



PRESS RELEASE: Finance Committee Recommends 2 Bills to Increase State Funding for Education

April 2 – The House Finance Committee made bipartisan votes to advance two pieces of legislation that will increase State funding for public education. These bills will increase the State’s total contribution to local school districts by about \$120 million over the next two years, with most of the money being targeted at students and schools with the highest needs

“It’s great to see these bills continue to advance with strong bipartisan support,” said Zack Sheehan, NHSFFP Executive Director. “It is clear that the State needs to do more to support our local districts, and these are a step in the right direction.”

HB 1583 (recommended Ought to Pass 18-7) looks the same as when it was first passed by the House in February, increasing base adequacy from \$4,100 to \$4,404 per pupil and adding over \$60 million in targeted aid, divided between fiscal capacity disparity aid, which directs funds to communities with lower property values, and funding for districts with higher proportions of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch.

There had been an amendment proposed to the bill, which would have brought the State in line with last year’s court rulings in the *ConVal* and *Rand* lawsuits, by increasing base adequacy to \$7,356.01 and requiring municipalities that raise excess Statewide Education Property Tax (SWEPT) to remit that excess to the State, but also included a provision which would have imposed a spending cap on school districts. The amendment was withdrawn before it was voted on by the committee.

HB 1656 (recommended Ought to Pass as Amended 21-4), previously passed the House on a voice vote, increases State special education funding by \$17.5 million and changes that funding by introducing categories, so students with more intensive needs receive more funding. While it was the original intent of the Education Funding Subcommittee that worked on this bill earlier in the session to increase State special education funding by \$35 million, it was discovered that the text of the bill did not actually achieve that increase, and an amendment to bring the bill in line with that intent failed on a 12-13 vote in the Committee.

“Certainly, the legislature needs to do more if it is going to bring the State in line with these court rulings, but a step in the right direction is better than doing nothing,” Sheehan said. “These are bills that everyone can support, and I look forward to the House passing them again and sending them to the Senate.”

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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.