

**New Hampshire School Boards Association
Legislative Bulletin
June 8, 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

A tremendous “THANK YOU” to all local officials (school board members and town officials) who helped defeat this bill. Following several procedural maneuvers to re-visit this legislation, the House left the bill on the Table. The deadline for the House to act on Senate bills has now passed, thereby requiring a supermajority vote to pass SB 88 even if it is again removed from the Table.

The voice of locally elected officials was instrumental in securing this defeat. Again, THANK YOU to all who contacted their representatives. A record of the roll call vote that removed SB 88 from the table for reconsideration can be found at <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/ns/rollcall/rollcallsbyvotedetail.asp?sessionyear=2007&voteno=164&body=H>

CACR 18 – State funding of public education

Following a strong vote rejecting the Finance Committee’s recommended language for a constitutional amendment, the House surprised everyone by voting to Indefinitely Postpone the bill. This move prohibits consideration of any “substantially similar” legislation next year, causing leadership much concern over pursuing strictly targeted aid funding plans.

In a rare response, the Senate suspended its rules to allow introduction of a new bill so late in the session. The intent is to draft another constitutional amendment proposal, including a public hearing, for the Senate to consider. The Senate is currently scheduled to meet again next Wednesday.

HB 377 – Right to Know Law

While incorporating needed revisions to RSA 91-A regarding electronic communications and record keeping, the Senate adopted a significant change in language prohibiting ANY communication among a majority of a board, including sequential electronic communications (email). The bill states “Communications among ... a majority of its members, outside a meeting, including, but not limited to, sequential communications among members of a public body, are prohibited and shall not be used to circumvent the spirit and purpose of” the law. The new amendment does allow communication regarding purely administrative matters, such as confirming the time or location of a meeting. The strict language prohibiting all communications will present undue hardship for small three or five person boards. The bill now goes back to the House for concurrence, rejection, or creating a Conference Committee to work on compromise language.

HB 927 – Defining an Adequate Education

The Senate adopted a change to the definition of adequacy. The amended version includes provisions contained in the House version, (educational programs contained in the school approval standards: English/language arts and reading, mathematics, science, social studies, art, world languages, health, physical education and technology), and includes kindergarten through twelfth grade, allowing for full-day kindergarten programs. The change 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, such as experienced teachers, smaller class sizes, full day kindergarten, student support services, staff training and instructional resources.

The bill now goes back to the House for review and the likely creation of a Conference Committee to work on compromise language.

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

The House passed SB 18, raising the age of compulsory attendance from 16 to 18, effective July 1, 2009. Expanded opportunities through alternative learning programs may be utilized to create educational plans leading to a high school diploma or its equivalent. SB 101 also passed, providing for increased vocational tuition and transportation aid to cover attendance at alternative programs offered at regional vocational education centers.

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.