

EDUCATION

N.H. plays key role in education overhaul report

'Significant and meaningful' proposals lauded by ed commissioner

BY CINDY KIBBE

A report proposing sweeping changes in the way the country educates its children is being embraced by officials in New Hampshire and other states.

The report, "Tough Choices or Tough Times: The Report of the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce," offers a plan for a complete overhaul of the education system in the United States. Its authors, including Marc Tucker, vice chair at the commission, say their recommendations could save the nation as much as \$60 billion annually and far better prepare American students to compete on an international level.

Some of the recommendations are:

- Allowing 16-year-olds to sit for examinations that, if passed, will allow them to go directly to college

- Placing much more emphasis on hiring the best and brightest to be teachers — and paying them upwards of \$110,000, in some cases

- Providing mandatory early childhood education

- Developing standards, assessments and curricula that also take into account a child's abilities in creativity and innovation

Some of the recommendations stem from New Hampshire's education reform efforts. The state was one of a dozen that the commission focused on in producing the report.

New Hampshire Education Commissioner Lyonel B. Tracy called the report "one of the most significant and meaningful documents in education to come out in my lifetime."

Tracy said the report "could very well be a prelude to rewriting the No Child Left Behind Act in its national and international impact."

The report, according to Tucker, took about 18 months to prepare, including what he called "serious talks with more than a dozen states from all points and corners of America."

He said, "These states know that the only way to make significant improvements in student performance is to reshape the system of education itself — something that hasn't been done in this country for over 100 years."

The report was initially released in 2006, and education leaders in New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Utah were among its early adopters. The resulting recommendations stem from their experience with the changes.

The price tag

New Hampshire was one of the states taking part in the initial phase of the report after its success with the Project Running Start program, which allows 10th graders to take classes at the state's community colleges for college credit.

As a result, Tracy said, the next step for New Hampshire will be to develop a "state board of examination."

"We will take the best tests from around the country and around the world, and by working in conjunction with high schools, we will develop a curriculum and board exam for 10th graders," said Tracy.

If students pass the board exam, they may then go on to college, bypassing the last two years of traditional high school.

If this proposed exam sounds a bit like SAT or other standardized tests, Tracy says it should not.

"SATs or ACTs are for admissions offices and should not be compared to the board exam system that is based on a high-level curricu-



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lum," he said. "We are not reinventing the wheel, but moving forward with something that other countries are already doing."

Massachusetts will be focusing on creating

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EDUCATION

SNHU finds 'Go-Getter' south of the border

Winner of Global MBA contest works at Mexico nonprofit

Jennifer Allen of Mexico City has been named the winner of Southern New Hampshire University's Go-Getters Challenge, a two-month campaign to award one contestant a free Global MBA.

Allen was selected among three finalists who appeared live Oct. 27 on "FOX25 Morning News." Each contestant had one minute to explain how an SNHU Global MBA would affect their life. Viewers then voted online and a panel of SNHU judges determined the final winner.

Saying she was "absolutely thrilled" about winning, Allen said she will use the opportunity to learn and develop skills that can be applied directly to her as a manager in a nonprofit organization in Mexico City.

"I plan on then sharing successful strategies for economic sustainability worldwide through consulting," she said. "Most of all, I

know that this scholarship will enable me to empower others. I will be transformed through this experience and know many others will be also."

The campaign was unveiled on the "FOX25 Morning News" Sept. 16 broadcast. Contestants were required to write a 500-word essay explaining the impact a Global MBA would have on their lives. SNHU staff and faculty members served as judges and selected six semi-finalists. On-campus interviews followed, and the field was then narrowed to three. The campaign generated over 1 million online impressions and candidates from seven states and Mexico took part.

"The ideal go-getter for us is someone who is goal-driven and willing to put in the time and effort to improve his or her life and the lives of those around them, but perhaps hasn't had the opportunity or resources to get to that next level in their education," said SNHU President Paul LeBlanc. "Education has been the fuel of the American Dream and this is our way to help someone realize the transformation that is possible." **NBR**

Antioch's Green MBA rated highly in survey

Students, executives give program high grades

According to a survey by Net Impact, a nonprofit organization of over 10,000 MBAs, graduate students and executives, Antioch University New England's "Green MBA" makes the grade.

Net Impact's "Business as Unusual: The 2008 Student Guide to Graduate Business Programs" lists Antioch New England's MBA in Organizational and Environmental Sustainability program among the top five in seven of 13 categories.

The Antioch program, known as the Green MBA, ranked first out of 63 MBA programs in two categories — faculty support of Net Impact themes in the curriculum and faculty support of Net Impact themes in extra curricula events and activities.

Antioch's Green MBA came in second for preparing Net Impact students for ethical and socially responsible leadership, third for student support of Net Impact themes in the

curriculum, and fourth for both administrative support of Net Impact themes and for preparing all students for ethical and socially responsible leadership.

In addition, 92 percent of Antioch's Net Impact respondents thought Antioch students are enthusiastic regarding social/environmental themes in their curriculum and 100 percent of respondents think Antioch faculty are enthusiastic regarding social/environmental themes in their curriculum.

For more information, visit antioch-ne.edu. **NBR**

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a better system to recruit, train and retain educators, providing universal pre-kindergarten for all students, creating a network of new high-autonomy, in-district school models to facilitate teacher ownership and initiating conversations about teacher pay and benefits packages.

Utah is looking at developing high-performance schools and districts, which will help students compete with those around the world.

One of the more significant questions to be answered is how to pay for it all.

The report's authors suggest a mechanism that sounds familiar:

"The proposal to abandon local funding of schools in favor of state funding using a uniform pupil-weighting funding formula, combined with the addition of \$19 billion to the system as a whole, will make it possible, for the first time in the history of the United States, to have an equitable means of funding our schools, while at the same time leveling up the funding of the system as a whole, so that relatively well-to-do districts will not have the incentive to defeat the system that they would have if the existing funds were simply redistributed."

"Funding is always a challenge," said Tracy, but he said he hopes the new presidential administration and Congress "may see something worthy and make it a part with significant education legislation with funding."

"President-elect Barack Obama placed a great deal of importance on education, especially early-childhood education," he said.

He also said that New Hampshire's education leaders felt preparing the Granite State's students for a future interconnected with the world was too important "to wait and join until we had all the [funding] details. However, we are moving very cautiously and selectively."

A copy of the executive summary of "Tough Choices or Tough Times: The Report of the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce" can be downloaded at skillscommission.org/executive.htm. **NBR**

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