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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Overhaul of public school minimum standards are a cause of concern for future of public education in New Hampshire

Concord, NH -- On Thursday, February 15, the NH Department of Education is expected to introduce their proposed Minimum Standards for Public School Approval, also known as the Ed 306s, to the NH State Board of Education. The proposal, which appears to be largely crafted by Commissioner Frank Edelblut, would undermine public schools by weakening the standards to which our public schools are held.

“The NHED’s proposed overhaul of the minimum standards is the most concerning one we’ve seen to date,” said Nicole Heimark, Executive Director at Reaching Higher NH. “Despite years of public outcry and recommendations, the NHED doubled down some of the most controversial changes, forging ahead on a path of undermining public schools and eviscerating local control.”

The document includes changes to state requirements around school climate and a student code of discipline, locally developed competencies, program elements, and definitions and terminology that could redefine what classifies as a “public school.”

In analyzing the proposed rules, Reaching Higher NH has identified six preliminary high-level themes:

- **PRIVATIZING LEARNING:** Replaces instruction with open-ended references like “opportunities,” which could lower the bar for what constitutes a course or credit and set the conditions for the state to outsource them to private companies.
- **REMOVING CLASS SIZE REQUIREMENTS:** Removes maximum class size requirements for K-12. Note: this is not addressed in other sections of rules or in statute; therefore, New Hampshire would not have maximum class sizes.
- **MOVING TO A STATEWIDE MODEL OF COMPETENCY AND ASSESSMENT:** Removes references to local competencies, local graduation requirements, and local assessments, opening up questions on what the role of public schools are in developing competencies and courses that meet the needs of their students and communities.
- **LAWMAKING THROUGH RULES:** Includes regulations that may go beyond their statutory authority, especially in areas that lawmakers are considering this session or have outright rejected. This includes NHED-approved assessments for local courses, school nurse requirements, and superintendent duties, among others.



- **REMOVING REQUIREMENTS FOR DIFFERENTIATED SUPPORT:** Mandates that school districts provide “opportunities” for timely and differentiated support, rather than requiring instruction is differentiated.
- **REMOVING KEY TEACHING PROVISIONS THAT HAVE MADE NH A MODEL FOR OTHER STATES:** Makes significant and potentially impactful changes to language, including: changing “certification” to “license” in teaching requirements; changing “instruction” to “learning”; removing all references to local accountability and assessment; and weakening the definition of “competency” and “competency-based education.”

Reaching Higher NH is undergoing a more thorough analysis of the proposed rules, and will publish updates as they become available. RHNH offered key recommendations for consideration by the NH Department of Education and State Board of Education in October. Read those here: [Recommendations to Reverse Harm and Strengthen Public Schools](#)

A public hearing on the rules is tentatively scheduled for Monday, April 8, 2024 at 1:00 p.m. [Please click here](#) for more information on educator listening sessions scheduled throughout the state.

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Reaching Higher NH is a nonpartisan 501c3. Our mission is to provide all New Hampshire children with the opportunity to prepare for college, for immediate careers, and for the challenges and opportunities of life in 21st century NH, by serving as a public education policy and community engagement resource for New Hampshire families, educators, and elected officials.