



**N H S B A**  
NEW HAMPSHIRE  
SCHOOL BOARDS  
ASSOCIATION  
Incorporated 1946

December 2004

*“Only together can we really make a difference.”*

#### **NHSBA Officers**

**Cindy Chagnon**  
President, Bedford

**Susan Allen**  
1st Vice-President, Gilford

**Rebecca Ayers-Moore**  
2nd Vice-President/Treasurer, Conway

**Kent LaPage**  
Immediate Past President, Portsmouth

**Executive Director**  
**Theodore E. Comstock, Esq.**

Contact for *focus*:  
**Kathleen O'Sullivan**  
Director of Communications,  
Policy Services & Finance  
Email: [kosullivan@nhsba.org](mailto:kosullivan@nhsba.org)

**NH School Boards Association**  
46 Donovan Street, Suite 4  
Concord, NH 03301

Phone: **603-228-2061**

# *f*OCUS

on New Hampshire School Boards

Volume 2, Number

## **State Minimum Standards For Public School Approval: Hearings Upcoming**

As reported in previous issues of the *focus*, the State Board of Education has spent more than a year reviewing and recommending major changes to the Minimum Standards for School Approval, most often referred to simply as “the minimum standards.”

Per requirements of law, the State Board has now scheduled formal public hearings to allow public comment on the proposed rules. This is the first formal step in gaining final adoption of the proposed rules. Adoption of these rules will mean major changes, and likely increased costs, to local school boards.

The proposed minimum standards run many pages, and encompass many issues. However, most school boards that we have heard from are most concerned about the following major proposed changes:

---

### **MAJOR PROPOSED CHANGES**

#### ***Class Size***

The proposed rules recommend reducing class sizes as follow, to be effective by the 2007-08 school year:

- kindergarten – grade two: 20 students or fewer per teacher (currently the rules provide for 25 students or less)
- grades 3-5, 25 students or fewer per teacher (currently the rules provide for 30 students or less in grades 3-12)
- middle school and senior high school: 30 students or fewer (same as current rules for these grade levels)

search which shows increased student achievement at the lower grade levels with reductions in class size. The rules, however, do not address any associated issues with increased personnel or building costs. However, the Department of Education has stated that it will be providing a fiscal note on the overall costs associated with the proposed standards.

#### ***School Year***

The proposed rules eliminate the current requirement of 180 days for a standard school year, and replace that with the following: Each elementary school shall maintain a school year of at least 945 hours of instructional time, and each middle and senior high school shall maintain a school year of at least 990 hours of instructional time.

The stated intent of these proposed rules is to provide local school districts increased flexibility in structuring the school year.

#### ***Kindergarten***

The proposed rules provide that every school district shall offer a kindergarten program by the 2007-08 school year. Currently, the rules state only that each elementary school may include a kindergarten program.

The stated intent of this proposed rule is to recognize the critical importance of kindergarten, and to require that it be “offered.” The proposed rule does not provide guidance on how it is to be offered (i.e. through private sources), nor does it address any issues relative to increased costs.

Non-Profit Org.  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
Permit #1697  
CONCORD NH 03301

NH School Boards Association  
46 Donovan Street, Suite 4  
Concord, NH 03301-2624  
Address Service Requested



## ***ATTENTION School Board Members!***

### ***New Hampshire State Board of Education MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL APPROVAL — Hearing Schedule***

The State Board has announced that public hearings will be conducted on the proposed rules in the following locations, with the time being set as 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm at all locations:

<b>December 15, 2004</b>	<b>Department of Education – Concord</b>
<b>January 12, 2005</b>	<b>Littleton High School</b>
<b>January 26, 2005</b>	<b>Nashua High School – North</b>
<b>February 8, 2005</b>	<b>Dover Middle School</b>

The State Board of Education is inviting written comment on the proposed rules. The deadline for submission of materials is February 18, 2005. We encourage all school board members to attend and participate in one or more of these public hearings. And, we encourage all boards to submit written comments. For more information on either process or substance, please contact NHSBA Executive Director Ted Comstock at 228-2061, or email at [sklesq@aol.com](mailto:sklesq@aol.com).

#### ***Extended Learning Opportunities***

The proposed rules, in multiple sections, encourage extended learning opportunities. These opportunities have commonly been referenced as “real world learning.” The thrust of these proposed rules is to allow students to attain credit in settings and coursework outside of the regular curriculum.

The stated intent of these proposed rules is to allow increased flexibility in curriculum and to meet the needs

of non-traditional students. The proposed rules are largely devoid of guidance on how this flexibility would be appropriately exercised by local school districts.

Also included under this general heading is a proposed rule which would require that each district employ personalized learning strategies for each student.

The stated intent of this proposed rule is to address the individual needs of students. The proposed rule does not provide guidance on how this might be implemented