

**New Hampshire School Boards Association
Legislative Bulletin
April 13, 2007**



Current House Bills (HB) or Senate Bills (SB) you need to know:

HB 1 and HB 2 – House Adopts State Budget

The House adopted a \$10.4 billion state budget that fully funds Dept. of Education estimates for catastrophic aid and building aid for the next biennium. Dropout prevention funds are increased from \$350,000 to \$1,050,000 in 2008 and to \$1,750,000 in 2009. Tuition and transportation aid is also increased to accommodate an expansion of eligible students. Total annual state education grants are distributed differently. In each fiscal year of the biennium, districts will receive a grant equal to the greater of their FY 2007 grant plus 5%, or 94.6596% of their anticipated FY 2008 grant based on current law (Dept. Educ. estimates last November, 2006). The Education Trust Fund is deleted; education aid is funded through the general fund. The budget now moves to the Senate, with deliberations beginning in Senate Finance next Tuesday, April 17.

HB 25 – House Adopts Capital Budget

The House approved a capital budget that continues the schedule of two projects per year for vocational center renovations. 75% funding for the two Regional Career and Tech Ed Centers in Exeter and Manchester is included. The bill now goes to the Senate for further consideration.

CACR 18 – Constitutional amendment on the state’s role in providing an adequate education

The Senate approved Governor Lynch’s proposed constitutional amendment on a 15-9 vote, meeting the $\frac{3}{5}$ requirement. CACR 18 affirms the need for the legislature to cherish our schools and define an adequate education, regularly determine the total statewide cost, and fund not less than 50% of that cost. Lawmakers would not only have the authority to define and cost adequacy, but also distribute state aid in any manner deemed best to promote equal opportunity statewide for an adequate education. A requirement that “some” aid be distributed to every school district could be met by another categorical aid (e.g. building aid) as well as state ‘revenue’ received from the statewide property tax. NHSBA opposition to placing such language in the constitution is based on several long-standing resolutions of the association (see #'s 5, 6, 7, and 10 at http://www.nhsba.org/about_resolutions.asp) and NHSBA’s support of the current state obligation to underwrite the cost of an adequate education for each educable child. The bill now moves to the House for further consideration, where the $\frac{3}{5}$ requirement must again be achieved. If the bill passes, it would be submitted to the general public at the state general election in November 2008, and requires a $\frac{2}{3}$ affirmative vote.

SB 101 – State payment for students attending regional alternative education programs

The Senate approved a proposal authorizing the Dept. of Education to pay tuition and transportation for at risk students who reside in a school district in which the high school does not offer an alternative education program, to attend an alternative education program at a regional vocational education center or the associated high school. The bill now moves to the House for further consideration.

HB 661 – State Planning Commission on special education

The House approved a proposal to establish an executive planning commission on special education. Areas to be addressed include methods for delivery of services and technical assistance, professional development, personnel shortages and accountability. \$50,000 is appropriated to hire staff and retain consultants. The bill now moves to the Senate for further consideration.

SB 18 – Raising the age of required attendance of children in school

The House Education Committee has scheduled a public hearing on SB 18, the Governor's initiative relative to dropouts that raises from 16 to 18 the age for compulsory school attendance, for next Wednesday, April 18, at 10:00. SB 18 is supported by a specific NHSBA resolution, adopted last fall at the Delegate Assembly.

SB 88 – Public employee terms of employment, bargaining units, and dispute resolution

SB 88 is scheduled for a public hearing in House Labor next Wednesday, April 18. The bill changes several aspects of the current collective bargaining law, RSA 273-A. It adds, "matters directly related to safety considerations" as items to be bargained under the terms and conditions of employment, and removes "number of personnel" from managerial policy, making it subject to bargaining. The bill also reduces the minimum number of employees for a bargaining unit from 10 to 3, and requires the continuation of any pay plan in an agreement if a new agreement is not reached when the contract expires (statutory evergreen clause).

ACTION ITEM:

Please contact members of the House Labor Committee (see <http://gencourt.state.nh.us/ns/billstatus/commdetails.asp?txtcommcode=H11>) and urge defeat of this bill, which tips the balance of negotiations and unilaterally implements pay raises without local voter approval. Remind committee members of their position on HB 89, which already passed the House and will create a study committee on dispute resolution between local political subdivisions and public employees, specifically including the issue of evergreen clauses.

Please review the ACTION ITEMS above and contact your local representatives, senators, and committee members TODAY to voice your concerns regarding legislative proposals. Remember that you, through NHSBA, are the only locally elected officials that "speak" exclusively for public education in NH.

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. HB678, SB78 or CACR18 (no spaces!), and make sure the Session Year is 2007.

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