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MEDIA ADVISORY: UNH Experts Available To Discuss Proposed Dropout Legislation

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As the New Hampshire legislature debates raising the state's high school dropout age to 18, two University of New Hampshire faculty members are available to discuss the legislation (SB268) and implications of such a change.

Barbara Krysiak, professor of education administration and school leadership, is available to discuss the impact of increasing the dropout age. She is founder of the successful dropout prevention program, Project Mentor, which recently was expanded statewide with the support of Gov. John Lynch, USNH Chancellor Stephen Reno and the USNH Board of Trustees. The program trains mentors who work with middle-schoolers to encourage them to stay in school and prepare for and enroll in college. For more information on the program, visit <http://www.unh.edu/news/campusjournal/2006/march/031506mentor.html>.

The former superintendent of the Claremont School District when the landmark New Hampshire educational funding lawsuit was filed, Krysiak is an expert in education reform, including curriculum reform and equitable school funding. She also has 37 years of experience in K-12 schools as a teacher, department head, principal, associate superintendent, and superintendent.

Krysiak can be reached at 603-862-1127 or brysiak@hopper.unh.edu.

JoAnne Malloy, clinical associate professor in UNH's School of Health and Human Services and project co-director for the Achievement in Prevention in Excellence (APEX) project of UNH's Institute on Disability, is examining the effectiveness of schoolwide positive supports as a dropout prevention strategy in eleven New Hampshire schools. Working previously with Franklin High School and Manchester's Central High School, APEX significantly reduced the dropout rate by implementing an organized positive behavioral discipline program and a school-to-career focus for at-risk youth.

"This legislation highlights the need for all of us to be responsible to our students finishing high school," says Malloy. "The real key is how the schools react to that challenge. As we raise the age of compulsory attendance, the legislation also allows the schools to develop creative ways to help those students who are at risk to complete their education. It's important that we work with schools toward that goal."

Malloy can be reached at 603-340-0486 or jmmalloy@aol.com.