is no reason to believe that the percentage of students who take more than four years to graduate has been changing rapidly in these years.

Do some transfer to and then graduate from a private high school?
Certainly, students do transfer from public to private schools (and vice versa) during their high school years. However, if the number transferring in both directions were equal there would be no reduction in the number of public school students. Only a *net transfer* in favor of the private schools would result in a numerical loss of students to the public schools. This can be investigated by breaking the private high schools into two groups.

1. Roman Catholic Parochial Schools
The enrollment at Roman Catholic Parochial high schools was 2,442 in October of 2000. As Table 4 illustrates, there is no sudden enrollment jump in 9th grade over 8th grade. Thus, there is no net transfer of 8th grade public school students to 9th grade in the parochial school system. Table 4 also shows that enrollment declines from 9th grade through 12th grade in a fashion that is very similar to that of the public schools. It does not appear that there is much, if any, *net transfer* of public school students into or out of the parochial school system during the high school years.

Table 4: New Hampshire's parochial schools show similar attrition

Enrollment in Roman Catholic Parochial Schools by Grade					
	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
October 2000	691	687	609	626	520
October 1999	680	668	661	551	559
October 1998	655	711	582	579	578
October 1997	639	651	621	603	520
October 1996	616	656	630	548	475

2. Other Private High Schools

We estimate a *net transfer* of 150 students *from* private schools *to* public schools in each class as it progresses thorough the four high school years. Total enrollment in non-parochial private schools in the fall of 2000 is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: There is no net transfer to other private schools

Enrollment in Other Private Schools by Grade			
	8th	9th – 12th	Average 9th-12th
October 2000	849	5,593	1,398
Less boarding students from outside NH attending prep school	-0	-2,811	-703
Net NH-Resident Enrollment	849	2,782	695

There is an increase in enrollment from 849 students in 8th grade to an average of 1,398 students in each of the four high school years. This might seem to indicate a shift of 500+ students from New Hampshire public schools to these private high schools. However, New Hampshire's 10 large boarding "prep" schools[12] account for more than half of the enrollment in 9th-12th grades. Of their total enrollment of 3,782 students, 2,811 were boarding students from other states and only 971 were New Hampshire residents.[13] Assuming that these out-of-state students were equally divided among the four grade levels, approximately 703 of the enrolled students would have come into the state in 9th grade and would not be counted in the 8th grade enrollment. Table 5 shows an average enrollment of 695 New Hampshire residents in grades 9-12, while the enrollment in 8th grade was 849.

There is little or no net loss of students in these schools from 9th grade through 12th grade. The total 12th grade enrollment in non-parochial private schools in 2000 was 1,338 while the 9th grade enrollment was 1,281. This is primarily because these private schools enroll large numbers of students who reside outside New Hampshire and, when a student leaves for any reason, new students are added from among waiting applicants.

[12] Brewster Academy, Dublin School, Holderness School, Kimball Union Academy, New Hampton School, Phillips Exeter Academy, Proctor Academy, St. Paul's School, Tilton School, and White Mountain School.

[13] To assist our analysis of for this paper, the New Hampshire Department of Education conducted a telephone survey in March 2002 of the ten schools and obtained the count of students who were NH residents and students who were from out of state. While this count was for the subsequent year, any difference between the two years would be very small.

Calculating a Drop-Out Rate

The number of students who graduate from public high schools each year is not an estimate: it is a known quantity. The attrition rate is based on the estimated number of students who are "potential" graduates. We have employed two means to estimate this number. One, using 8th grade enrollment as the base, results in an estimated graduation rate of 74 percent and drop-out rate of 26 percent. The other, using 9th grade enrollment as the base, results in an estimated graduation rate of 77 percent and drop-out rate of 23 percent.

Recognizing that our calculations have made use of informed estimates and two different approaches have resulted in slightly different numbers, we have split the difference. *We conclude that approximately 75 percent of students in a high school class do graduate while 25 percent drop-out before receiving a diploma.* The margin of error on these numbers is about plus or minus 1 percent.

Recent Department Of Education Drop-out Data

Historically, the NH Department of Education has collected and published annual drop-out data. Those reports, however, were based on definitions and procedures that were not compatible with those urged by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). For that reason, in recent years NCES would not publish New Hampshire's drop-out data in its national statistical compendia.[14]

In 1998, the department began a multi-year project to revise its definitions and procedures. As a result, in 2001 each high school was asked to track students individually and to report the numbers that they could identify as drop-outs over the period from October 2, 2000 through October 1, 2001.[15]

The department collated these reports and issued a summary on February 4, 2002. After a few school districts submitted revised numbers, the department revised and reissued its calculations in March.[16] In aggregate the schools reported 3,141 drop-outs over the 12-month period, an annual rate of 5.3 percent of the base enrollment. Of the 3,141 drop-outs individually recorded, 12 percent were freshmen, 22 percent were sophomores, 33 percent were juniors, and 33 percent were seniors at the time they dropped out. Also, 61 percent (1,905) were males; 39 percent (1,236) were females.

If continued in a like manner over a four-year period, a 5.3 percent annual rate would result in a cumulative drop-out rate of 19.6 percent. (For example, a starting 9th grade class would of 1,000 students would have 947 students at the end of one year, 897 at the end of the second year, 849 at the end of the third year, and only 804 at the end of the fourth year. Overall, 196 students would have dropped out, a cumulative rate of 19.6 percent.)

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[14] *Public High School Dropouts and Completers from the Common Core of Data: School Years 1991-92 through 1997-98*, National Center for Education Statistics, April 2002, found at http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2002/2002317.pdf

[15] Definitions and procedures can be found at http://www.ed.state.nh.us/ReportsandStatistics/Dropout percent20Instructions.html

[16] Excel data file provided by NH Department of Education noted as "Revised 3/20/02."

Our estimated 25 percent cumulative drop-out rate is higher than the 19.6 percent that results from extrapolating from the department's annual rate. There are a couple of reasons why the department's results evidently understate the real drop-out rate.

First, the department's summary report acknowledged that 14 high schools had not fully complied with the new procedures and had been unable to report students who dropped out over the summer break between school years.

Secondly, the school districts evidently failed to determine how many students transferring to another school district actually showed up and enrolled there. The schools reported more than 1,800 students who ostensibly transferred *out* to another public school, but the numbers reported as transferring *in* were hundreds fewer.[17] The "leakage" in that number was students that the districts did not count as drop-outs even though they were not counted as re-enrolled in another school. We count them as drop-outs.

Thirdly, accurate counts of home-study students are not possible under current law—by either the department or by us. While home-schooled students are reported as "enrolled" when their home study is supervised by a school district, they are not counted among graduates when they complete a full high school curriculum at home. Further, current law does not require any supervision or reporting of home-study students age 16 or older so enrollment numbers in later years decline as parents no longer report on their child's educational program.[18] The fact is that no one knows how many of New Hampshire's home-schooled students complete a high school curriculum and, therefore, should be counted among "graduates" and how many simply end their schooling early and should be counted among those who have dropped out. Clearly both are occurring; but in what proportion?

Although the department's attempt to track students in each high school is much better than it was only a few years ago, we conclude that it is still incomplete and results in an underreporting of the number of students who actually drop-out.

The aggregate method we have employed dispenses with the difficulty of tracking students as they move among different public schools. Although the method cannot determine which schools contribute how many drop-outs to the total, the overall picture is easier to obtain and is more accurate.

II. Calculated Cumulative Rates By High School

While the absolute drop-out rate reported by the NH Department of Education[19] for each high school may be low, differences among schools on this measure should be informative. The

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[17] From the manuscript state totals of "General Statistics of Public and Non-Public Schools", Form A-3, for years 1997/98, 1998/99, 1999/2000, NH Department of Education.

[18] In 1999/2000, for example, there were 341 home-study students enrolled in 8th grade, 281 in 9th grade, 173 in 10th grade, 78 in 11th grade and only 32 in 12th grade.

[19] NH Department of Education, http://www.ed.state.nh.us/ReportsandStatistics/Dropout.html (as revised March 20, 2002). The rate for Nashua includes drop-outs among 9th graders, even though they attend junior high schools. Rivendell High School (Orford) is not included because it is in Vermont. Campbell High School (Litchfield) is not included because it did not include all four high school years in 2000.

annual drop-out rate for each high school can be converted to a *cumulative rate* using the assumption that the school's annual rate will occur for four consecutive calendar years. Any high school with a small student body is likely to see large variation in annual rates from year to year. Thus, the calculated cumulative rate for any small school is more likely to vary from the true rate. The true rate could be more or less than the estimated rate.

Even with a known annual rate of drop-outs for four years, the cumulative rate depends on what portion of the drop-outs occur in each of the freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior years. To illustrate this, consider a hypothetical school in which each incoming freshman class has 100 students and in which the *school-wide* (not the *class*-wide) annual drop-out rate is 7 percent.

If all of the drop-outs are seniors, the freshman class will start with 100 students, the sophomore class will have 100 students, the junior class will have 100 students, and the senior class will have 100 students before the drop-outs occur. If 7 percent of the 400 students dropped out, the number dropping out would be 28. Since all of these are seniors, the cumulative drop-out rate of the senior class would be 28 percent, exactly four times the annual rate.

On the other hand, if all the drop-outs are freshmen, the freshman class will start with 100 students and 23 will drop out during the year. The sophomore, junior, and senior classes will all have 77 students, so the annual school-wide drop-out rate will be 23/(100+77+77+77) or 7 percent while the cumulative rate will be 23 percent.

Between these extremes, if 7 percent of each class drops out each year, the freshman class will lose 7 of its 100 students, the sophomore class 7 of its 93 students, the junior class 6 of its 86 students and the senior class 6 of its 80 students. The senior class will graduate 74 students, so the cumulative drop-out rate will be 26 percent, slightly less than if all the drop-outs were seniors but more than if they were all freshmen.

For this illustrative school with a 7 percent annual drop-out rate, the cumulative rate is somewhere between 23 percent and 28 percent depending on exactly what portion of those who drop out during any year are in the freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior classes. The 26 percent estimate, based on equal percentages of drop-outs in each class can be calculated by a simple formula:

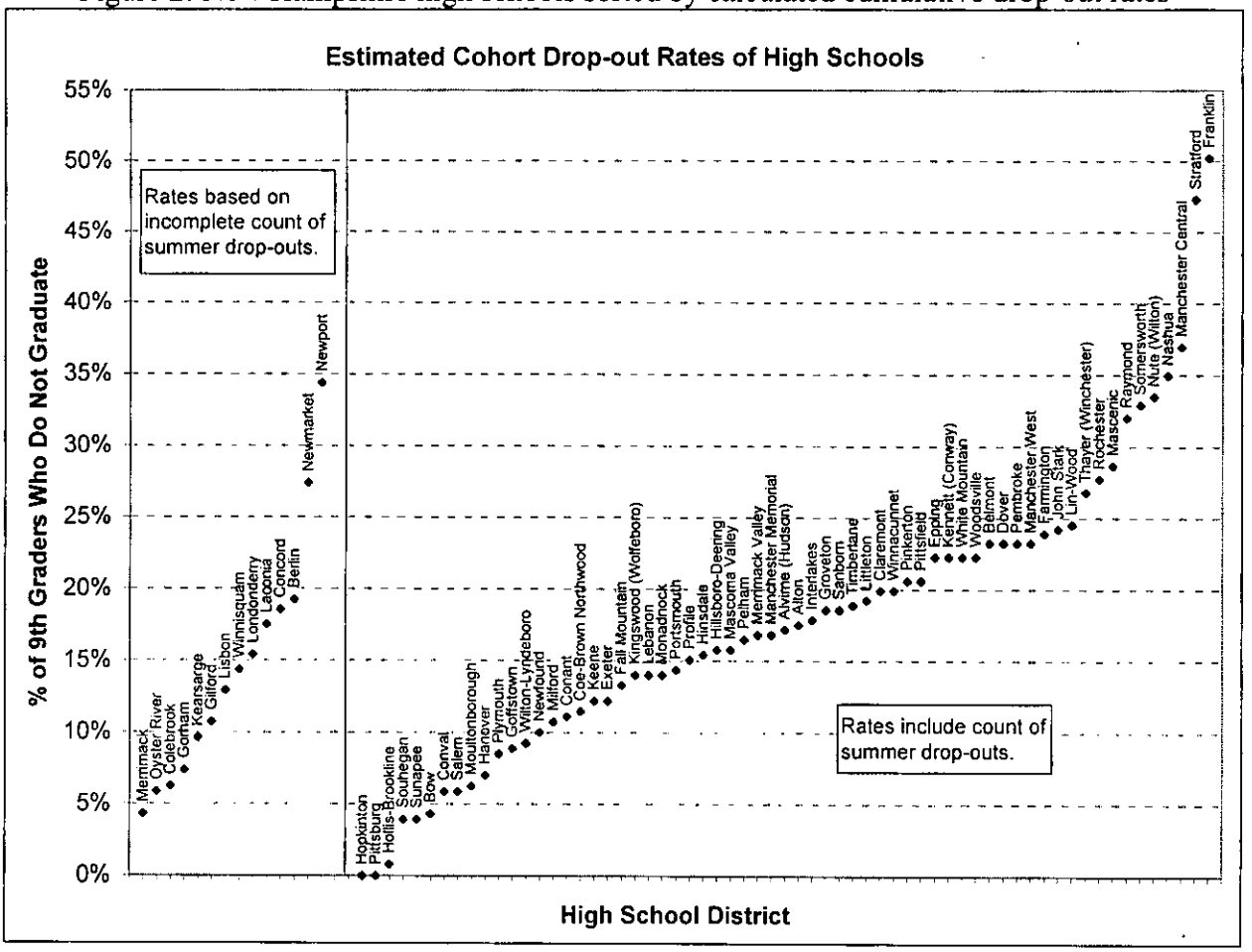
$$\textbf{Cumulative Rate} = 1 - (1 - \textbf{Annual Rate})^4$$

The department's reported state average annual drop-out rate of 5.3 percent results in an average cumulative rate of 19.6 percent when this formula is used. This is 5 percentage points less than the 25 percent rate we calculate in Part I of this paper for the reasons noted there. We do not know the extent of the possible undercount in each school district. Thus, the annual rates presented for individual schools and categories of schools in the following tables and figures are lower than or equal to the true rates. Additionally, 14 schools did not count summer drop-outs. For that reason we have presented those schools separately in Table 6 and Figure 2 and excluded those schools from subsequent analysis.

Table 6: Annual and cumulative drop-out rates by high school

High School (incomplete count)	Annual Rate	Calculated Cumulative Rate	High School (complete count)	Annual Rate	Calculated Cumulative Rate
Berlin	5.2%	19%	Alton	4.7%	18%
Colebrook	1.6%	6%	Alvirne (Hudson)	4.6%	17%
Concord	5.0%	19%	Belmont	6.4%	23%
Gilford	2.8%	11%	Bow	1.1%	4%
Gorham	1.9%	7%	Claremont	5.4%	20%
Kearsarge	2.5%	10%	Coe-Brown Northwood	3.0%	11%
Laconia	4.7%	18%	Conant	2.9%	11%
Lisbon	3.4%	13%	Conval	1.5%	6%
Londonderry	4.1%	15%	Dover	6.4%	23%
Merrimack	1.1%	4%	Epping	6.1%	22%
Newmarket	7.7%	27%	Exeter	3.2%	12%
Newport	10.0%	34%	Fall Mountain	3.5%	13%
Oyster River	1.5%	6%	Farmington	6.6%	24%
Winnisquam	3.8%	14%	Franklin	16.0%	50%
			Goffstown	2.3%	9%
			Groveton	5.0%	19%
			Hanover	1.8%	7%
			Hillsboro-Deering	4.2%	16%
			Hinsdale	4.1%	15%
			Hollis-Brookline	0.2%	1%
			Hopkinton	0.0%	0%
			Interlakes	4.8%	18%
			John Stark	6.7%	24%
			Keene	3.2%	12%
			Kennett (Conway)	6.1%	22%
			Kingswood (Wolfeboro)	3.7%	14%
			Lebanon	3.7%	14%
			Lin-Wood	6.8%	25%
			Littleton	5.2%	19%
			Manchester Central	10.9%	37%
			Manchester Memorial	4.5%	17%
			Manchester West	6.4%	23%
			Mascenic	8.1%	29%
			Mascoma Valley	4.2%	16%
			Merrimack Valley	4.5%	17%
			Milford	2.8%	11%
			Monadnock	3.7%	14%
			Moultonborough	1.6%	6%
			Nashua	10.2%	35%
			Newfound	2.6%	10%
			Nute (Milton)	9.7%	34%
			Pelham	4.4%	16%
			Pembroke	6.4%	23%
			Pinkerton	5.6%	21%
			Pittsburg	0.0%	0%
			Pittsfield	5.6%	21%
			Plymouth	2.2%	9%
			Portsmouth	3.8%	14%
			Profile	4.0%	15%
			Raymond	9.2%	32%
			Rochester	7.8%	28%
			Salem	1.5%	6%
			Sanborn	5.0%	19%
			Somersworth	9.5%	33%
			Souhegan	1.0%	4%
			Stratford	14.8%	47%
			Sunapee	1.0%	4%
			Thayer (Winchester)	7.5%	27%
			Timberlane	5.1%	19%
			White Mountain	6.1%	22%
			Wilton-Lyndeboro	2.4%	9%
			Winnacunnet	5.4%	20%
			Woodsville	6.1%	22%

Figure 2: New Hampshire high schools sorted by calculated cumulative drop-out rates



When all schools collect and report accurate information about summer drop-outs, when the recorded number of "transfers-to another district" are equal to the "transfers-from another district," and when three more years of data are collected, an actual cumulative rate will be able to be determined for each school. The actual cumulative rate may eventually turn out to be higher or lower than the cumulative rate calculated here for any particular high school.

Graduation Credit Requirements and Drop-out Rates

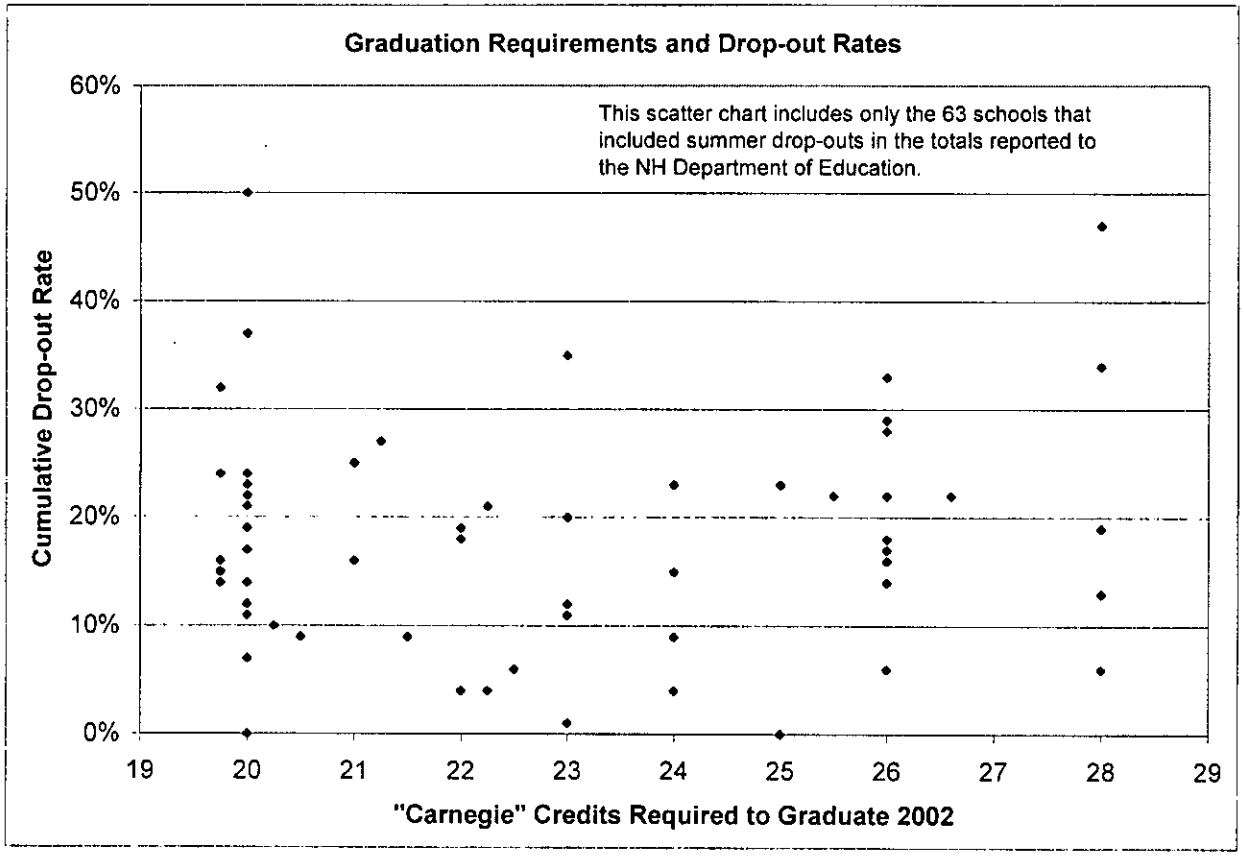
In recent years, many school boards have raised the number of so-called "Carnegie" credits required to obtain a high school diploma.[20] As boards have considered such an action, some have argued that higher graduation requirements will result in discouraging marginal students from completing high school and therefore result in more drop-outs.

We investigated what relationship might exist between graduation credits and drop-outs. To do this, we used the data from only the 63 schools that had included counts of summer drop-outs in their reports to the department. Figure 3 displays the results as a scatter graph. There appears to

[20] For more information about Carnegie credits and graduation credit requirements of New Hampshire high schools, see *Big School, Little School*, M. Gagnon and D. Hall, NH Center for Public Policy Studies, May 2001.

be no relationship between credits required and drop-out rate. Specifically, and contrary to what some have suggested might be the case, higher credit requirements for graduation do *not* appear to be associated with higher drop-out rates.

Figure 3: No relationship between graduation credit requirements and drop-out rates



School Size, School Spending, and Drop-out Rates

We also investigated what relationship, if any, might exist between school size and drop-outs and between school spending and drop-outs. The 78 high schools were divided into three groups – "Small," "Medium," and "Large" – based on their enrollment[21] (Table 7). Similarly, the schools were sorted into."Low," "Moderate," and "High" spending groups based on their per-pupil expenditure[22] (Table 8).

Table 7: High schools grouped by size

Group	Enrollment
Small (26 schools)	59 - 426 students
Medium (26 schools)	435 - 781 students
Large (26 schools)	811 - 3,083 students

[21] NH Department of Education, "Enrollment in Grades 9-12 in New Hampshire Approved Public Secondary Schools and Approved Public Academies as of October 1, 2000," April 20, 2001.

[22] "Per pupil expenditure" (PPE) is based on expenditures as reported on each district's Annual Financial Report (DOE-25) for 1999-2000. Spreadsheet copies of these reports were obtained from the NH Department of Education. PPE does not include debt service, capital costs, tuition paid to other districts, transportation, or food service costs. Comparable PPE figures were obtained directly from Pinkerton and Coe-Brown Northwood Academies.

Table 8: High schools grouped by spending per pupil

Group	Per Pupil Expenditure
Low (26 schools)	$5,353 - $6,474
Moderate (26 schools)	$6,532 - $7,686
High (26 schools)	$7,737 - $13,052

Each school was thereby classified into one of nine categories based on both size and relative spending level.[23] Table 10 displays each of the schools arranged by category with its calculated cumulative drop-out rate. The category averages in Table 10 are not pupil-weighted, but count each school equally. From this table, it is clear that there is a relationship between school spending and drop-outs: lower spending schools have higher drop-out rates. The relationship appears less pronounced in regard to school size.

To investigate this further, we totaled the net enrollment and reported 2000/01 drop-outs for the 63 schools that had included summer drop-outs in their totals. Table 9 and Figure 4 display the annual and estimated cumulative rates based on size and spending. While there is little difference, on average, among schools of different size, the difference based on spending is apparent. Students in the 22 lowest spending high schools are almost twice as likely to drop out as the students in the 21 highest spending schools.

As noted earlier, true rates will be higher than the ones contained in tables 9 and 10 because some students who were reported as transfers should have been included among those reported as drop-outs. Nevertheless, the relative difference between categories is accurate.

Table 9: Drop-out rates by school size and spending

	Number of Schools	2000/01 Drop-outs	Net Enrollment	Annual Rate	Calculated Cumulative Rate
School Size					
Small	20	245	4,984	4.9%	18.3%
Medium	20	597	12,109	4.9%	18.3%
Large	23	1,920	34,597	5.5%	20.4%
School Spending					
Low	22	1,844	27,163	6.8%	24.5%
Moderate	20	574	14,234	4.0%	15.2%
High	21	344	10,293	3.3%	12.7%
Total	63	2,762	51,690	5.3%	19.7%

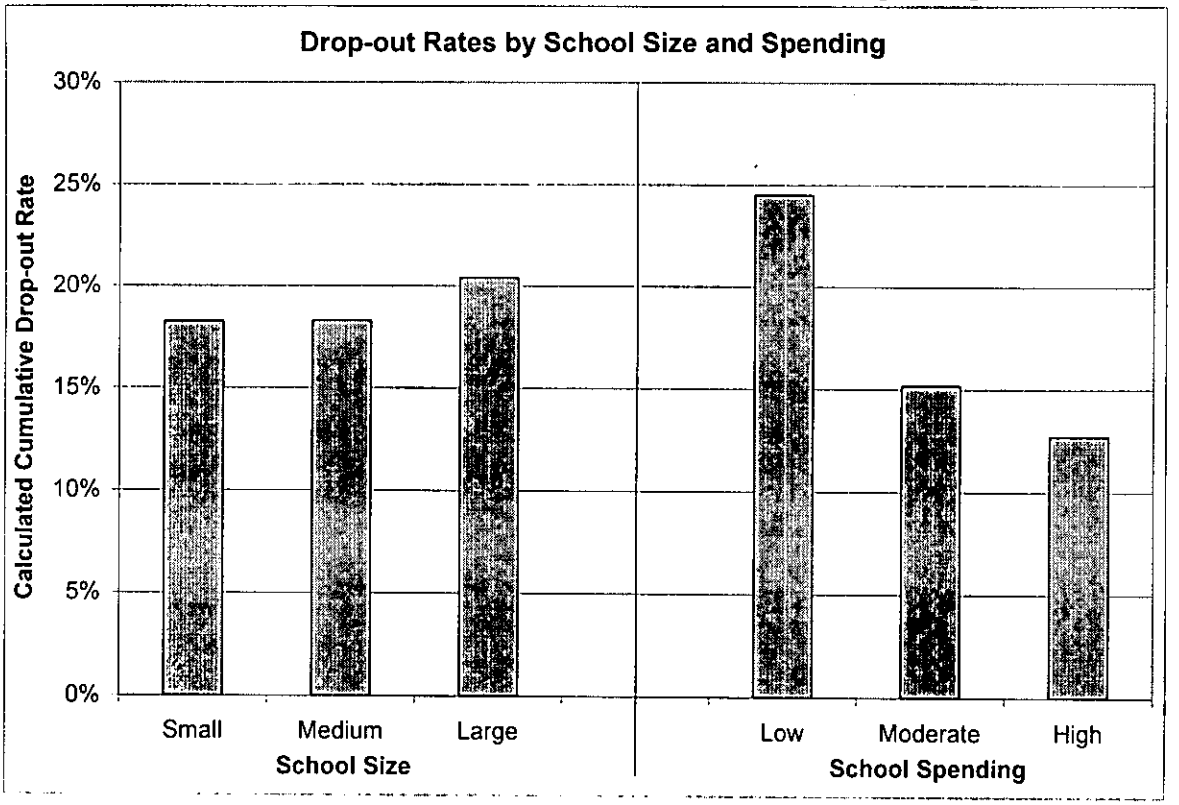
[23] This same set of nine categories is used in our report, *Big School, Little School: How Course Offerings and Graduation Requirements Vary Across New Hampshire's High Schools.*

Table 10: High schools by size and spending with calculated cumulative drop-out rates

High Schools by Category with Cumulative Drop-out Rate				
		Size (Enrollment)		
		Small 18.1%	Medium 16.9%	Large 16.9%
Spending (Per Pupil Expenditure)	High 13.0%	Alton (18%) *Colebrook (6%)* *Gorham (7%)* Haverhill (22%) Hopkinton (0%) Lincoln-Woodstock (25%) *Lisbon (13%)* Littleton (19%) Moultonborough (6%) Orford /Rivendell n/a Pittsburg (0%) Pittsfield (21%) Profile (15%) Stratford (47%) Sunapee (4%) Wilton-Lyndeboro (9%)	Bow (4%) Claremont (20%) Hanover (7%) *Gilford (11%)* Milford (11%)	Kingswood (14%) Plymouth (9%) Portsmouth (14%) Souhegan (4%) Winnacunnet (20%)
		14.1%	10.6%	12.2%
	Moderate 15.9%	Epping (22%) Hillsboro-Deering (16%) Inter-Lakes (18%) *Newmarket (27%)* Winchester (27%)	Coe-Brown (11%) Hollis-Brookline (1%) Jaffrey-Rindge (11%) John Stark (24%) *Kearsarge (10%)* *Laconia (18%)* Lebanon (14%) Newfound Area (10%) *Oyster River (5%)* Pelham (16%) Sanborn (19%) Shaker (23%) White Mountain (22%)	*Concord (19%)* Contoocook Valley (6%) Conway (22%) Exeter (12%) Keene (12%) *Londonderry (15%)* Monadnock (14%) Timberlane (19%)
		22.0%	14.2%	14.9%
	Low 22.8%	Hinsdale (15%) Mascenic (29%) Milton (34%) *Newport (34%)* Northumberland (19%)	*Berlin (19%)* Fall Mountain (13%) Farmington (24%) Franklin (50%) Mascoma Valley (16%) Raymond (32%) Somersworth (33%) *Winnisquam (14%)*	Dover (23%) Goffstown (9%) Hudson (17%) Manchester Central (37%) Manchester Memorial (17%) Manchester West (23%) *Merrimack (4%)* Merrimack Valley (17%) Nashua (35%) Pembroke (23%) Pinkerton (21%) Rochester (28%) Salem (6%)
		26.2%	25.1%	20.0%

Note: schools in light italics did not include summer drop-outs in their tabulations, so stated rates are probably low.

Figure 4: Drop-out rate is inversely related to school spending



These data cannot be used to determine the direction of causation in the inverse relationship between school spending and drop-out rate. One could argue that higher spending assists in reducing the drop-out rate. Conversely, one could argue that communities with high drop-out rates do not support higher spending in the schools. Or both may be caused by a third, undetermined factor. These data cannot resolve causation. However, the data do show that a relatively strong inverse relationship does exist.

III. Recommendations

1. Each school board in the state should establish a goal that it decides is an acceptable cumulative drop-out rate among the students for which it is responsible. Any difference between that goal and the actual rate should be a cause for local concern, planning, and action. A high drop-out rate is not simply a problem to be handled by schools; it reflects community attitudes and needs to be addressed by the entire community. Schools should involve students, local employers, and civic organizations in keeping more students in school and on a path toward a diploma.

2. Reducing drop-out rates, especially in those districts with high rates, should be given proper priority by the executive and legislative branches of state government in their efforts to improve the quality of public education in New Hampshire. Considerable attention has been given to improving student performance on the state's standardized NHEIAP tests, especially at elementary schools where students have had greater difficulty achieving high standards. Equal, if not more, attention should be given to reducing the number of high school drop-outs, especially

in those communities where relatively high proportions of each incoming freshmen class never graduate.

3. The New Hampshire Department of Education should continue its laudable process of tightening the reporting of drop-outs from school districts. The 14 school districts that have failed to count the number of students who dropped out over the summer vacation summer should do so this summer and in future years.

4. Each school district should confirm that each student that it reports to the NH Department of Education as "transferred to another public school district in New Hampshire" has been reported by the other district as "transferred from another public school district in New Hampshire." Transfers not so confirmed should be counted as drop-outs. If necessary, the department should monitor the names of individual transfers from one district to another to locate and eliminate any "leakage" caused by students who are listed by one district as "transfers-out" but who do not get listed by any other district as "transfers-in."

5. The NH Department of Education should publish cumulative rates for each district or high school as well as annual rates. The public quite reasonably assumes that published drop-out rates reflect the total percentage of students in a class who fail to graduate, so that is the number the department should provide. Publishing only annual rates has made New Hampshire's drop-out problem seem much smaller than it really is. Initially these cumulative rates will have to be estimates, similar to those made in this report. Later, as each additional year of accurate data is collected and tabulated, the estimates will be able to be replaced by actual cumulative drop-out rates as each class progresses through its high school years.

The New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies is an independent, nonpartisan organization that pursues data-based research on public policy matters, develops options, informs policy makers, and advises them about choices for action. Established in 1996, the Center's mission is to raise new ideas and improve policy debates through quality information and analysis on issues shaping New Hampshire's future.

To advance its mission, the Center actively identifies issues, collects and analyzes data, publishes reports and special papers, holds briefing sessions for elected and appointed policy makers and stakeholders, and participates in public discussion of policy topics through the print and electronic media. As a private-sector "think tank," the Center is committed to quality research and thorough communication.

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Voting Sheets

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

EXECUTIVE SESSION on HB 139

BILL TITLE: **establishing a committee to study the collection and reporting of school drop-out, suspension, and expulsion data.**

DATE: March 19, 2003

LOB ROOM: 207

Amendments:

Sponsor: Rep. Naro — OLS Document #: 2003 0849h

Sponsor: Rep. — OLS Document #:

Sponsor: Rep. — OLS Document #:

Motions: (OTP) OTP/A, ITL, Interim Study (Please circle one.)

Moved by Rep. Naro

Seconded by Rep. Carson

Vote: 16-2 (Please attach record of roll call vote.)

Motions: OTP, (OTP/A) ITL, Interim Study (Please circle one.)

Moved by Rep. Naro

Seconded by Rep. Carson

Vote: 16-3 (Please attach record of roll call vote.)

CONSENT CALENDAR VOTE:

(Vote to place on Consent Calendar must be unanimous.)

Statement of Intent: Refer to Committee Report

Respectfully submitted,

Rep. Sharon M. Carson, Clerk

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

EXECUTIVE SESSION on HB 139

BILL TITLE: **establishing a committee to study the collection and reporting of school drop-out, suspension, and expulsion data.**

DATE: 3/19/03

LOB ROOM: 207

Amendments:

Sponsor: Rep. Nalo — OLS Document #: 2003-0849h

Sponsor: Rep. — OLS Document #:

Sponsor: Rep. — OLS Document #:

Motions: (OTP), OTP/A, ITL, Interim Study (Please circle one.)

Moved by Rep. Nalo

Seconded by Rep. Carson

Vote: 16/2 (Please attach record of roll call vote.)

Motions: OTP, (OTP/A), ITL, Interim Study (Please circle one.)

Moved by Rep. Nalo

Seconded by Rep. Carson

Vote: 16/3 (Please attach record of roll call vote.)

CONSENT CALENDAR VOTE:

(Vote to place on Consent Calendar must be unanimous.)

Statement of Intent: Refer to Committee Report

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon M. Carson
Rep. Sharon M. Carson, Clerk

OFFICE OF THE HOUSE CLERK 2003 SESSION

EDUCATION

Bill #: HB 139 Title: re school drop out, suspens appeal data

PH Date: 1/21/03 Exec Session Date: 3/19/03

Motion: OTP Amendment #: 2003-0849h

MEMBER	YEAS	NAYS
L'Heureux. Stephen R. Chairman		
Alger. John R M. V Chairman		
Dearborn. Bruce L	✓	
Flint. Gordon B	✓	
Carson. Sharon M	✓	
Colcord. J D	✓	
Balboni. Michael A		✓
Leone. Richard C	✓	
McHugh. Claire B	✓	
Naro. Debra A	✓	
Laurent. John J	✓	
Tufts. J Arthur	✓	
Carter. Mark S	✓	
Hagan. Barbara J		✓
Ingbretson. Paul	✓	
Snyder. Clair A	✓	
Jean. Claudette R		
Clarke. Claire D	✓	
Rush. Deanna P	✓	
Scovner. Nancy M	✓	
Dunn. James T	✓	
	16	2

TOTAL VOTE:
Printed: 1/6/2003

OFFICE OF THE HOUSE CLERK 2003 SESSION

EDUCATION

Bill #: HB 139 Title: establishing a committee to study the collection + reporting of school drop-out, suspension

PH Date: 1/21/03 Exec Session Date: 3/19/03

Motion: ~~AA~~ OTP/A Amendment #:

MEMBER	YEAS	NAYS
L'Heureux. Stephen R. Chairman		
Alger. John R M. V Chairman		✓
Dearborn. Bruce L	✓	
Flint. Gordon B	✓	
Carson. Sharon M	✓	
Colcord. J D	✓	
Balboni. Michael A		✓
Leone. Richard C	✓	
McHugh. Claire B	✓	
Naro. Debra A	✓	
Laurent. John J	✓	
Tufts. J Arthur	✓	
Carter. Mark S	✓	
Hagan. Barbara J		✓
Ingbretson. Paul	✓	
Snyder. Clair A	✓	
Jean. Claudette R		
Clarke. Claire D	✓	
Rush. Deanna P	✓	
Scovner. Nancy M	✓	
Dunn. James T	✓	
	16 Y	3 N

TOTAL VOTE:
Printed: 1/6/2003

Committee Report

COMMITTEE REPORT

COMMITTEE: **Education**

BILL NUMBER: **HB 139**

TITLE: establishing a committee to study the collection and reporting of school drop-out, suspension, and expulsion data.

DATE: March 19, 2003 CONSENT CALENDAR YES ☐ NO ☒

☐ OUGHT TO PASS

☒ OUGHT TO PASS WITH AMENDMENT

☐ INEXPEDIENT TO LEGISLATE

☐ REFER TO COMMITTEE FOR INTERIM STUDY
(Available only in second year of biennium.)

STATEMENT OF INTENT
(Include Committee Vote)

This bill as amended ensures the uniformity and reliability of the State's student and school performance data system and clarifies the Department of Education's compliance enforcement authority with regard to this accountability issue. It further aligns the state system with the federal reporting requirements. The committee believes accurate, complete,and reliable data on school drop out, suspension and expulsion is essential to school improvement initiatives and the objective evaluation of current educated practices, programming and polices.

Vote 16-3.

Rep. Debra A. Naro
FOR THE COMMITTEE

Original: House Clerk
cc: Committee Bill file

Education

HB 139, establishing a committee to study the collection and reporting of school drop-out, suspension, and expulsion data. **OUGHT TO PASS WITH AMENDMENT**

Rep. Debra A. Naro for Education: This bill as amended ensures the uniformity and reliability of the State's student and school performance data system and clarifies the Department of Education's compliance enforcement authority with regard to this accountability issue. It further aligns the state system with the federal reporting requirements. The committee believes accurate, complete,and reliable data on school drop out, suspension and expulsion is essential to school improvement initiatives and the objective evaluation of current educated practices, programming and polices. **Vote 16-3.**

COMMITTEE REPORT

COMMITTEE: **Education**

BILL NUMBER: **HB 139**

TITLE: establishing a committee to study the collection and reporting of school drop-out, suspension, and expulsion data.

DATE: / CONSENT CALENDAR YES ☐ NO ☑

☐ OUGHT TO PASS

☒ OUGHT TO PASS WITH AMENDMENT

☐ INEXPEDIENT TO LEGISLATE

☐ REFER TO COMMITTEE FOR INTERIM STUDY
(Available only in second year of biennium.)

STATEMENT OF INTENT
(Include Committee Vote)

Vote 16/3

? NARD

Rep.
FOR THE COMMITTEE

OUS

Original: House Clerk
cc: Committee Bill file

USE ANOTHER REPORT FOR MINORITY REPORT

HB 139 as amended ensures the uniformity and reliability of the State's ~~data~~ student and school ~~data~~ performance data system and clarifies the Department of Education's compliance enforcement authority with regard to this accountability issue. It further aligns the state system with the federal reporting requirements of ~~the No Child Left Behind Act~~. The committee believes accurate, complete, and reliable data on school drop-out, suspension and expulsion is essential to school improvement initiatives and the objective evaluation of current educational practices, programming and policies