

NH SCHOOL FUNDING & PROPERTY TAXES

CHALLENGES AT A GLANCE:

Start here

Two New Hampshire Supreme Court rulings have decided how school funding in NH should work, supporting the NH Constitution. Legislators have ignored this since 1993.

The problem

The average cost of educating a student in NH is over \$19,400 per year. The State calculates the cost of an “adequate education” for 2022-23 at just \$3,787 per student, with some adjustments raising the average to around \$4,600.

The study

In 2019 the State convened The Committee to Study School Funding. In 2020, the committee delivered a report \$500,000 dollars in the making, that thoroughly identifies the problems, the results of those problems, and possible solutions.

Discussion ignored

Despite a constitutional mandate, two NH Supreme Court decisions, and an exhaustive state committee report providing solutions, *elected officials have failed to meaningfully address school funding disparity.*

The committee report sits in Concord, with many legislators either unaware of its existence, or unwilling to meaningfully discuss its findings.

Please follow the NH School Funding Fairness Project for more information.

<https://fairfundingnh.org/>



Just the Facts

Claremont I, 1993:

The State has a duty to pay for the cost of a constitutionally adequate education for *all K-12 public school students.*

Claremont II, 1997:

The taxes that the State uses to pay for education must have a *uniform rate across the state.*

Adequacy cost was never defined. This allows the State to avoid its constitutional mandate and court decisions, and to underfund public education, forcing local communities to make up the difference.

The state funding shortfall forces disproportionate local tax rates, unfair tax burdens, and resource discrepancy between districts. That's a violation of the courts, and of the NH constitutional mandate that the State must provide an adequate, equitable education.

Finding:

The State's current estimated cost for an adequate education is not reproducible by any empirically based approach.

Finding:

Districts with higher student needs, and small districts, require more spending per student to achieve a common desired level of student outcomes.

Finding:

Communities with higher poverty rates and lower property wealth are doubly penalized under New Hampshire's current system.

Finding:

The State could more equitably generate revenue for education by collecting revenue centrally and distributing revenue according to a weighted formula.

Finding:

As district poverty rates increase, student outcomes decrease – even after accounting for other district factors that also may be related to poverty, such as special education and english learner rates, and district size.

Finding:

Under a weighted formula as proposed by The Committee, more than 70% of NH towns could see a reduction in property tax rate.

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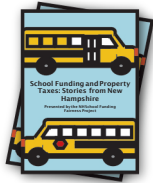
What can you do? Get engaged.

1. Learn

The easiest step in making a difference is learning about the issue. The resources on this page can help.

- **Explore the NH School Funding Fairness Project website.** We advocate for changes in policy, and engage in activities that promote equitable school funding in NH.
www.fairfundingnh.org

- **Read our story book: "School Funding and Property Taxes: Stories from New Hampshire"**, which simplifies the different ways Granite Staters are impacted by the State's continued failure to equitably fund education.



Download a digital copy:
<https://fairfundingnh.org/story-book/>

2. Take a step

Even the smallest steps can help:

- **Share social media content:** Follow and share content from NH School Funding Fairness Project and others advocating for fair school funding.
- **Write:** Don't underestimate the power of the pen. Community "chatter" is our greatest asset. We can help you with Letters to the Editor, Op-eds, Social Media Posts, and more. Email Noah at ntelerski@fairfunding.org for info, ideas, editing, and support.
- **Inquire:** *Meaningful change must happen at the state level.* Contact your legislators (and candidates) and ask where they stand on school funding disparity and what their plan is for fixing it. Your state legislator contact information is here:
<https://gencourt.state.nh.us/house/members/>



Did you know?

NH's current school funding system – the most regressive in New England* – fails to prioritize equitable funding and distribution as demanded by the NH Constitution and multiple NH Supreme Court decisions.

Inequitable school funding continues to pose wide-ranging negative impacts on our communities – beyond student achievement and lower quality education. It also results in decreased property values and reduced community engagement and cohesion. That harms the economic competitiveness and overall well-being of many NH communities.

Advocates like the NH School Funding Fairness Project are calling for a more equitable tax burden and more even allocation of resources to fulfill the constitutional requirement that all NH students have access to a high quality education, funded equitably across the state.

We can't do it alone. Join us to promote fair school funding in NH. Together we can make a real difference for our schools and communities.



* The 2020 report from the Committee to Study School Funding identifies issues and solutions for NH education funding. Download a digital copy: <https://fairfundingnh.org/learn/commission-to-study-school-funding/12012020.pdf>

- **Request a Presentation:** Invite us to present in your community; at your rotary club; your School Board meeting; at your Chamber of Commerce or wherever people need to learn about this critical issue. We're always looking for opportunities. Contact Casey to arrange this at cneal@fairfundingnh.org.
- **Be present:** Attend community events, school board meetings or budget hearings, where school funding is discussed. Your voice can make a difference.

- **Contact our staff:** Questions or itching to get involved? We're always ready to hear from you. Email Casey at cneal@fairfundingnh.org. She'll get you started ASAP.