

**New Hampshire School Boards Association
Legislative Bulletin
January 4, 2008**



The 2008 Legislative Session has commenced. Below are a few priority issues.

Education Adequacy Commission

Emma Rous, co-chair of The *Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Costing an Adequate Education*, gave a briefing to the House Finance Committee on tentative progress to date. Representative Rous explained the committee's current considerations on various Universal Costs associated with providing the opportunity for an adequate education, all based on the state's school approval standards. She outlined the following areas: 1) Teacher Costs – based on student/teacher ratios for main classes and specialty classes, using an FY 2008 average salary based on Step 3 Bachelor (\$33,847) and corresponding benefits @ 33%; 2) In-school Administrative Costs – based on one principal per 500 students with an FY 2008 salary of \$75,159 and benefits @ 28%, also included is an administrative assistant at a salary of \$30,000 with 33% benefits; 3) Guidance Costs – based on a guidance counselor for every 400 students with an FY 2008 average salary based on Step 3 Master (\$37,141) and benefits @ 33%; 4) Library Media Specialist Costs – based on a media specialist for every 500 students with a salary of \$33,847 and 33% benefits; 5) Technology Coordinator Costs – based on one tech coord. per 1,500 students at a salary of \$33,847 with 33% benefits; 6) Custodian Costs – based on one custodian per 500 students at a salary of \$30,000 with 33% benefits; and 7) Other Costs – based on instructional materials at \$250 per pupil, technology at \$75 per pupil, teacher professional development at \$20 per pupil, facilities operation & maintenance at \$195 per pupil and transportation at \$315 per pupil. In addition, for those districts not offering kindergarten, the committee will recommend that the state fully fund the placement of portable classrooms for the next three years, as well as extending the incentive program for kindergarten construction aid at 75% beyond the current expiration date of July 2008. The committee must complete its work and report findings and recommendations by February 1, 2008. The legislature then has until June 30, 2008 to make final determination of the cost of an adequate education.

Legislative Proposals Concerning Labor Relations

Several bills have been introduced that would have a significant impact on employee/employer labor relations. Two of the bills have been assigned to the House Education Committee: **HB 1328** requires that ALL school employees receive due process protections as part of any disciplinary action, and no discipline of any employee without just cause; **HB 1330** changes the procedure for nonrenewal of a teacher contract: it requires the district to show just cause for nonrenomination and would allow a grievance based on such nonrenewal to be subject to arbitration or any other binding resolution. Two other bills both amend RSA 273-A and have been assigned to the House Labor Committee: **HB 1344** would mandate the use of binding arbitration when public employees and employers fail to reach agreement on a contract; **HB 1364** creates a new "neutral impasse panel" charged with making "a just and reasonable determination of the matters in dispute. The neutral impasse panel will have the authority to act on each issue separately and choose the most equitable solution to each subject separately."

These bills seek to by-pass local control and approval processes and would unilaterally place requirements/mandates on local school districts. NHSBA will closely follow these bills and keep you apprised of their schedule and progress. Members of the House Education and Labor Committees will need to be contacted concerning our opposition to these bills.

Retirement Commission

The Chair of the *Commission to Make Recommendations to Ensure the Long-Term Viability of the NH Retirement System* gave a summary of the Commission's Final Report (see <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/statstudcomm/committees/1898/Document%20Updates.html>) to the House Finance Committee. The report acknowledges the crucial work of HB 653 from last session, but also highlights the scope of further problems that require legislative action, specifically the funding of COLAs and medical subsidies. Recommendations include freezing the medical subsidy amount in 2010 and establishing a new health care subsidy plan that is separate from the pension plan, and establishing an employee-funded COLA program. NHSBA remained concerned that the report did not address enough corrective action and participated in three minority reports concerning governance, benefits and funding. We continue to express grave concern over the insertion of a NEW additional employer rate to fund the medical health subsidy that was originally intended to come from excess earnings

and not be a cost to taxpayers. In addition, employers will be covering the entire unfunded liability of \$2.7 billion (over 30 years), this deficit arguably a result of poor Board oversight and governance. For further information and details on retirement, be sure to attend the *Early Bird Session* at NHSBA's Delegate Assembly on Saturday, January 19th.

For the complete text of any bill, go to <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/ns/billstatus/quickbill.html> and enter the bill number, e.g. HB927 (no spaces!).

For more information on specific legislation, please call Dean Michener, NHSBA Director of Governmental Affairs at 603-228-2061, or email: deanm@nhsba.org.