

**New Hampshire School Boards Association
Legislative Bulletin
February 2, 2007**



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NEW HAMPSHIRE
SCHOOL BOARDS
ASSOCIATION

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The NHSBA and Federal Issues

This week, NHSBA President Susan Allen, First VP Clint Hanson and Second VP Nancy Warren attended the National School Boards Association's annual Federal Relations Network Conference in Washington, DC. They heard Senator Edward Kennedy, chair of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, share his legislative priorities and concerns with provisions of No Child Left Behind, notably in the areas of assessment and inadequate funding. U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings discussed the reauthorization of NCLB and raised much concern when she suggested that public *and private* choice be offered to parents of students in schools undergoing restructuring due to a school's continued designation as in need of improvement. NHSBA's officers also met with Congresswoman Carol Shea-Porter, sharing NHSBA resolutions and perspectives on federal legislative initiatives, especially funding of federal programs. Representative Shea-Porter, who sits on the US House Education Committee, agreed with many of NHSBA's concerns, and also signed NSBA's Pledge to America's Schoolchildren, a commitment to ensure America's schoolchildren receive the highest quality public education <see <http://www.pledgetoamericasschoolchildren.org/index.php> >. Through her efforts in Congress, Representative She-Porter pledged to actively support and collaborate with local school boards to promote excellence and equity in raising student achievement. Your Association Officers were also able to share NHSBA resolutions and perspectives with Congressman Paul Hodes. Unfortunately he was unexpectedly called away from his meeting with NHSBA, but his staff remained, taking careful notes and promising to keep in touch, as did staff at Senator Sununu's office. Another highlight of the day was an unanticipated meeting with Senator Barack Obama of Illinois. The Senator took time to discuss NH issues and shared his thoughts on NCLB and federal funding; he also signed NSBA's Pledge to America's Schoolchildren.

While in Washington, much attention was focused on IDEA and NCLB funding levels, especially Title I, and two bills introduced to improve/fix NCLB. In the House, HR 648 has been introduced by Representative Young (R, Alaska), and in the Senate, S 348 by Senator Crapo (R, Idaho). Briefly, both bills incorporate more flexibility into NCLB, specifically in terms of measuring AYP, established goals for AYP, and participation rates, as well as more flexibility for students with disabilities and limited-english-proficient students. State flexibility is provided by allowing states to alter the federal framework to align with the state's own accountability system. In addition, school districts could not be denied the opportunity to provide supplemental services solely because they did not make AYP or are in improvement or corrective action status.

And at the New Hampshire State House...

The House Labor sub-committee on **HB 89**, permitting strikes by public school teachers, voted to recommend to the full committee an amended version of the bill, removing the provision allowing strikes. If the amendment is adopted, it will create a legislative study committee of three House Labor Committee members and three Senators. The study committee would be charged with studying the dispute resolution process between local political sub-divisions and their public employees. Recommendation would be made on alternative methods of dispute resolution, including binding arbitration and evergreen clauses, with a report due by November 1, 2007. The amendment will be considered at a future meeting of the full House Labor Committee.

The House Ways and Means Committee heard testimony on **HB 145**, creating an education funding study committee. The purpose of the bill is to study the revenues obtainable from a broad range of funding options not currently in use in NH, and the potential impacts of such funding options on the state's economy and existing revenue base. The bill currently remains in committee under consideration and review.

Upcoming Activity in the New Hampshire Legislature

Budget: The House and Senate will meet in Joint Session on Thursday, February 15, to hear Governor Lynch's Budget Address.

Adequate Education: The House and Senate have jointly collaborated to form a Joint Legislative Task Force on Adequacy that will meet to organize on February 6. The Task Force on Adequacy will seek public input, summarize findings and make recommendations to the House and Senate Education Committees on a definition of an adequate education. Regional hearings around the state are planned for February and March with dates and details soon to be announced.

Next week, the House Education Committee will take up several bills, including: **HB 205**, relative to procedures for certain court ordered out-of-district placements; **HB 178**, allowing a school district that withdraws from the cooperative school district to retain its share of the equity in any cooperative district schools; **HB 213**, allowing a charter school, nonpublic school approved by the department of education, or any residential facility for children meeting state and federal school nutrition program requirements, to apply for school nutrition program funds subject to available appropriations; and **HB 330**, establishing a task force to study the feasibility of supplying laptop computers to all 7th grade children in the state.

Division II of the House Finance Committee will continue its review of **CACR 6**, a proposed constitutional amendment addressing targeted aid issues. The bill proposes that the state may meet its adequate education funding obligations by providing aid only to those communities that, in the reasonable judgment of the general court, are in need of such aid. The Senate Education Committee will consider **SCR 2**, a Senate Concurrent Resolution urging Congress to amend the No Child Left Behind Act. Senate Finance will consider **SB 47**, increasing the fiscal year 2007 appropriation for school building aid grants by \$2,376,244 to cover the current year shortfall.

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. HB89, or SB78 (no spaces!), and make sure the Session Year is 2007.

*Make sure your local representatives know where their school board stands on important legislative proposals. Keep your legislators informed and aware. **Remember that you, through NHSBA, are the only locally elected officials that "speak" exclusively for public education in NH. Need some help?***
Learn how you can be involved in NHSBA'S Legislative Advocacy Network and make your board's voice heard.

Call NHSBA (800-272-0653) or (603-228-2061) today and be part of the team. For more information or details, or for information on specific legislation, please call Dean Michener at 603-228-2061.

-- Dean Michener, Associate Director
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