STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

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November 1, 2019

Honorable Representative Lucy Weber, Chair
Health and Human Service Oversight Committee
Room 302, State House
Concord, NH 03301

Honorable Representative Patrick Long, Chairman
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 current 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 2019 with the application being posted 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 met with youth and caregivers upon request, provided quarterly presentations to youth at SYSC and provided a college focused workshop at the annual DCYF youth summit.

There were thirty seven certified applicants for the tuition waiver program this year. By comparison there were forty two applicants in 2018 and forty three in 2017. On August 16th 2019, HB 393 was signed into law. The bill added five additional tuition waiver slots for the USNH schools and five for the CCSNH schools thus increasing the total number of slots from twenty to thirty.

As a result of the additional slots more youth were awarded a tuition waiver slot than ever before. In fact there were more waiver slots available than there were eligible and enrolled students for the first time since the program started. Fifteen slots were awarded for the USNH schools with one of the applicants opting not to attend school. Fifteen waiver slots were awarded to the CCSNH schools with five youth either dropping out or deciding to attend a private school.

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 fifty tuition waiver recipients that attended a USNH schools from 2012, the first year that waiver applicants started giving written permission for their educational outcomes to be obtained, through November of 2018. Sixty-six percent of those waiver recipients have either graduated or continued to work towards graduation.

USNH

Graduated	19	38%
No longer enrolled/ did not graduate	17	34%
Still enrolled	5	10%
Newly enrolled	9	18%
Total	**50**	**100%**

The chart below consists of the sixty four waiver recipients that attended a CCSNH school from 2012 through May of 2019. Thirty percent of those waiver recipients have either graduated or continued to work towards graduation. It is worth noting that several youth that did not graduate from a CCSNH school ended up graduating from either a USNH school or a private college.

CCSNH

Graduated/Certificate	7	11%
No longer enrolled/ did not graduate	45	70%
Still enrolled	12	19%
Total	**64**	**100%**

DCYF has continued to explore ways that might increase successful academic achievement among waiver recipients and result in higher graduation rates. This included participating in a meeting on 10/25/19 organized by Representative Susan Ford and attended by representatives from USNH and the CCSNH institutions. The group agreed on a plan to make waiver recipients aware of supportive campus services before they start school, obtain their permission for support services to reach out to them and ways to make course load responsibilities more manageable. A follow up meeting was scheduled for 2/20/2020.

The full time enrollment requirement status as required by statute has been identified as a possible barrier. Both youth and staff have maintained that allowing waiver recipients the option of taking of a couple of courses at a time would be a better fit for youth needing a more gradual transition to the demands of college. DCYF has had conversations about this topic with the CCSNH system and is in the process of reviewing the enrollment requirements of the states of Maine and Massachusetts.

A complete breakdown of the applicants and recipients of the Tuition Waiver Program for Foster and Adopted Children Program is available on pages 3-7 of this document.

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 for students to 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 majority of non-recipients were determined by the college to which they applied, to be missing required financial documentation.
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 for students to 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 for students to 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 for students to 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.