

Hi there,

The legislature got off to a fast start this month, and [there was great turnout in support of increased state funding for education](#). We helped deliver testimony to the House Education Committee from 127 people who could not attend the hearing in person, including [a letter from a group of Pitts eld High School students](#). There was overwhelming public support for a fix to our school funding system, and a bipartisan subcommittee was formed to work on those bills.

**But after only two meetings, it seems like the subcommittee could be moving to recommend all four of its bills for interim study.** That would mean these bills are effectively dead for the session and there would be no progress on increasing state funding for education and property tax relief for communities around the State.

Education funding has been the subject of major legislative study in 2008, 2018, and in 2020, when the State spent \$500,000 on a commission and then ignored all of the commission's recommendations. And even more recently, the costs of education were the subject of 3 weeks of study in the courtroom during the *ConVal* trial.

**We've already had over 200 people contact the subcommittee using our advocacy tool to call on them to do something with this important legislation.** These bills are not silver bullets, but they are honest attempts at improving our broken school funding system, and at the very least, they could help bring the State into compliance with last year's *ConVal* and *Rand* rulings.

If you haven't already, add your voice and tell the subcommittee that you don't want to see more study done when it is so obvious that our state, our students, and our taxpayers need solutions.

Contact the Subcommittee



## Upcoming Events

In February we are headed to the Seacoast! We have two School Funding & Property Taxes presentations lined up, and we hope you'll be able to join us!

On February 13, join us and our hosts, SAU 90 and SAU 21, at Hampton Academy in Hampton. And the following week, we're excited to be hosted by SAU 50 at the Greenland Central School in Greenland on February 20.


Tell us you're coming to Hampton

Register to join us in Greenland

## SCHOOL FUNDING & PROPERTY TAXES SAU 90 & 21

HAMPTON, NORTH HAMPTON, SOUTH HAMPTON, HAMPTON FALLS, SEABROOK

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13TH. 6PM**  
**HAMPTON ACADEMY CAFETERIA**  
29 ACADEMY AVE. HAMPTON, 03842



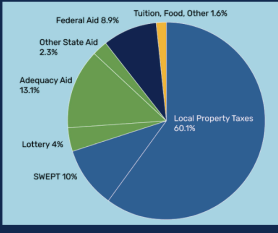
**JOIN NHSFFP, SAU 90, SAU 21 & THE HAMPTON SCHOOL BOARD TO LEARN HOW NH'S SCHOOL FUNDING MODEL CREATES INEQUITIES FOR STUDENTS AND TAXPAYERS ALL OVER THE STATE, & HOW WE CAN WORK TOGETHER TOWARD AN EQUITABLE SOLUTION.**

REGISTER: FAIRFUNDINGNH.ORG/EVENTS

## SCHOOL FUNDING & PROPERTY TAXES SAU 50

RYE, GREENLAND, NEWINGTON, NEW CASTLE

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20TH. 6PM**  
**GREENLAND CENTRAL SCHOOL**  
70 POST RD. GREENLAND 03840



**JOIN NHSFFP & SAU 50 TO LEARN HOW NH'S SCHOOL FUNDING MODEL CREATES INEQUITIES FOR STUDENTS AND TAXPAYERS ALL OVER THE STATE, & HOW WE CAN WORK TOGETHER TOWARD AN EQUITABLE SOLUTION.**

REGISTER: FAIRFUNDINGNH.ORG/EVENTS

We also will be back in Manchester! **On February 6, you'll be able to find our community engagement team at the Bookery. Drop in between 4pm and 6pm** to say hello and chat about what's happening in the legislature and ways for you get involved with fair funding!




## Right to Know Request on State Spending in the *ConVal* and *Rand* lawsuits

We wanted to find out how much taxpayer money was being spent by the State to defend itself in the two ongoing school funding lawsuits. We knew it had retained outside lawyers as part of its defense, and so we filed a request with the NH Attorney General's office under the State's Right-to-Know statute, to get that information.

In the State's response to our request, they reported spending over \$1 million just on out of state lawyers for the *ConVal* case alone. That number really stands out when you look at the court's decision, where the judge wrote that **the State presented no evidence in support of the current amount of base adequacy.** That's a lot of money for no evidence.

**From the lawsuit's filing in 2019 to December 1, 2023, the State spent a total of \$1,187,748.28 on the *ConVal* case.** And, that number does not include internal NH DOJ staff time.




**“The State presented no evidence to justify the current base adequacy amount.”**

**-From the ruling in *ConVal School District v. State of NH***

**\$1,084,864**

**Taxpayer dollars Paid to Out of State Lawyers**



Since the state's attorneys and staff are salaried, the department said it would need to estimate internal staff costs. We opted to omit them from our request to get the information faster, but it is worth noting the actual cost of defending the State in *ConVal* is actually higher than the number listed.

The same caveat applies to the information we received about **the *Rand* lawsuit, where the State has spent \$106,014.55**, plus internal staff time, defending its unconstitutional administration of the Statewide Education property Tax.

Read the Document we Received from the State



## Read our Op-Ed on the Lawsuit Rulings and the Legislature

Ahead of the start of the legislative session, our Executive Director, Zack Sheehan, wrote an op-ed on what the *ConVal* and *Rand* rulings meant for the legislatures work, and how the decisions could serve as a guide to begin fixing our broken school funding system.

From Zack: "The state should stop dragging its feet and get to work. **The New Hampshire Constitution is clear that the state is responsible for funding an adequate education.** These rulings affirm that responsibility. Increasing state funding for education, thereby shifting it off local property-tax payers, is a step in the right direction. I challenge the Legislature to get down to business starting in January and fulfill the promise of *Claremont* for every Granite Stater.

Read More



## School Funding News Roundup

These are some stories we've had our eye on this month:

NH Business Review: "[Schoolhouse rock\(ed\)](#)"

This is a great rundown of all of the most important education related bills being worked on this session.

NH Fiscal Policy Institute: "[Granite Staters with Lowest Incomes Have Highest Effective State and Local Tax Rate](#)"

This explainer from NHFPI breaks down the latest data from the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy (ITEP) which clearly shows that wealthier Granite Staters pay smaller percentages of their income in taxes than low- and middle-income people in the state. This regressive system is largely driven by our heavy reliance on property taxes.

Concord Monitor: "[Opinion: New Hampshire is not a low tax state](#)"

This was a great read that appeared in the Concord Monitor this month. The author breaks down their total tax burden living in New Hampshire compared to when they lived in Massachusetts. They found that they pay between \$3,500 and \$4,000 more a year in taxes living in New Hampshire, again largely because of our heavy reliance on property taxes.



**The support of generous donors like you is critical to our success. Please consider becoming a part of the fair funding movement and contributing to our efforts.**

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