

**New Hampshire School Boards Association
Legislative Bulletin
February 9, 2007**



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NEW HAMPSHIRE
SCHOOL BOARDS
ASSOCIATION

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This week at the New Hampshire State House

In Senate Finance, NHSBA supported **SB 47**, a bill proposing a supplemental appropriation to meet the 8% shortfall in school building aid for the current fiscal year, 2006-07. The committee recommended passage of the bill 6-1; it now goes to the full Senate for a vote next week. Make sure your local senator supports this bill that allows the state to meet its current year commitment to local districts. NHSBA also offered testimony in support of **SCR 2**, a Senate Concurrent Resolution urging Congress to amend NCLB. NHSBA stressed the need for more flexibility in the law, 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. During testimony, it was noted that two current bills in Congress specifically address these concerns: S 348 and HR 648. In House Finance, NHSBA opposed **CACR 6**, proposing a constitutional amendment that would change the state's education funding obligation from a duty to all children to one that would allow aid only to those communities that, in the 'reasonable' judgment of the legislature, are in need of such aid. Supreme Court decisions have made clear that targeted aid to 'needy' communities is allowable, but that such additional aid should be provided only after making a basic commitment to all children of the state. Division II of Finance is recommending the bill be retained and considered with other school funding proposals. In House Education, NHSBA also testified as to concerns with the specific language of **HB 178**, relative to the disposition of property when a district withdraws from a cooperative. The bill seeks changes in language concerning the withdrawing district's equity in cooperative district property.

The House Executive Dept. and Admin. Committee held a work session on **HB 160**, changing the appointment of the executive director of the PELRB from the board to the governor. While no formal vote was taken, several committee members expressed concerns with making the appointment process too political. Committee action on the bill is expected next week.

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 Joint Legislative Task Force on Defining "Adequacy" in Education released its plans for regional meetings, or forums, in the state (see NHSBA Alert < <http://www.nhsba.org/actionalerts.asp> >). The Task Force is charged with making recommendations for legislation to define a "constitutionally adequate education." The forums will feature professional facilitation, a brief presentation on the state of the law, and a structured public comment period. In addition, NH Public Television will videotape each forum and make them available on its website via streaming video. Written public comment can also be submitted through the taskforce's e-mail address: adequacy@leg.state.nh.us. NHSBA encourages your attendance at any one of the forums and suggests reviewing the association's position statement on guiding principles to consider in defining an adequate education (see NHSBA Focus on Adequacy < <http://www.nhsba.org/focuson.asp> >).

Vouchers/Tax Credits: Next Wednesday, the House Municipal and County Government Committee will hold a public hearing on **HB 422**, authorizing the governing body of a town or city to grant abatements to persons whose children are enrolled in schools other than the local public schools. The abatements can be up to \$500 off the state education property tax, or for any amount off the local education property tax. School board members should voice their concerns with this proposal by contacting members of the committee. A complete list of committee members, with their e-mail address, can be found at < <http://qencourt.state.nh.us/ns/billstatus/commdetails.asp?txtcommcode=H18> >.

Other Legislation: Next week, the House Education Committee has a busy schedule, including: **HB 669**, providing grants of \$1,200 per kindergarten pupil and removing the repeal date on the kindergarten construction aid program; **HB 888**, providing that the state shall fund certain educational costs related to instruction including classroom teachers, classroom textbooks and materials, professional development,

building aid, technical resources, and the state's share of special education costs; and **HB 651**, extending the school building aid grant program to cover kindergarten construction costs. The Transportation Committee will consider **HB 333**, requiring driver education to include operation of manual transmission vehicles. The Finance Committee will consider two education bills: **HB 451**, revising the Catastrophic Aid formula by lowering the threshold for aid eligibility from 3.5 to 3.0 times the *district* cost/pupil, and capping the local maximum expenditure at 8.0, instead of 10.0, times the *district* cost/pupil; and **HB 558**, requiring any education trust fund surplus to be transferred to the revenue stabilization reserve account.

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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