



Phone: (603) 228-2061  
or (800) 272-0653  
Fax: (603) 228-2351

<http://www.nhsba.org>

#### *Board of Directors*

Susan D. Allen  
*President, Gifford*

Clinton Hanson  
*1st Vice-President, Pembroke*

Nancy Warren  
*2nd Vice-President, Rochester*

Cindy Chagnon  
*Immediate Past President, Bedford*

To: Joint Legislative Committee on Costing an Adequate Education  
From: Dean Michener, NH School Boards Association  
Date: November 5, 2007  
Subject: Kindergarten

As you consider the issue of transition assistance for districts that will be required to offer a new kindergarten program, NHSBA would like to offer the following comments.

Kindergarten, and whether it should be a required offering in our state's school districts, has been a focus of discussion and debate at past NHSBA Delegate Assemblies. The Association has long supported kindergarten and noted its documented benefits. We also supported the state's incentive program for districts implementing kindergarten, which often provided the crucial support needed for local voter approval. We appreciate and applaud the inclusion of kindergarten in the state's definition of the educational content of an adequate education. This new requirement places obligations on school districts that require certain expenditures, and two resolutions adopted at NHSBA Delegate Assemblies specifically address this issue:

- NHSBA proposes that the New Hampshire State Board of Education require that kindergarten be established as a minimum standard for New Hampshire public schools.
- NHSBA urges the State to fully fund any minimum standards which require districts to offer kindergarten.

While we recognize the advantages and benefits that kindergarten programs provide, we also recognize the process of local government and corresponding issues this raises for local school districts. The Department of Education has provided comprehensive information on physical plant/facility impacts and corresponding costs for those districts that do not currently offer kindergarten. Recommendations of this committee concerning state support for those costs will be made to the legislature, with legislative action beginning in January at the earliest. School district budgeting is well under way for the 2008-2009 school year, with public hearings and budget committee work required before the January posting of warrant articles, subsequent deliberative sessions, and final voting at district meetings in March. School districts have experienced similar time constraints in the past while working under financial uncertainty. Such situations prompted the adoption of another resolution, specifically:

Executive Director  
Dr. Theodore E. Comstock  
[sklesq@aol.com](mailto:sklesq@aol.com)

NH School Boards Association  
25 Triangle Park Drive, Suite 101  
Concord, NH 03301

- NHSBA opposes the dramatic and unpredictable changes in educational funding each year – often with solid information only coming to the school districts after the balloting or school district meetings are done.

The NHSBA opposes any new educational funding legislation, passed and enacted by the Legislature, which takes effect any earlier than the next biennium. School boards cannot be expected to work with legislation passed after the budget cycle for the following year is completed.

Thank you for your time and attention to these concerns of school board members throughout the state.