



PRESS RELEASE: State Budget Headed to Governor’s Desk Still Far from Meeting Constitutional Obligation Despite Improvements to School Funding

June 8, 2023 - The state budget as amended and passed by the State Senate and concurred with by the House of Representatives takes steps in the right direction to increase state funding for education, improving upon the Governor’s original proposal, and removing the damaging Weyler amendment that would have drained the Education Trust Fund. But despite these improvements, this budget still falls far short of fulfilling the State’s constitutional responsibility to fund education.

“The changes to education funding in this budget are really just beating around the bush and still leave the State far from actually meeting its constitutional funding obligations,” said Zack Sheehan, NHSFFP Executive Director. “That being said, I do think that this budget takes some steps in the right direction. Protecting the Education Trust Fund was a critical change. Increasing overall funding in addition to targeted aid and ensuring that no district loses funds over the next two years is important. And to see the overwhelming, bipartisan support for these changes in both chambers of the legislature shows that there is more of a recognition that school funding needs to be fixed for both New Hampshire students and taxpayers. We cannot continue to leave communities behind when it comes to school funding.”

Despite those positive changes to the budget, the state will still be downshifting over \$2 billion a year onto local property tax payers, in direct violation of multiple NH Supreme Court precedents.

“There are two ongoing school funding lawsuits. There were three weeks of testimony in the *ConVal* trial that wrapped up less than a month ago, and despite all the hours of superintendents making it very clear that they would not be able to operate their districts on the funding the State provides them, we still did not see the necessary changes made in this budget,” Sheehan said. “Hopefully when the *Rand* trial takes place in the fall and the inequalities in our tax system are laid bare in the court room it will expand the debate about revenue solutions and ways to fix our upside down tax system in the second year of this legislature.”

* * * * *

The mission of the NHSFFP, a registered 501(c)(3), is to inform the public about the condition of New Hampshire public schools and their funding; to advocate for changes to make the system more equitable for students and taxpayers alike; and, if necessary, to prosecute, manage, control, and/or participate in a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the system for funding education in New Hampshire.

For all press inquiries, please contact Noah Telerski at ntelerski@fairfundingnh.org