



# Issue Brief

**Forum participants included 33 attendees:** 10 educators, 14 parents, 3 parent/paraeducators, 2 parent/educator, 2 community service providers, 3 NHC staff.

**SAUs represented:** 2, 8, 46, 53, 72, 73, and 80.

**School districts represented:** Penacook, Boscawen, Salisbury, Andover, Loudon, Inter-Lakes, Shaker Regional, Concord, Pembroke, Gilford, Alton, and Holderness.



**NH Connections** is a project of Parent Information Center and funded by the NH Department of Education - Bureau of Special Education to provide technical assistance, workshops, and resources to schools/school districts to enhance strategies to support parent involvement in the Special Education process.

## Concord– Lakes Community Forum on Special Education

A forum was held on February 9, 2010 at the Merrimack Valley High School cafeteria in Penacook, NH in collaboration with the Merrimack Valley School District and Special Education Directors to further understand “Parent Involvement in Special Education.”

**A world café style forum** was chosen to facilitate the discussion around three guided questions:

- ◆ What would your vision of parent involvement in special education look like?
- ◆ What parent involvement happens in our schools today?
- ◆ What challenges prevent us from improving parent involvement in special education?

Conversations were held to address each question with each participant having the opportunity to speak. Notes of the discussions were taken by the table moderators. Participants reviewed the comments from each question and then voted on a top priority under each question. The results of the voting are what the participants see as the priorities for proposed action items. You can find a copy of each discussion at [www.nhconnections.org...](http://www.nhconnections.org...) Below are the priorities chosen by the region.

### From question one:

- Parent advisory group on special education
- Educate parents on the meaning of test scores
- Parent/teacher taking workshops together
  - Celebrate successes

### From question two:

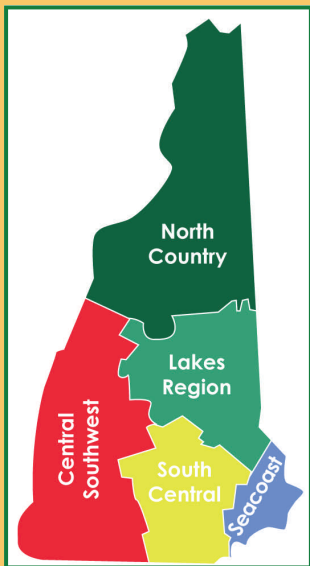
- Parent to parent outreach (we want more of it)
  - Special committees to include parents
  - Evening seminars for parents

### From question three:

- Time constraints and childcare
- Parents not knowing the special education process
  - "Us" versus "Them" mentality

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### Where do we go from here?

Now that the region had a better understanding of the priorities, the Regional Support Network (RSN) met to create action plans to address the priorities. During the meetings, partners developed Action Plans at a level that they met their needs. This included developing Regional, SAU, District Level, or School Level Action Plans. Regional Support Network (RSN) meetings were held in collaboration with Merrimack Valley School District in March, April and May. You can read the action plans at [www.nhconnections.org](http://www.nhconnections.org)... or you could insert a couple "hot" action items they are working on or resulted from the form. Ie: leadership training... etc.

### What's next?

The region is planning another forum for the fall. We'd love to partner with you or participate..... Here you want to plug what's coming up next.