

**New Hampshire School Boards Association
Legislative Bulletin
June 29, 2007**



The 'End' to Another Session! The NH House and Senate met Wednesday to finish their business this year, adopting a budget and defining an adequate education. Today's Bulletin will be the last regular weekly Legislative Bulletin for a few months. A summary of the 2007 Legislative Session is being prepared and will be distributed later this summer.

Thank you to all Board members for your interest in legislative issues and your advocacy on behalf of Boards and Students throughout the state. Together we have really made a difference!

Money and Education

Governor Lynch will likely sign the state budget bills into law today. Building and catastrophic aids are fully funded at Dept. Education estimates; tuition & transportation aid is significantly increased to accommodate an expansion of eligible students attending alt. programs at regional vocational centers; and dropout prevention funding is more than tripled. In addition, state adequacy grants increase over \$100 million for the biennium (FY '08 and FY '09), establishing grants for each year that are either the greater of the FY 2007 grant plus 5%, OR 94.6596% of the anticipated FY 2008 grant based on Dept. Education estimates last fall. Almost \$14 million is allocated for the state to continue its commitment to renovating the regional Career and Tech Ed Centers.

The Committee of Conference compromise on defining an adequate education was adopted by both the House and Senate; the complete text of the bill is available at (<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2007/HB0927.html>). Adequacy is defined in terms of substantive education programs (English/language arts and reading, mathematics, science, social studies, art, world languages, health, physical education and technology) for kindergarten through grade 12, and requires the establishment of criteria to identify schools with greater educational challenges. A joint legislative oversight committee on costing education must study models and formulae for determining the cost of an adequate education, the educational needs and resources needed to deliver an adequate education, as well as study and review transition assistance for school districts that do not currently provide public kindergarten. The committee must report its findings and recommendations by February 1, 2008.

HB 143 – Apportionment of Damages

This bill awaits the Governor's signature or veto. HB 143 defines a 'party' as only those entities remaining in the lawsuit when a jury or court is determining the apportionment of fault. If a minimally responsible party remains as the only defendant in a case at the time of the jury verdict, after a party with significant fault has settled, under HB 143 the minimally responsible party would have to be assigned 100% (assuming sole remaining party) liability for any award. This creates the potential for "deep pocket" defendants, such as school districts, who may be minimally at fault in a lawsuit, to assume more than their proportionate financial liability for large damage awards.

Action Item

Please contact Governor Lynch (<http://www.nh.gov/governor/contactus.htm>) and urge defeat of this bill. NHSBA is part of a coalition working to inform the Governor of the negative consequences of HB 143. Defendants should not be held responsible for more than their fair share.

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!).

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

May you have an enjoyable and relaxing summer!