

*New Hampshire
School Boards Association*

*Policies, Resolutions
and
Statements of Belief
Manual*

January 2009

**By Procedure Adopted Unanimously at Delegate Assembly, November 4, 2006
And Following Action of the January 17, 2009 Delegate Assembly**

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Overview of Action Taken at the 2006 Delegate Assembly

The resolutions contained herein have been adopted for three consecutive years by a vote of the Delegate Assembly. Such resolutions become a continuing commitment of the Association and part of this document, *Policies, Resolutions and Statements of Belief Manual*. This practice is based on the proposal adopted unanimously at the 2006 Delegate Assembly on November 4, 2006:

Whereas **NHSBA** takes consistent positions on certain issues that repeatedly come before the Delegate Assembly as re-adopted resolutions, and

Whereas these issues deserve special recognition for their continued importance as long-standing positions,

Be it therefore resolved that any resolution adopted for at least three continuous years be moved to the **NHSBA** Policies, Resolutions and Statements of Belief Manual.

**RESOLUTIONS QUALIFYING FOR INCLUSION IN THE
POLICIES, RESOLUTIONS AND STATEMENTS OF BELIEF MANUAL**

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Perennial Resolutions of the New Hampshire School Boards Association

I - School Choice

- I:A• NHSBA** supports the utilization of public education funds solely for public school purposes as determined by the local school boards. (1991)

- I:B• NHSBA** urges the NH Legislature and Congress to oppose any efforts to subsidize elementary or secondary private, religious or home schools with public tax dollars. Specifically, NHSBA opposes the creation of vouchers, tax credits and tax subsidies that in any form are targeted to the tuition or expenses for non-public K-12 schools. Rather than diverting scarce tax dollars away from our public school classrooms, NHSBA urges the NH Legislature and Congress to support improvements in our public schools and meet current funding obligations and promises, benefiting the vast majority of America's children who are educated daily in our public schools. (2005)

II - Education Funding

- II:A• NHSBA** proposes that the state fully fund all state education aid formulas before the funding of any other state obligation. (1994)

- II:B• NHSBA** supports reducing the threshold for determining the local share of a catastrophic aid special education placement to 2 times the state average elementary and secondary costs of general education. (1998)

- II:C• NHSBA** supports Building Aid at a level of no less than 55% for all School Districts in the State for bonds. (2000)

- II:D• NHSBA** resolves that the New Hampshire Legislature solve the educational funding crisis in a fair and equitable manner throughout the state and that all education monies so raised be distributed to school districts for the purpose of educational funding. (2001)

- II:E• NHSBA** proposes that the state develop an equitable and sustainable tax plan dedicated solely to education for the purpose of fully funding a constitutionally adequate education for all students in the state. (2002)

II:F• 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. (2005)

II:G• NHSBA urges the Legislature to utilize the resources of the NH Department of Education, including the Department’s statistical data, to define a curriculum that comprises an “adequate education” in the State of NH, and further to calculate the actual cost of an “adequate education,” and to develop an Adequate Educational Funding distribution formula which is consistent with the spirit of the Claremont decisions. (2005)

II:H• NHSBA urges the State to fully fund any minimum standards which require districts to offer kindergarten. (2005)

II:I• NHSBA opposes legislation that would directly or indirectly divert state costs or responsibilities to local school districts. (2006)

III - Health Care Funding

III:A• NHSBA supports a statewide effort to work with legislative bodies to address the spiraling costs associated with health care benefits borne by the school districts in New Hampshire. (2005)

IV – Charter Schools

IV:A• NHSBA proposes that for any charter school authorized by the State Board of Education, state aid entitlements under RSA 198:42 should be paid directly to the charter school from state funds which are separate from local district grants. (2006)

IV:B• NHSBA proposes that the State Department of Education develop evaluation and accountability criteria for the state’s charter schools to ensure their financial stability as well as sound educational objectives. (2006)

V - Local Control and School District Autonomy

V:A • NHSBA supports legislation to lower the mandated 2/3-majority vote for passing a bond article to 60% for all school districts. (1997)

V:B • NHSBA supports the continued ability for Cooperative School Districts to adopt apportionment formulas based on locally determined factors. (2000)

V:C • NHSBA urges the Legislature to review the practices, decisions, and potential bias against public employers by the PELRB. (2000).

V:D • NHSBA supports amending current law to allow school districts to establish a non-lapsing contingency fund to meet the cost of unanticipated expenses. (2001)

V:E • NHSBA supports legislation that allows local governing bodies to indicate their recommendation on any warrant article, in addition to those recommendation requirements already specified in the municipal budget law, RSA 32. (2006)

VI - School Safety

VI:A • NHSBA supports legislation which excludes public schools from being designated as neutral ground for visitation purposes for children of parents undergoing a divorce procedure by legal or other administrative orders. (1998)

VI:B • NHSBA supports efforts to enact legislation which would require notification to school districts of restraining orders related to a student's behavior. (1999)

VII - Accountability

VII:A • NHSBA believes that all components of state testing (English Language Arts, Writing Prompt, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies) should continue to be given annually at the end of the school year with appropriate and immediate steps being taken to ensure that these test results are received by school districts no later than the following July 1. Valid data to assess school performance relies on measuring individual student progress: NH should adopt gain score or value-added measures as the principal means for determining AYP. If NH does not adopt gains-score or value-added measures as the principal means for determining AYP, then annual testing

should take place at the beginning of the school year so that information may be used instructionally during the year. (1998)

VII:B• NHSBA supports the inclusion of only students who have enrolled in a district continuously for the previous school year in the numbers calculated for AYP as defined by NCLB. (2005)

VIII - State Board of Education

VIII:A• NHSBA supports the State Board of Education's focus on Attracting and Retaining Quality Educators in New Hampshire, as highlighted in its recommendations reported May 2001. *NHSBA* urges the State Board to continue this effort as well as monitoring all New Hampshire teacher-training programs to ensure that an adequate supply of new and highly qualified educators is available in New Hampshire. (1998)

VIII:B• NHSBA proposes that the Department of Education develop and maintain a database of available grants and other funding mechanisms to assist local school districts in their grant writing efforts and funding of locally determined programs. (2002)

VIII:C• NHSBA urges the State Board of Education to conduct a statewide study of the "traditional" school calendar utilized by most public school districts in New Hampshire and to issue a summary report of its findings, conclusions and recommendations. (2003)

VIII:D• NHSBA urges the NH State Board of Education to adopt Standards of NH School Approval which emphasize qualitative standards rather than quantitative standards. (2003)

VIII:E• NHSBA proposes that the New Hampshire State Board of Education require that kindergarten be established as a minimum standard for New Hampshire public schools. (2003)

VIII:F• NHSBA supports the development and implementation of poverty indicators for Title I eligibility, which best reflect the current distribution of children from low income families in the public schools across the State and maximizes the number of districts eligible for Title I funds. (2003)

VIII:G • **NHSBA** supports the concept and duties of the State Board of Education as established in RSA 21-N:10-11. In its capacity to review all programs, advise on goals and hear appeals, the State Board of Education should have the authority to appoint the Commissioner of Education as well as confirm the Deputy Commissioner and division directors nominated by the Commissioner of Education. (2005)

VIII:H • **NHSBA** opposes the changes in student assessment at the state level which are resulting in fewer content and skill areas tested, especially the loss of the writing assessment. Basing assessment decisions on availability of funding rather than on what is best for the students of New Hampshire is not something that **NHSBA** can support. (2005)

VIII:I • **NHSBA** supports legislation raising the age of compulsory attendance in school for children who have not graduated from age 16 to age 18. Such change in statute shall also require the establishment, and funding, per NH Constitution, Part Two, Article 28-a, of programs to support students at risk, including dropout prevention programs and other alternative options that allow students to continue a program of study to complete their high school education. (2006)

IX - Federal Legislation:

IDEA

IX:A • **NHSBA** urges the U.S. Congress to appropriate funds to pay 40% of the cost of implementing IDEA, and to fully fund any additional requirements in the area of special education and to provide financial impact statements. (1990)

IX:B • Since its original enactment in 1975, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) has played a pivotal role to assure that students with disabilities receive the services they need for their success. **NHSBA** supports and applauds the efforts and goals encompassed by IDEA's mission.

As our Congress considers the reauthorization of IDEA, **NHSBA** believes attention should be directed at components of the program that are moving away from the original mission of educating children to a mission that involves a wider range of functions. **NHSBA** believes that for special education to achieve its potential in today's environment, several areas should receive attention. **NHSBA** proposes that federal reauthorization of IDEA address these specific priority concerns in the following areas:

- federal funding - Congress should fully fund the federal share of IDEA as a mandatory program;
- teacher recruitment and retention - federal law should create and encourage incentives for new teachers seeking special education certification;
- administration and paperwork - federal law should ease the current complex paper trail aimed at documenting compliance as well as allowing greater flexibility in the IEP process;
- due-process hearings - federal law should provide for adequate notice of issues and good-faith mediation
- related services - federal law should identify the financial role of other governmental units rather than fix all costs for related services on the narrow portion of the tax base that just serves education;
- private placements - federal law should focus on whether a substantive deprivation of educational opportunities exists in the public setting before consideration of private placement;
- safe learning environment - federal law should allow local school district personnel the flexibility and discretion to make appropriate discipline determinations that are in the best interests of all students when it comes to disciplining children with disabilities;
- over identification - federal law should clarify the definition of those disabilities that can result in over identification. (2002)