

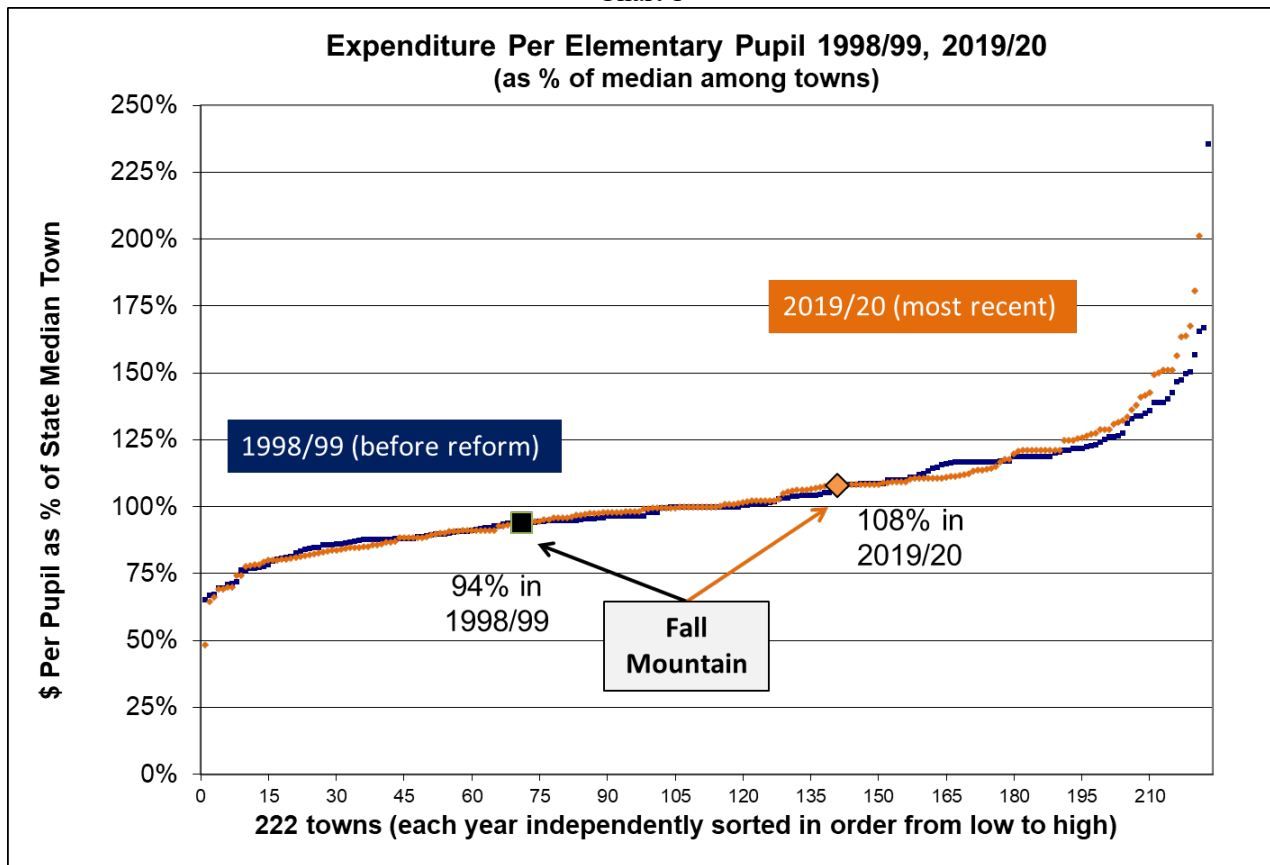
Fall Mountain Regional: School Funding and Property Taxes

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1. Spending per elementary pupil

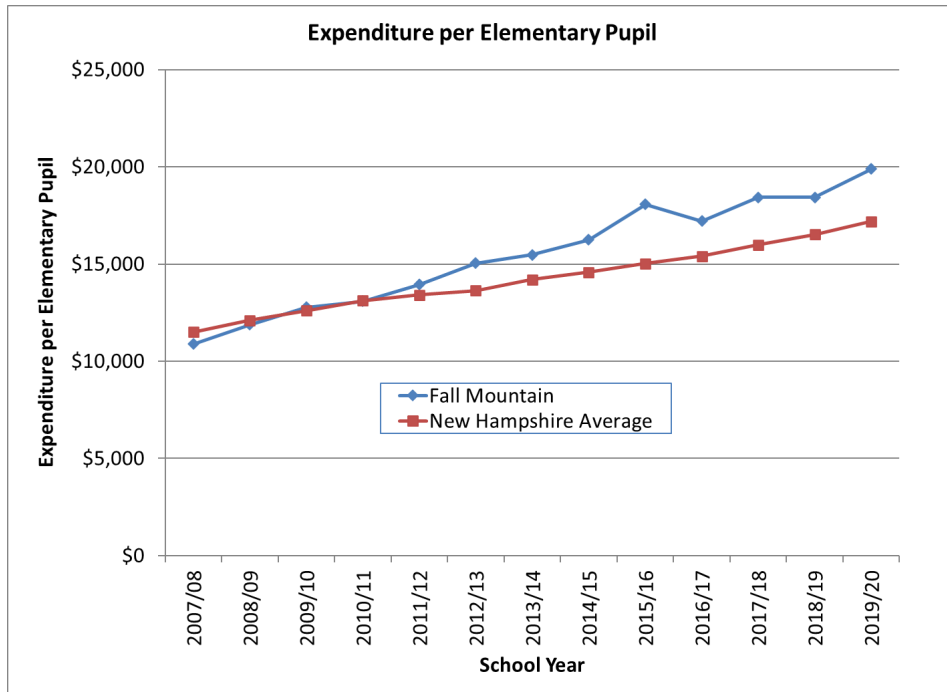
School year 1998/99 was the last year of state aid before the new increased aid to pay for an “adequate” education was introduced after the NH Supreme Court’s *Claremont* rulings. That year, Fall Mountain reported spending \$5,585 per elementary student, 94% of what the state median town had spent. In school year 2019/20, the most recently completed year, Fall Mountain reported spending \$19,897 per elementary pupil, 108% of what the median town had spent.

Chart 1



The following chart compares the spending per pupil for elementary pupils in Fall Mountain and the state average for the past thirteen years.

Chart 2

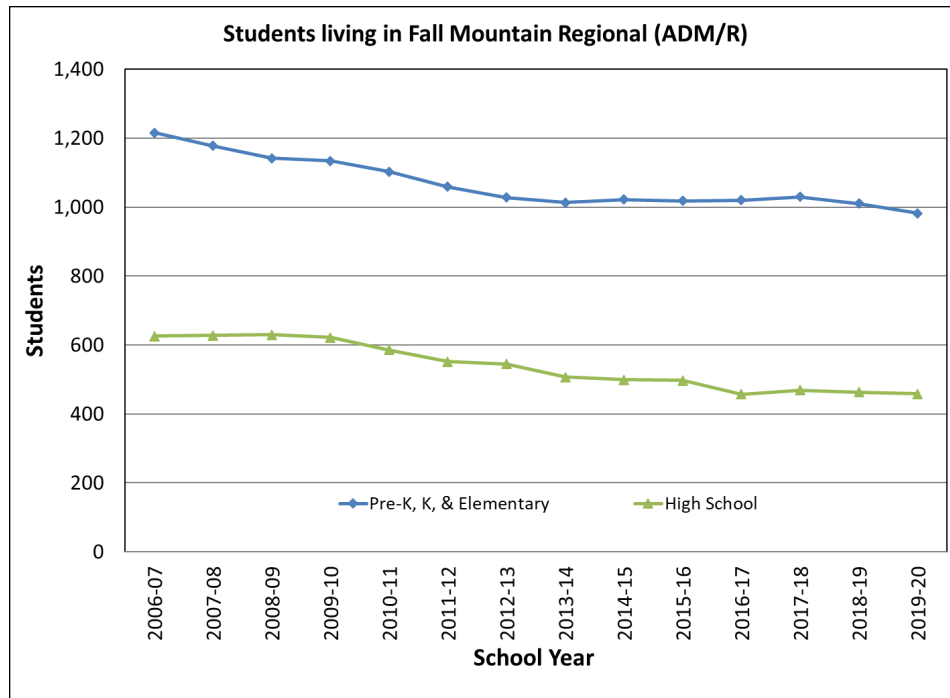


At the beginning of this time window, Fall Mountain was spending slightly less than the state average. However, over the course of the last 10 years, spending per pupil in the district has increased at a faster rate than the state average and is currently about \$2,000 more than the state average.

2. Overall Enrollment of Students

Average Daily Membership in Residence (ADM/R) is one way in which enrollment is measured. It measures the numbers of students a school district is responsible for even when some grades are tuitioned into another district. ADM/R has been in decline in New Hampshire and in Fall Mountain. The following chart displays this for elementary school (pre-school, kindergarten, and grades 1-6) and high school for Fall Mountain for the past fourteen years. During this period, elementary students have declined by 19% and high school students by 27%.

Chart 3



**Like many districts, Fall Mountain reports students in grades 6-8 as elementary students rather than middle school students.*

3. School District Spending Pattern

Spending by New Hampshire’s public school districts totaled \$3.15 billion in school year 2019-2020. Fall Mountain’s total K-12 education spending (on recurring expenditures) was \$30.8 million. All school districts use the same bookkeeping definitions so it is possible to compare how one district’s spending pattern compares to other districts or the state as a whole. The table below highlights Fall Mountain’s spending distribution versus the state average as reflected in its financial report (DoE25) to the NH Department of Education.

Table 1

Spending by Type	Percentage	
	Fall Mountain Regional	NH Average
Regular Instruction	37%	40%
Special Programs	23%	20%
Vocational Programs	2%	1%
Other Instructional Programs	2%	1%
Student Support Services	6%	8%
Instructional Support Staff	6%	3%
Administration	9%	11%
Plant Operations	9%	8%
Pupil Transportation	4%	4%
Food Services	2%	1%
Bond & Note Interest	0%	1%
Other Expenses	0%	0%
Total Expenses	100%	100%

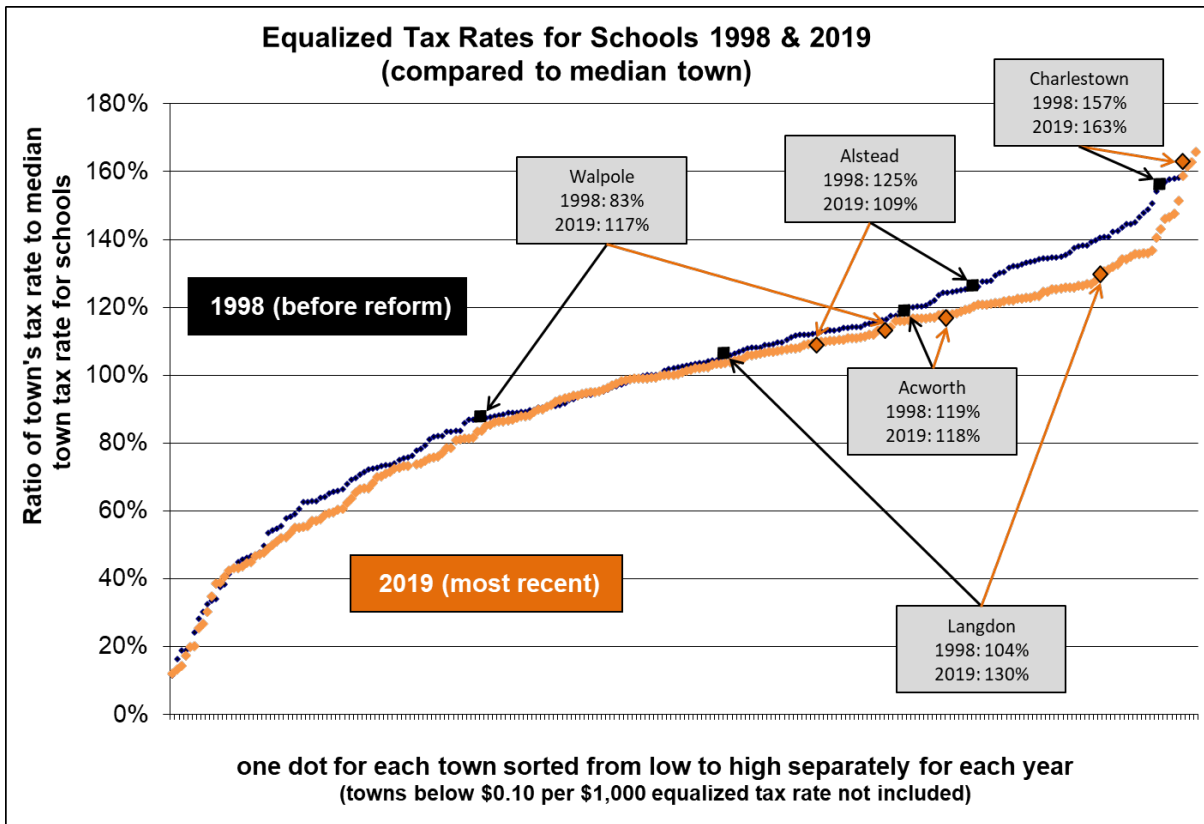
4. Property tax rates for schools

1998 was the last tax year before the new aid to pay for an “adequate” education was introduced after the NH Supreme Court’s *Claremont* rulings. Equalized school tax rates for 1998 for the towns that comprise the Fall Mountain Regional School District are shown in Table 2. Also shown are the equalized rates for 2019. For each of those two years, those rates are compared to the equalized school tax rate for the median New Hampshire town.

Table 2

Town	1998		2019	
	Equalized Tax Rate	% of Median Town	Equalized Tax Rate	% of Median Town
Acworth	\$22.86	119%	\$16.03	118%
Alstead	\$24.00	125%	\$14.82	109%
Charlestown	\$30.08	157%	\$22.10	163%
Langdon	\$19.96	104%	\$17.64	130%
Walpole	\$15.95	83%	\$15.85	117%

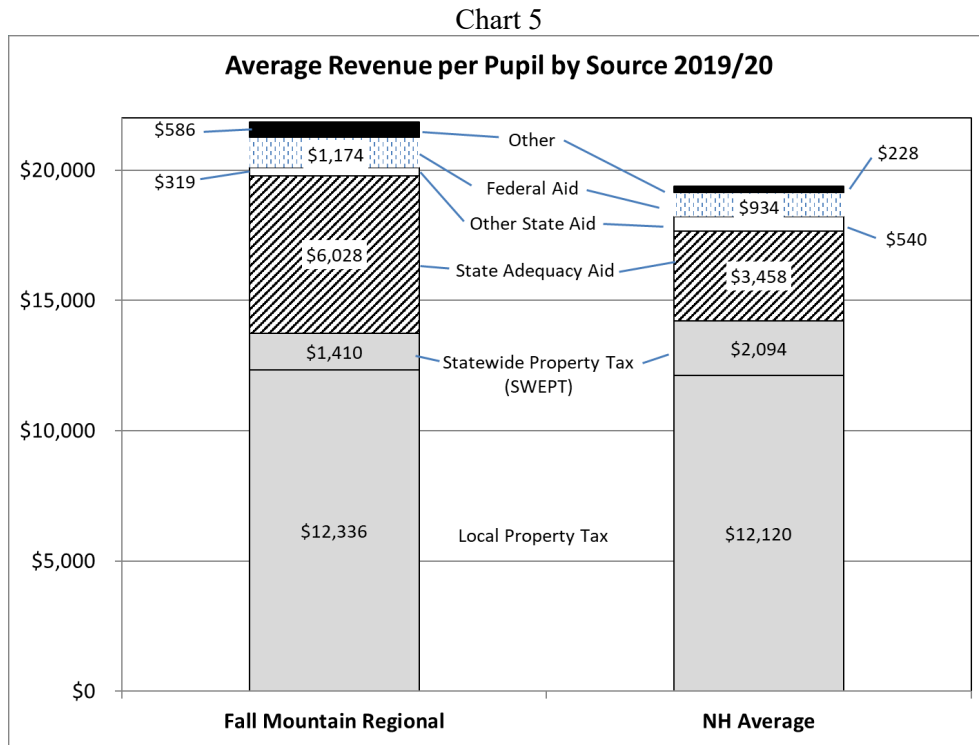
Chart 4



There continues to be considerable disparity in the tax rates among the five towns of the district. Charlestown had the highest school tax rate in the state in 2019, a full \$22.10 for schools, including a local school tax rate of \$20.34 and a state tax rate of \$1.76. The total school rate in Alstead was only 67% that in Charlestown.

5. School District Revenue Patterns

Similar to spending patterns, it is possible to compare the revenue sources of one district with that of others or the state average. Below is a bar chart that shows the revenue distribution of the Fall Mountain school district, calculated by dividing the revenue amount by ADMR, compared to the state average.



In 2019/20 Fall Mountain's school revenue was \$21,853 per pupil, moderately above the state average of \$19,374. Fall Mountain raised nearly the same amount per pupil from property taxes as the state average and received more state and federal aid per pupil than the state average.

6. Property value for each pupil

The Fall Mountain Regional School District's spending per elementary student has remained relatively near the median. The tax rates of the towns have varied but have generally been above the state median.

The most important statistic that relates the ability of different towns to raise taxes for the purpose of their schools is Equalized Property Value per Pupil. Equalized valuation per pupil for the five towns of the Fall Mountain district are displayed in the following figures.

Charlestown, at the extreme, has an equalized property value per pupil that is only 43% of the state average. The other four towns of the district are also well below the state average.

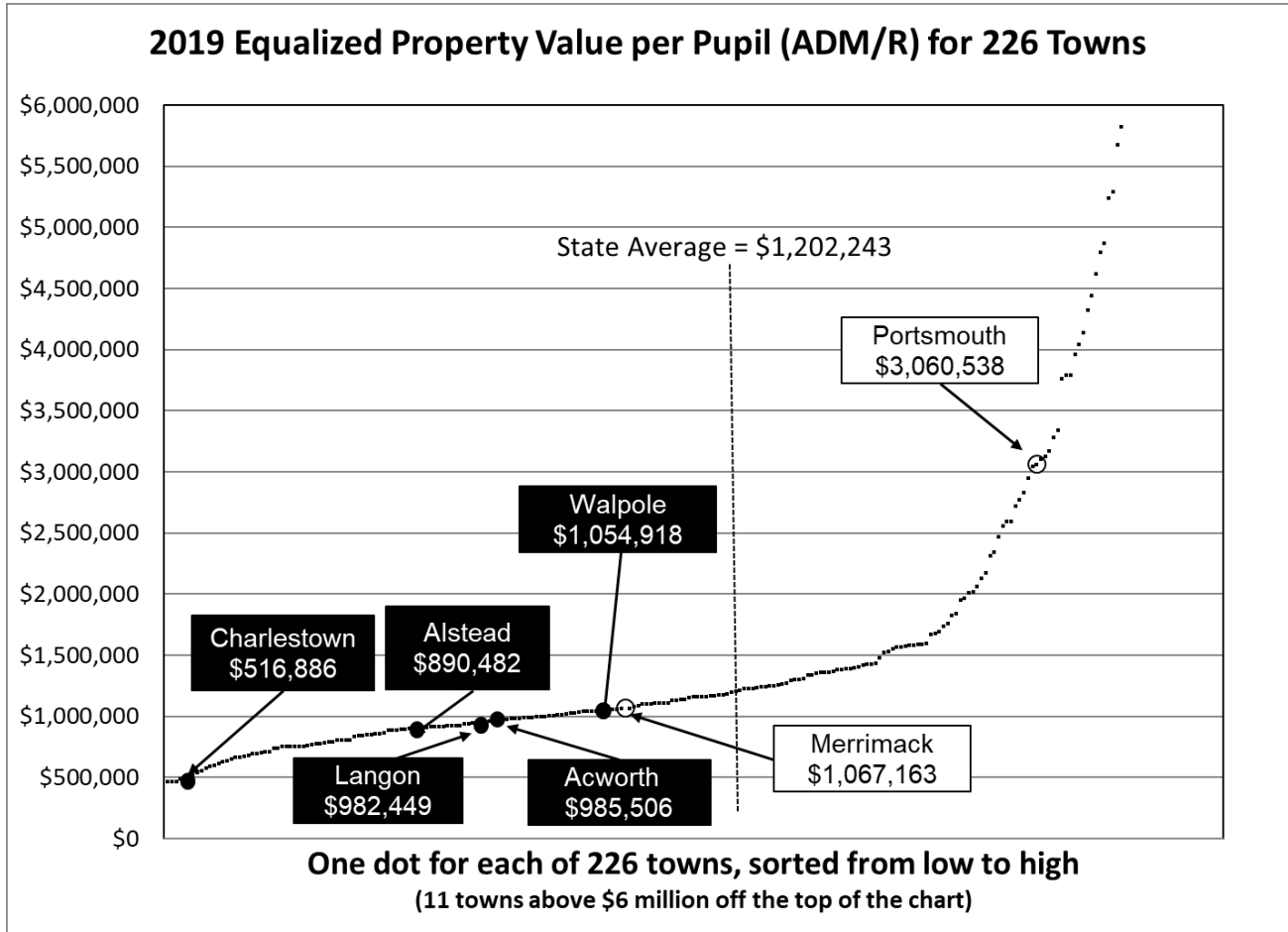
If Portsmouth and Charlestown were to raise the same amount per pupil for their schools, Charlestown's school tax rate have to be about 6 times higher than that of Portsmouth.

Of course, that is not what happens. Portsmouth raised \$18,700 per pupil with only a \$6.11 equalized school tax rate, while Charlestown raised \$11,423 per pupil with an equalized school tax rate of \$22.10. Portsmouth raised

\$7,277 more for every pupil in its schools from its tax base than Charlestown did, while its tax rate was only 28% of the tax rate of Charlestown.

This difference continues with only slight variation year after year. In the 13 years from kindergarten through 12th grade, Portsmouth will raise locally \$94,600 more for educating each of its children than will Charlestown.

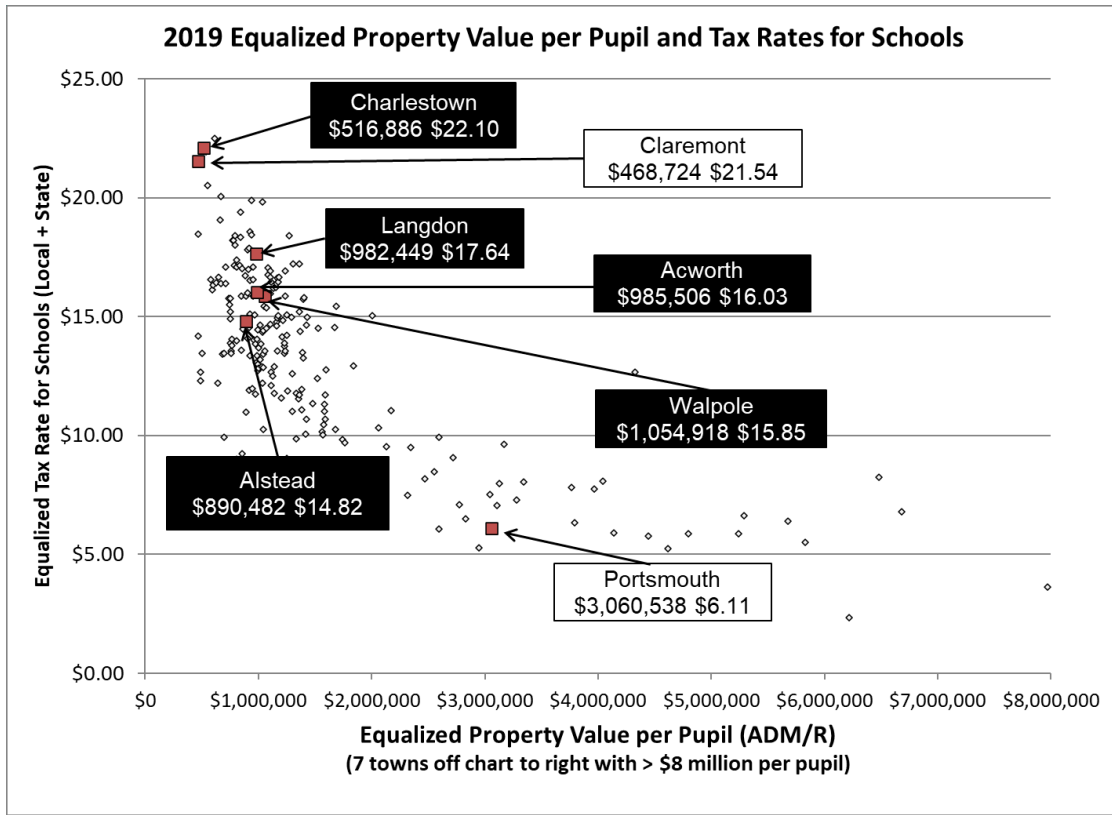
Chart 6



Think of a classroom of 20 students. Portsmouth raises almost \$145,500 more per classroom at a tax rate only 28% that of Charlestown. And will continue to do so year after year.

Clearly there is not a level playing field when it comes to the ability of towns' property tax bases to support their schools.

Chart 7



Note: Data used in this report are taken from reports and spreadsheets of the NH Department of Education (Equalized Valuation per Pupil, Cost Per Pupil By District, Average Daily Membership Based Upon Attendance and Residence (ADM), Average Class Size By School, and DoE25ExtractforStateProfileData for various years). Such data are reported by New Hampshire school districts to the Department. Tax rates printed on town tax bills are not equalized and cannot be compared among towns. Using equalized data allows an apples-to-apples comparison among town tax rates and property values.