

**New Hampshire School Boards Association
Legislative Bulletin
June 1, 2007**



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

SB 88 – Public employee terms of employment, bargaining units, and continuation of pay plans

Next Wednesday the House will vote on this bill that reduces the minimum number of employees for a bargaining unit from 10 to 5, mandates the continuation of any pay plan when the contract expires (statutory evergreen clause), and makes “matters directly related to safety considerations” a mandatory subject of bargaining. Please see the NHSBA **ACTION ALERT** (http://www.nhsba.org/legb_actionalert_05_30_07.asp) and call your representatives to **OPPOSE** this bill.

CACR 18 – State funding of public education

The House will vote next week on a proposed amendment that gives the legislature authority to *reasonably* define standards for education and determine the corresponding level of funding. State aid would be allocated in a manner that “honors the rights and responsibilities of local communities” and *reasonably* mitigates local disparities in opportunities and fiscal capacities. The proposal gives the legislature total authority over funding levels and allows the legislature to be “reasonable” in determining funding needs, thus changing the Court’s standard of review from one of strict scrutiny to simply a rational basis.

ACTION ITEM

Please continue to voice your opposition to this amendment. CACR 18 gives the state the responsibility to define, and determine an appropriate funding of, elementary and secondary education; and state aid is anything the legislature reasonably determines. NHSBA resolutions numbers 4,5,6,7,&10 (http://www.nhsba.org/about_resolutions.asp) all address this issue, calling for full funding of all state education aid formulas and developing a distribution formula consistent with the spirit of the Claremont decisions.

HB 377 – Right to Know Law

The Senate will vote next week on a major change to the Right-to-Know Law. As passed by the House, chance social encounters where official matters are discussed are allowed, provided no decisions are made, it is disclosed at the next meeting, and can not be used to violate the spirit of the law. The proposed Senate change would prohibit any such communication, including emails, among a majority of board members. It would make any discussion of school business between two members of a three-person board illegal, even if one member simply asks another what happened at the last meeting. Efforts are being made to reach a compromise floor amendment so that all parties can agree to a bill that otherwise contains good revisions/clarifications to the law.

ACTION ITEM

Please ask your Senator to oppose the committee amendment and make sure that any floor amendment provides protection for small school boards to operate efficiently. Failing a compromise solution, urge the Senate to rerefer the bill to committee for further work over the summer.

HB 927 – Defining an Adequate Education

The Senate Education Committee will consider a proposed change to the definition of adequacy next Tuesday. The amended version includes provisions contained in the House version, and includes kindergarten through twelfth grade, allowing for full-day kindergarten programs. The proposal requires the legislature to determine resources necessary to provide essential programs, acknowledging that students’ needs vary from school to school, requiring more resources in districts with greater challenges. Criteria is to be established to identify enhanced needs schools that are eligible for enhanced core resources.

SB 18 & 101 – Raising the age of required attendance & state payments for at-risk students in alt. programs

Both of these bills have been recommended for passage by the House Finance Committee and will be voted on when the House meets next week. SB 18 raises the age for compulsory attendance to 18, and SB 101 provides for the state to pay tuition and transportation costs for at-risk students attending alternative education programs at a regional vocational education center. NHSBA supports these two bills as “companion” legislation. SB 18, properly funded, is a specific NHSBA Resolution, and the state’s budget, as passed by the House, more than doubles funds for dropout prevention programs, also including a \$3 million increase for tuition and transportation for the expansion of at-risk programs at regional vocational centers as contained in SB 101.

ACTION ITEM

Please contact your local representatives and voice support for these bills reflecting good policy and a state partnership, as highlighted in NHSBA resolution # 18 (http://www.nhsba.org/about_resolutions.asp).

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.