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## Press Release

### For Immediate Release

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### Governor Hassan, Commissioner Barry Announce Department of Education Awarded \$12 Million Federal Children's Behavioral Health Grant

CONCORD – As part of ongoing efforts to strengthen behavioral health services for children, Governor Maggie Hassan and Department of Education (DOE) Commissioner Virginia Barry announced that DOE's Office of Student Wellness has been awarded a four year, \$12 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

At \$3 million per year, the grant will go to the New Hampshire Families and Systems Together (FAST) Forward for Children and Youth 2020 project, which will support the expansion and sustainability of a state-level system of care (SOC) for children, youth and their families.

"Ensuring that Granite Staters of all ages have access to behavioral health services and receive appropriate care is critical to the health and well-being of our families, our communities and our state," Governor Hassan said. "This important grant will support our work with local school districts to improve behavioral health services for young people, and I thank the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's for recognizing the Department of Education with this grant to help build on those efforts."

"We are honored to be chosen to carry out this very important work," said DOE Commissioner Barry. "Strengthening the partnership between New Hampshire schools, families, and other youth serving organizations and ensuring high quality support for all students will ensure that New Hampshire's youth are positioned for a successful life."

System of care describes a coordinated approach for supporting children, youth and their families that is culturally and linguistically competent and directed by the family and youth receiving support. New Hampshire FAST Forward 2020 will expand the array of services available and increase the number and ways for families to be involved.

The project is aimed at: creating Regional Systems of Care collaborative teams in three regions of the state, the North Country, the Lakes Region and the Claremont area; providing individualized wraparound planning and an expanded array of services to the highest need children and youth with behavioral health challenges; involving families and youth in all aspects of service delivery and support; improve the transition from pre-school to kindergarten and first grade for young children; improving the educational and social/emotional outcomes for children and youth; and ensuring that systems, supports, and policies are aligned with National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care.

New Hampshire FAST Forward 2020 will be administered through the Office of Student Wellness in partnership with the following school districts: Franklin, Winnisquam Regional, Laconia, Berlin, White Mountains Regional, SAU 7 and Claremont.

Since entering office, Governor Hassan has worked to strengthen New Hampshire's community-based mental health system, including efforts specific to our children such as establishing a Division of Behavioral Health that includes children's behavioral health programs, signing bipartisan legislation to implement a comprehensive system of care for children's behavioral health services, providing funding for Assertive Community Treatment teams dedicated to children and working with local school districts to improve behavioral health services for young people across the state.

The Office of Student Wellness works in collaboration with local communities, school districts, and individuals, to support students as they become fully productive members of society. Efforts are focused on several key areas,

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including early childhood social and emotional learning and development, prevention, safety, and support for mental, emotional, and behavioral health. For more information, please visit [www.NHStudentWellness.org](http://www.NHStudentWellness.org).

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