Lori A. Shibinette
Commissioner

Joseph E. Ribsam, Jr.
Director

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

DIVISION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

129 PLEASANT STREET, CONCORD, NH 03301-3857
603-271-4451 1-800-852-3345 Ext. 4451
Fax: 603-271-4729 TDD Access: 1-800-735-2964 www.dhhs.nh.gov

November 1, 2022

Senator Jeb Bradley, Chairman
Health and Human Service Oversight Committee
Room 302, State House
Concord, NH 03301

Representative Kimberly Rice, Chair
Children and Family Law Committee
Room 206, Legislative Office Building
Concord, NH 03301

Re: Report on the RSA 187-A: 20-b, Tuition Waiver Program for Foster and Adopted Children

Dear Committee Members,

As you may recall, SB 168 (2007) (Chapter Laws 2007, 366:1) established a tuition waiver program for foster and adopted children. That legislation requires the Department to report annually to the Health and Human Services Oversight Committee and to the Children and Family Law Committee on the status of the program. Accordingly, please accept the following as the Division's report on the status of the program:

The University System of New Hampshire (USNH) and the Community College System of New Hampshire (CCSNH) continued to manage the Tuition Waiver program. The application process for this academic year started in October of 2022 with the posting of the application on the DCYF website and the websites of participating schools. The New Hampshire Higher Education Assistance Foundation (NHHEAF) Center for College Planning continued to be a resource for foster care youth, caregivers and DCYF who had questions about how to navigate the college admissions, application and financial aid process. NHHEAF was part of our annual youth summit on August 4, 2022 and their college counselors met with youth and caregivers upon request.

There were forty-nine certified applicants for the tuition waiver program this year. By comparison, there were forty-eight applicants in 2021 and forty-six in 2020. Fifteen waiver slots were awarded to the USNH and fifteen to the CCSNH. One youth who was awarded to attend a USNH school opted not to attend college and had their slot filled by another applicant.

DCYF and the USNH and Community College system have continued to maintain regular contact in support of the tuition waiver program. This has included both systems recording educational outcomes of waiver recipients that attended their institutions.

The chart below consists of the sixty-four tuition waiver recipients that attended a USNH school from 2012, the first year waiver applicants started giving written permission for their educational outcomes to be obtained, through the Fall of 2022. Fifty-six percent of recipients have graduated or are continuing to work towards graduation. If you subtract the newly enrolled students that number becomes Fifty-three percent.

USNH

Graduated	21	33%
No longer enrolled/ did not graduate	28	44%
Still enrolled	11	17%
Newly enrolled	4	6%
Total	**64**	**100%**

The chart below consists of the ninety-five waiver recipients that attended a CCSNH school from 2012 through the Fall of 2022. Thirty-seven percent of recipients have graduated or are continuing to work towards graduation.

CCSNH

Graduated/Certificate	11	12%
No longer enrolled/ did not graduate	60	63%
Still enrolled	24	25%
Total	**95**	**100%**

DCYF has continued to explore ways to increase academic achievement among waiver recipients in order to raise graduation rates. DCYF has continued to meet with representatives from both college systems to explore ways to solidify the connection of DCYF youth to campus supports and resources. On May 9, 2022, DCYF participated in the New Hampshire Convening on Higher Education and Young Adult Homelessness. There were discussions about ways to support the homeless population attending college including early identification through the FAFSA, summer and winter housing options during school breaks and establishing a SPOC (Single Point of Contact) at each institution. The New Hampshire Technical Institute (NHTI) recently reached out and offered use of their college dorms for those transitioning out of DCYF or homelessness.

The DCYF Youth Engagement Specialist has maintained contact with waiver recipients and provided guidance to students who encountered academic and social/emotional hurdles. She has sent out reminders to reapply and provided information about the FAFSA process and other scholarship opportunities.

In an effort to expand the eligibility criteria for the Tuition Waiver for Foster and Adopted Children DCYF has suggested the following changes to the CCSNH and USNH systems and an LSR was submitted:

- **Expanding the eligibility age from 23-26.** This suggested change comes directly from one of our youth who pointed out that not everyone is ready to attend college at 18 and others may attend and then want to go back at a later time. Making this change would also align it with the eligibility for our Education and Training Voucher Program (ETV) that ends at age 26.

- **Expanding criteria for eligibility to include youth that "Exit DCYF care through a permanency plan of legal guardianship to a relative or other adult".** There has been an increase in youth leaving DCYF for guardianship and many times, it is to their grandparents. We have heard from many grandparents over the years and being able to have their grandchild eligible to apply for the waiver would be a big help with their efforts to make college possible.

- **Increase the amount of waivers.** On average, there is approximately 46 applicants per year for the 30 slots. This would allow more youth to obtain this great benefit while offsetting increases in applications due to eligibility expansion.

- **Expand eligibility criteria to include youth placed with grandparents or other relatives out of state.** Through the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC), youth are sometimes placed with grandparents or relatives out of state. Those youth, when approaching 18, need to choose if they want to continue to live with that relative out of state or be placed in a foster or group home in state in so they can meet residency requirements in order to be eligible for the waiver.

A complete breakdown of the applicants and recipients of the Tuition Waiver Program for Foster and Adopted Children Program is available on the subsequent pages of this report.

As always, please feel free to contact me with any additional questions you may have regarding the status or implementation of this program.

Very truly yours,

Joseph E. Ribsam, Jr.
Director

Cc Beth Dorian, Community College System of NH
Kara-Lee Bean, University System of NH

Number of Students who applied for Waiver	Number of Students who received and used the Waiver	Number of students who did not receive the Waiver	Reasons why students did not receive the Waiver
2008 Spring Semester			
11	4	7	♦ 3 were no longer enrolled in college ♦ 2 had sufficient financial assistance from grants or scholarships ♦ 2 did not complete the Federal Financial Application for Student Assistance (FAFSA) as required by the Postsecondary Education Commission.
2008-2009 Fall/Spring Semesters			
34	13 (3 for Spring '09 Semester only.)	21	♦ 7 were no longer enrolled in college ♦ 9 had sufficient financial assistance from grants or scholarships ♦ 2 did not complete the Federal Financial Application for Student Assistance (FASFA)* ♦ 2 missed the deadline for completing the application ♦ 1 was already 23 at the time of application
2009-2010 Fall/Spring Semesters			
56	20	36	While a complete breakdown regarding those who did not receive the waiver is unavailable the college to which they applied, to be missing required financial documentation, determined the majority of non-recipients.
2010-2011 Fall/Spring Semesters			
53	20*	33	The waivers were provided to the youth with the greatest level of financial need. Other reasons for a youth not to receive the waiver included being able to access adequate financial resources from other sources, opting not to attend college or not attend a NH state school or being determined by the college to which they applied, to be missing required financial documentation. *Two students dropped out of college after the semester started. These waiver slots will be filled for the spring of 2011 through an application process currently underway.

Number of Students who applied for Waiver	Number of Students who received and used the Waiver	Number of students who did not receive the Waiver	Reasons why students did not receive the Waiver
2011-2012 Fall/Spring Semesters			
38	20*	18	The waivers were provided to the youth with the greatest level of financial need. Other reasons for a youth not to receive the waiver included being able to access adequate financial resources from other sources or opting not to attend college or not attend a NH state school. *One student is scheduled to graduate in December of this year. This will create a waiver slot for the Spring semester that will be awarded to one of the 18 youth who had applied but did not receive a waiver.
2012-2013 Fall/Spring Semesters			
35	20*	15	The waivers were provided to the youth with the greatest level of financial need. Other reasons for a youth not to receive the waiver included being able to access adequate financial resources from other sources or opting not to attend college or not attend a NH state school. *One student is scheduled to graduate in December of this year and another student has dropped out. This has created two waiver slots for the Spring semester that will be awarded to one of the 15 youth who had applied but did not receive a waiver.
2013-2014 Fall/Spring Semesters			
38	20*	18	The waivers were provided to the youth with the greatest level of financial need. Other reasons for a youth not to receive the waiver included being able to access adequate financial resources from other sources or opting not to attend college or not attend a NH state school. *Three waiver recipients did not utilize the waiver either because they decided not to attend college or were not full time students, which is a requirement. The three slots were filled by selecting new recipients from a pool of alternate candidates.

Number of Students who applied for Waiver	Number of Students who received and used the Waiver	Number of students who did not receive the Waiver	Reasons why students did not receive the Waiver
2014-2015 Fall/Spring Semesters			
40	20*	20	The waivers were provided to the youth with the greatest level of financial need. Other reasons for a youth not to receive the waiver included being able to access adequate financial resources from other sources or opting not to attend college or not attend a NH state school. *Three waiver recipients did not utilize the waiver either because they decided not to attend college or were not full time students, which is a requirement. The three open slots were subsequently filled by other applicants.
2015-2016 Fall/Spring Semesters			
43	20*	23	The waivers were provided to the youth with the greatest level of financial need. Other reasons for a youth not to receive the waiver included being able to access adequate financial resources from other sources or opting not to attend college or not attend a NH state school. *Five waiver recipients did not utilize the waiver either because they decided not to attend college or were not full time students, which is a requirement. The five open slots were subsequently filled by other applicants.
2016-2017 Fall/Spring Semesters			
44	22*	22	The waivers were provided to the youth with the greatest level of financial need. Other reasons for a youth not to receive the waiver included being able to access adequate financial resources from other sources or opting not to attend college or not attend a NH state school. *Four students are splitting two waiver slots. This is due to one student graduating early and another student opting not to start college until the spring semester.

Number of Students who applied for Waiver	Number of Students who received and used the Waiver	Number of students who did not receive the Waiver	Reasons why students did not receive the Waiver
2017-2018 Fall/Spring Semesters			
53	21*	32	The waivers were provided to the youth with the greatest level of financial need. Other reasons for a youth not to receive the waiver included being able to access adequate financial resources from other sources, opting not to attend college or not attend a NH state school and the lack of additional waiver slots as the program is capped at 20 per year. *One student awarded the waiver choose not to attend school so that slot was filled by another student.
2018-2019 Fall/Spring Semesters			
42	20*	22	The waivers were provided to the youth with the greatest level of financial need. Other reasons for a youth not to receive the waiver included opting not to attend college or not attend a NH state school, being unable to attend full time, having been determined as not having made satisfactory academic progress by the college they previously attended and the lack of additional waiver slots as the program is capped at 20 per year. *Three students awarded the waiver dropped out of school and a fourth opted to enter the military instead. These open slots were subsequently filled by four other students.
2019-2020 Fall/Spring Semesters			
37	30*	7	All applicants that attended a NH State school were able to receive a waiver slot due to the increase from twenty to thirty slots. The seven students who did not receive a waiver opted not to go to college or did not enroll full time which is a requirement. *Four students awarded the waiver dropped out of school, one opted to attend a private online school instead and one opted not to attend college.

Number of Students who applied for Waiver	Number of Students who received and used the Waiver	Number of students who did not receive the Waiver	Reasons why students did not receive the Waiver
2020-2021 Fall/Spring Semesters			
46	30*	16	The waivers were provided to the youth with the greatest level of financial need. Other reasons for applicants not receiving a waiver included opting not to attend college or not to attend a NH state school, having been determined as not making satisfactory academic progress, and the waiver slots being capped at 30 per year. *One applicant awarded the waiver opted not to attend school and that slot was filled by another applicant.
2021-2022 Fall/Spring Semesters			
48	30*	16	The waivers were provided to the youth with the greatest level of financial need. Other reasons for applicants not receiving a waiver included opting not to attend college or not to attend a NH state school, having sufficient resources through participation in the HOPE Extended Foster Care Program and/or receiving federal funds, determined as not making satisfactory academic progress, and the waiver slots being capped at 30 per year. *Two applicants awarded the waiver opted not to attend school and those slots were filled by two other applicants.
2022-2023 Fall/Spring Semesters			
49	30*	18	The waivers were provided to the youth with the greatest level of financial need. Other reasons for applicants not receiving a waiver included opting not to attend college or not to attend a NH state school, having sufficient resources through participation in the HOPE Extended Foster Care Program and/or receiving federal funds, determined as not making satisfactory academic progress, and the waiver slots being capped at 30 per year. *One applicant awarded the waiver opted not to attend school and their slot was filled by another applicant.