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June 6, 2019

To: State Board of Education

From: Liz Tentarelli, president, League of Women Voters NH, on behalf of the state League board.
Email: LWVNewHampshire@gmail.com

Re: Learn Everywhere

The League of Women Voters of New Hampshire supports the primacy of local control in the determination of both standards and competencies as well as in the evaluation of whether and how well those standards and competencies are met. When students are awarded their high school diplomas, local educators and local school boards are the ones accountable for ensuring that diploma requirements have been achieved by each new graduate.

New Hampshire's public schools already award credit for work done outside the traditional high school program, including Extended Learning Opportunities coordinated by the local high schools. Running Start programs, taught by local secondary teachers with a master's degree in the field, grant local high school credit and Community College credits through the New Hampshire Community College System. We urge the New Hampshire State Board of Education to support learning opportunities such as these rather than the ill-defined Learn Everywhere proposal.

The League of Women Voters of New Hampshire therefore opposes the April 11 State Board of Education draft of the rules that authorize the Learn Everywhere program.

Those revised rules:

- place the process for approval, monitoring, and oversight of Learn Everywhere providers in the control of the Department of Education with vetting by a newly appointed committee, by-passing local school district control;
- require local districts to award academic credits for learning outside the classroom;
- transfer the authority to approve academic programs from the local school districts and school boards to the State Board;
- force the local Superintendents to accept at least one-third and up to 100% of the credits for Learn Everywhere experiences;
- lower the grading system to pass/fail rather than the multi-level existing systems (such as Exceeds Proficiency, Proficient, Approaching Proficient, Not Proficient).

Not addressed by the draft rules are:

- acknowledgment that accreditation of schools and colleges requires both authority and accountability evidence provided by each individual school being accredited
- application requirements of colleges and universities, which themselves face accreditation requirements for local governance and assessment.

The League of Women Voters of New Hampshire urges the New Hampshire State Board of Education to place the power for granting credit for extended learning and work-based programs in the control of local school districts and school boards – where that power belongs!
