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Dear Principal,

Do you believe that high-quality teachers are the key to student achievement? Would you like your teachers to receive cutting-edge, collaborative, standards-based professional development? If so, then we invite you to participate in a federally funded project, the E-Learning for Educators Initiative. This initiative aims to provide effective online professional development that leads to gains in teacher content knowledge, improvements in teaching practices, and increases in student achievement.

New Hampshire is one of nine states that have the opportunity to participate in this exciting initiative. In New Hampshire, we are calling the project OPEN NH (Online Professional Education Network for New Hampshire). This summer, we are offering, and currently accepting registrations for, twenty four high quality professional development courses. In the future, OPEN NH will continue to offer courses, and develop additional courses especially tailored to the needs of New Hampshire teachers. We hope to become the preferred professional development resource for our teachers.

As part of this initiative, along with the professional development courses, research is also being conducted. Your school is currently being asked to participate in a study that will evaluate the effectiveness of these courses. The first two studies will begin in January 2007. One study will focus on 4th and 5th grade math and ELA, and the second study will focus on 7th and 8th grade math and ELA. The online professional development courses will consist of a series of three courses, each 6 weeks in length. One course will be delivered during each of three semesters, so the professional development will be spread over 1.5 school years.

Schools who participate in the study will receive in depth, focused, high quality professional development courses through OPEN NH free of charge for an entire grade level. Participating teachers will also receive a stipend for their work and follow up data collection, as well as access to model courses, and professional development credits toward their recertification.

I hope your school will consider taking part in this study. This is an exciting time for education in New Hampshire, and our e-Learning initiative looks forward to working with your schools as we continue to improve the quality of education for New Hampshire children. For more information, please contact OPEN NH Project Coordinator, Stan Freeda (603-271-5132 sfreeda@ed.state.nh.us), or visit OPEN NH on the web (<http://nheon.org/opennh/about.htm>).

We look forward to working with you and your school in improving the quality professional development your teachers receive. Professional development will play an integral part as we monitor the progress and achievement of each child in New Hampshire.

Sincerely,

Lyonel B. Tracy
Commissioner of Education
New Hampshire Department of Education

Judith D. Fillion
Director, Division of Program Support
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