Dear Members,

This message is sent collaboratively among NHSBA, NHSAA, NEA-NH, NHASP, NHCTA and NHASEA members. The purpose of this joint communication is to provide unified and consistent recommendations to school boards, superintendents/central office administrators, teachers, school principals, school special education staff, support staff, other district staff and most importantly, to public school students and their parents.

In recent weeks, Governor Sununu and NHDOE Commissioner Edelblut have issued a series of Executive Orders and NHDOE guidance documents/recommendations with respect to remote learning, access/closures of school buildings, stay-at-home orders, Right to Know law compliance, and many other issues impacting public education in New Hampshire.

As we attempt to best serve the needs of our students and parents during these uncertain times, the above-mentioned Associations have discussed our shared values and crafted these recommendations to assist the state as a whole – educators, parents, and most importantly students. These recommendations are just that. We recognize that the individual plans for school districts must be made with many considerations in mind. We hope that these are helpful in guiding the important decisions you need to make. As we worked collectively to develop this set of recommendations we relied on the work of other states. Specifically, those states that have laws in place for pandemic planning for schools. In follow-up communications and advisories, we are happy to share those resources.

Recommendations for Long-Term Remote Learning:

1. School districts should provide continuous learning opportunities for students through remote learning 4 days per week. Teachers should be given/allowed one flex day per week to work on outreach, planning, preparation or attend to other needs as they arise in a remote instruction and learning environment. Further, it is responsive to parent and student feedback respecting the new demands on families and the related worry and anxiety.

2. Continuous learning opportunities means that teachers are providing students with content, materials, and resources that allow students to engage in academic work while at home. These opportunities will differ district-to-district. Instructional models may include blending of non-technology and virtual platforms. Local decisions will have to be made that are unique to the local student population, staff and resources.

3. Students should have weekly assignments, projects and if possible, check-ins. The recommended guidelines for maximum student commitment each day are as follows:

- Pre-K: 30 minutes.
- K-1: 45 minutes
- Grades 2-3: 60 minutes.
- Grades 4-5: 90 minutes.
- Grades 6-12: 30 minutes per teacher for a maximum of three hours per day.

These guidelines are meant for any delivery model – packets, online, hybrid, etc.

4. Districts should be mindful of the stressors on students, families, and educators. As districts continue to implement "remote instruction" and gather current feedback from all sectors, all stakeholders have communicated that students, parents, teachers, and administrators are at times overwhelmed by new responsibilities and routines as they diligently work to maintain student learning during this crisis. Collectively, our Associations believe that taking time away to reflect, to be a child and a family is critically important during a global pandemic. Decisions about time away from learning and wellness breaks should be made at the local level in coordination with stakeholders and collective bargaining agreements.

5. Remember that while continuous learning opportunities are important, school leaders need to be attentive to the social-emotional needs and learning components being utilized in many of our districts. In our efforts to meet the social-emotional needs of our students without having direct contact with them, other considerations may include:

- Focus on essential learning for students -- "Less is More"
- Be flexible and ready to adapt when needs arise
- Emphasize relationships in this new learning environment
- Encourage use of materials, resources and platforms that are already in use
- Extend grace to all in these unique and trying times

Last, our Associations collectively believe that coordinating efforts and recommendations serve to benefit all students and families. While we recognize that different paths will be taken and are warranted in individual communities, we hope these recommendations are helpful to our members as you make these critical decisions.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Megan Tuttle
NEA-NH

Barrett Christina
NH School Boards Association

Bridey Bellemare
NH Association of School Principals

Dr. Carl Ladd
NH School Administrators Association

Jane Bergeron-Beaulieu
NH Association of Special Education Administrators

Nicole Heimarck
NH-CTE Directors