

To Governor Ayotte and the General Court of New Hampshire:

Two years ago, a group of over 150 local leaders – including Mayors, City Councilors, Select Board members, and School Board members – [presented a similar letter to this one during public hearings on the State budget](#), calling on the State of New Hampshire to increase its funding for public education in order to address well-known inequities and gaps. [What that budget contained](#), touted as one of the biggest increases to State education aid since the *Claremont* decisions, was only \$169 million (barely more than a 2% increase) that did not meaningfully affect the State's share of education funding, which remains [the lowest in the entire country](#).

This modest change has not helped reduce the downshifted tax burden faced by local property tax payers trying to support their public schools. During the legislature's work in 2024, [there were several bills aimed at reducing that burden](#) and sending aid to districts and students that needed it the most, like students receiving special education services. Despite strong, bipartisan support in the House, these bills were killed by the Senate and failed to become law.

Meanwhile, all of us at the local level have continued working hard for our schools and communities to try and balance the needs of our students and the economic realities faced by our taxpayers. Inflation, energy costs, and unpredictable special education expenditures have put strains on our budgets, and the State has provided no relief.

The significant gap between actual expenses, which was [\\$21,545 per pupil](#) during the 2023-24 school year, and average State aid, which was [only \\$5,148 per pupil the same year](#), must be closed with local property taxes. Our [local property taxes cover 70% of all school revenues in the state](#), the highest share in the country. In all of our communities, especially those with lower property values, this means levying higher and higher tax rates just to keep up. The result is a system where one of the biggest factors in determining the opportunities available to our students, and the burden placed on the taxpayer, is local property values.

Despite record surpluses in the Education Trust Fund, excess State funds have not been used to help alleviate these disparities or provide aid to school districts. [In November 2024](#), the Department of Education announced that there was expected to be \$16 million less in the State's Special Education Aid fund than was being requested by local districts. This fund is used to reimburse school districts for specific, state-approved services provided to students with complex and intensive needs. These students have a federally protected right to these services, and if the State does not fill in the funding shortfall, it will downshift even more onto local property tax payers.

As the legislature begins working on the biennial State budget — the single largest vehicle for school funding reform — you must take stock of the current situation communities are facing. For decades, the State has fallen short of its constitutional responsibility to fund education, losing again and again in court while downshifting increases onto local property taxes in most communities around the state. With [pending decisions](#) in the two current school funding

lawsuits [coming any day from the NH Supreme Court](#), we once again call on the Governor and New Hampshire Legislature to act.

There are a variety of policy changes that could provide significant relief to local property tax payers while boosting the funding going to school districts around the state. [The 2020 Commission to Study School Funding's final report](#), having now gone four years without the legislature putting its findings and policy proposals into action, still presents a strong framework to build from. The work of last year's special House Sub-Committee on Education Funding also did extensive work on the bipartisan proposals that were ultimately killed in the Senate.

It is the firm belief of those signed below that well-funded, excellent public education is the most important asset for the future of New Hampshire. [About 85% of New Hampshire children attend public schools](#), meaning an increase in State aid would help most children in the state access new opportunities while also providing property tax relief for most taxpayers. This is a win-win and promotes the health of the New Hampshire economy by investing in the next generation and making our communities more attractive for businesses and families.

We all work hard to balance providing critical services to our communities while not increasing property taxes beyond what people can afford. The current budget process presents a new opportunity for the Governor and Legislature to work together on finding a solution to the funding challenges faced by so many communities in our state. A school funding solution ensures every student, no matter where they live, has access to the best possible public education, while also creating real relief for taxpayers. Doing nothing, while not only violating the New Hampshire Constitution, will only serve to exacerbate the existing disparities that exist in our state, driving local property taxes higher and keeping opportunities away from our students. The future of our state, and our communities, depends on the State contributing to a well-funded public education system.

Signed,

Allenstown

- **Scott W. McDonald, Allenstown Select Board Chair**

Alstead

- **Joseph Levesque, Alstead School Board Vice Chair**

Antrim

- **Katherine Foecking, ConVal School Board**

Atkinson

- **Don Woodworth, Timberlane School Board**

Bartlett

- **Emily Calderwood, Bartlett School Board Chair**

Bedford

- **Andrea Campbell, Bedford School Board Vice Chair**
- **Kara LaMarche, Bedford School Board**

Benton

- **Dwight A. Swauger, Benton School Board Chair**

Berlin

- **Diana Berthiaume, Berlin City Council**
- **Jeanne M. Charest, Berlin School Board Secretary**
- **Robert Cone, Mayor of Berlin**
- **Paul Grenier, Berlin City Council**
- **Peter Higbee, Berlin City Council**
- **Nathan Morin, Berlin School Board**
- **Ann Nolin, Berlin School Board Chair**

Boscawen

- **Lorrie J. Carey, Boscawen Select Board Chair**

Bradford

- **Beth Downs, Bradford Select Board Chair**

Bridgewater

- **Dominic Halle, Newfound Regional School Board**

Brookfield

- **James Manning, Select Board Vice Chair and Governor Wentworth Regional School Board Chair**

Campton

- **Donna Jo Hiltz, Campton School Board**

Canaan

- **Tim Josephson, Mascoma Valley Regional School Board Chair**
- **Hope Stragnell, Mascoma Valley Regional School Board**

Canterbury

- **Randi Johnson, Shaker Regional School Board**
- **Alice Todd, Shaker Regional School Board**

Chesterfield

- **Len Fleischer, Chesterfield School Board**

Claremont

- **Dale Girard, Claremont Mayor**
- **Arlene Hawkins, Claremont School Board**
- **Bonita Miles, Claremont School Board**
- **Whitney Skillen, Claremont School Board**

Concord

- **Liz Boucher, Concord School Board**
- **Jessica Campbell, Concord School Board**
- **Byron Champlin, Concord Mayor**
- **Michele Horne, Concord City Council**
- **Fred Keach, Concord City Council**
- **Judith Kurtz, Concord City Council**
- **Cara Meeker, Concord School Board**
- **Sarah Robinson, Concord School Board**
- **Sarah Sadowski, Concord School Board**
- **Pamela Walsh, Concord School Board President**

Conway

- **Randy Davison, Conway School Board**
- **Michael DiGregorio, Conway School Board Vice Chair**

Cornish

- **Justin Ranney, Cornish School Board Chair**

Dalton

- **Evelyn Flynn, White Mountain Regional School Board**

Deerfield

- **Kendra Cohen, Deerfield School Board Chair**
- **Ellen O'Donnell, Deerfield School Board Vice Chair**

Derry

- **Johnathan Dugan, Derry School Board**
- **Douglas Flood, Derry Town Councilor at Large**
- **David Granese, Derry Town Councilor at Large**
- **Jason MacLeod, Derry School Board**
- **Jenna Paradise, Derry School Board**
- **Michael Thiele, Derry School Board**
- **Jennifer Theroux, Derry School Board**
- **Michelle Mogé, Councilor at Large - Elect**

Dover

- **Robert Carrier, Dover Mayor**
- **Michelle Clancy, Dover School Board Secretary**
- **Micaela Demeter, Dover School Board**
- **Craig Flynn, Dover School Board**
- **Maggie Fogarty, Dover School Board**
- **Liz Goldman, Dover School Board**
- **Debra Hackett, Dover City Council**
- **Carolyn Mebert, Dover School Board Vice Chair**
- **Linnea Nemeth, Dover City Council - At Large**
- **Anthony Retrosi, Dover City Council**
- **April Richer, Dover City Council**
- **Dennis Shanahan, Dover Assistant Mayor**
- **Robin Trefethen, Dover School Board Chair**
- **Robbie Warach, Dover City Council**
- **Lindsey Williams, Dover City Council**

Durham

- **Em Friedrichs, Durham Town Council**
- **Heather Grant, Durham Town Council**
- **Sally Needell, Durham Town Council**
- **Curtis Register, Durham Town Council**

Eaton

- **Susan Wiley, Eaton School Board Vice Chair**

Epping

- **Amy Rich Crane, Epping Budget Committee**

Epsom

- **Michael Wiggett**

Exeter

- **Nancy Belanger, Exeter Select Board**
- **Molly Cowan, Exeter Select Board Vice Chair**
- **Susan B. Drinker, Exeter School Board**

Farmington

- **Nicole Huckins Doyle, School Board**

Fitzwilliam

- **Jeff Cesaitis, Monadnock Regional School Board**
- **Kristen Noonan, Monadnock Regional School Board**

Franklin

- **Delaney Carrier, Franklin School Board and City Council**
- **Laurie Cass, Franklin School Board Vice Chair**
- **Liz Cote, Franklin School Board Chair**
- **Jane Cote, Franklin School Board**
- **Ruth MaGina, Franklin School Board**
- **Desiree McLaughlin, Mayor of Franklin**
- **Leigh Webb, Franklin City Council Ward 3**
- **Olivia Zink, Franklin City Council Ward 2**

Gilford

- **Jessica Jacques, Gilford School Board Chair**
- **Nicole Hogan, MS, CMHC, Gilford School Board**

Gilsum

- **Jennifer Strimbeck, Monadnock Regional School Board**

Goffstown

- **Mark T. Lemay, Goffstown SelectBoard**
- **Shane Rozamus, Goffstown School Board**

Grantham

- **Lesley F. Nesbitt, Grantham School Board Chair**

Greenfield

- **Curtis Hamilton, Contoocook Valley School Board**

Hampton

- **Wendy Rega, Hampton School Board Chair**

Hampton Falls

- **Jason Farias, Hampton Falls School Board Vice Chair**
- **Gisela Manna, Hampton Falls School Board**

Hanover

- **Dr. Marcela Di Blasi, Hanover School Board**
- **Deborah Nelson, Hanover School Board**

Haverhill

- **William Kearney, Haverhill Cooperative School Board**

Henniker

- **James Newcomb, John Stark School Board**
- **Courtney Portillo, Henniker School Board**

Hopkinton

- **Jonathan Cohen, Hopkinton School Board**
- **Andrea Folsom, Hopkinton School Board Vice Chair**
- **Flo Dapice, Hopkinton School Board Student Member**
- **Norm Goupil, Hopkinton School Board**
- **Dulcie Madden Lipoma, Hopkinton School Board Chair**
- **Rob Nadeau, Hopkinton School Board**

Keene

- **Jay Kahn, Mayor of Keene**

Kensington

- **Cheryl York McDonough, Kensington School Board**
- **Stefanie Schmidt, Kensington Elementary School Board**

Laconia

- **Bruce Cheny, Laconia City Council**
- **Mark Haynes, Laconia City Council**
- **Andrew Hosmer, Mayor of Laconia**
- **Tony Felch, Laconia City Council**
- **Eric Hoffman, Laconia City Council**

Lancaster

- **K. van Bergen-Buteau, White Mountain Regional School Board**

Landaff

- **Michelle Beaudin, Landaff School Board**
- **Matthew Copithorne, Landaff School Board Chair**

Langdon

- **P. Kevin Keith, Langdon Select Board**

Lisbon

- **Robert Adams, Lisbon Regional School Board Vice Chair**
- **Arthur Boutin, Lisbon Regional School Board Chair**
- **Catherine Colby, Lisbon Regional School Board**

Litchfield

- **Christina M. Harrison, Litchfield School Board**

Lyman

- **Catherine Colby, Lisbon Regional School Board**

Madison

- **Cheri Stackpole, Madison School Board**

Manchester

- **Jason Bonilla, Manchester Board of School Committee**
- **Christina Fajardo, Manchester Board of Alderman Vice Chair**
- **Pat Long, Manchester Board of Aldermen**
- **Jim O'Connell, Manchester Board of School Committee Vice Chair**
- **Liz O'Neil, Manchester Board of School Committee**
- **Sean Parr, Manchester Board of School Committee**
- **Chris Potter, Manchester Board of School Committee**
- **Karen Soule, Manchester Board of School Committee**
- **Julie Turner, Manchester Board of School Committee**
- **Leslie Want, Manchester Board of School Committee**

Merrimack

- **Kaitlyn Bernier, Merrimack School Budget Committee**

Milan

- **Randy Fortin Milan Select Board Chair**
- **Michael E. Galuszka, Milan Select Board**
- **Peter Nolet, Milan Select Board Vice Chair**

Milford

- **Karin Cevasco, Milford School Board**
- **Amy Clark Canty, Milford School Board**
- **Paul Dargie, Milford Select Board Vice Chair**
- **Judi Zaino, Milford School Board Chair**

Nashua

- **Neil Claffey, Nashua Board of Education**
- **Jim Donchess, Mayor of Nashua**
- **Sharon Giglio, Nashua Board of Education**
- **Ernest Jette, Nashua Board of Aldermen**
- **Rob Johnson, Nashua Board of Education**
- **Regan Lamphier, Nashua Board of Education**
- **Patricia Klee, Nashua Board of Aldermen**
- **Heather Raymond, Nashua Board of Education**
- **Michael O'Brien, Nashua Board of Aldermen Vice Chair**

New Durham

- **Elizabeth Sheckler, Governor Wentworth Regional School Board**

New London

- **Bebe Casey, New London Select Board Chair**
- **David Keith, Kearsarge School Board**
- **Janet R. Kidder, Kearsarge Regional School Board**
- **Bill Helm, New London Select Board**

Newbury

- **Kristen Schultz, Newbury Select Board Vice Chair & School Board Member**

Newfields

- **Bobby Kelly, MD, MPH, Newfields School Board Vice Chair**
- **Jane Walsh, Newfields School Board**

Newport

- **Kathryn Boutin, Newport School Board Vice Chair**
- **James Burroughs, Newport Select Board Chair**
- **Rachel Dilger, Newport Select Board**
- **Jeffrey F. Kessler, Newport Select Board Vice Chair**
- **Melissa Mitchler, Newport School Board**
- **Steven Morris, Newport School Board Chair**
- **Jeffrey North, Newport Select Board**

- **Herbert Tellow, Newport Select Board**
- **Keith Sayer, Newport School Board**

Newton

- **Joe Aiello, Newton Select Board**
- **Amanda Aiello, Newton Budget Committee Vice Chair**
- **Robert Marchand, Newton Select Board**

Pembroke

- **Tracy Bricchi, Merrimack Valley Regional School Board Chair**
- **Andrew Camidge, Pembroke School Board Chair**
- **Kerri Dean, Pembroke School Board**
- **Melanie Camelo, Pembroke School Board Vice Chair**
- **Jessica Wheeler Russell, Merrimack Valley Regional School Board**

Penacook

- **Tracy Bricchi, Penacook School Board Chair**

Peterborough

- **William Kennedy, PhD, Peterborough Select Board**

Plainfield

- **Norm Berman, Plainfield School Board**

Plymouth

- **Gregory Aprilliano, Plymouth School Board**
- **Maryann Barnsley, Plymouth Select Board**
- **William Bolton, Plymouth Select Board Vice Chair**
- **Stephanie Halter, Plymouth Elementary School Board**
- **Aimee Lee, Plymouth School Board Chair**
- **Neil McIver, Plymouth Select Board**
- **Zachary Tirrell, Plymouth Select Board Chair**
- **Ted Wisniewski, Plymouth Select Board**

Portsmouth

- **Byron Matto, Portsmouth School Board**

Profile

- **Erin Talcott, Profile School Board Vice Chair**

Richmond

- **Edmond Laplante, Monadnock Regional School Board**

Rindge

- **Chris Ratcliffe, Jaffrey-Rindge Cooperative School Board Chair**
- **Lisa B. Wiley, Jaffrey-Rindge Cooperative School Board**

Rochester

- **Nick Bellows, Rochester School Board**
- **David Herman, Rochester City Council**
- **Matt Pappas, Rochester School Board**
- **Chuck Creteau, Rochester City Council**
- **Alexander de Geofroy, Rochester City Council**

Roxbury

- **Gina Carraro, Monadnock Regional School Board**

Salisbury

- **Peggy Jones-Blanchard, Merrimack Valley School Board**

Sandown

- **Mark Sherwood, Timberlane School Board Vice Chair**

Somersworth

- **Laura Barry, Somersworth City Council**
- **Nancie Cameron, Somersworth City Council at Large**
- **Matt Gerding, Mayor of Somersworth**
- **Dr. Bridget Jameson, Somersworth School Board**
- **Maggie Larson, Somersworth School Board Chair**
- **Sarah E. B. O'Brien-Hart, Somersworth School Board**
- **Crystal Paradis-Catanzaro, Somersworth City Council**
- **Carly Prescott, Somersworth School Board Ward 5**
- **David Witham, Somersworth City Council**

Springfield

- **Art Bobruff, Kearsarge Regional School Board**

Stoddard

- **Alfrieda J Englund, Stoddard School Board Chair**
- **Lisa Davenport, Stoddard School Board Vice Chair**
- **Terri LaRoche, Stoddard Select Board**

Strafford

- **Risa Ceskavich, Strafford School Board & Budget Committee**

Stratham

- **Erin Garcia de Paredes, Exeter Region Cooperative School Board**

Sutton

- **Charles Forsberg, Sutton Budget Committee**
- **Michael Gebo, Sutton Budget Committee**
- **Nancy Glynn, Sutton Select Board**
- **Melissa King, Sutton Budget Committee**
- **Robert Nelson, Sutton Budget Committee**
- **Charles Nelson, Sutton Budget Committee**
- **Glenn Pogust, Sutton Select Board Chair**

Swanzey

- **Hannah Blood, Monadnock Regional School Board**
- **Brian Bohannon, Monadnock Regional School Board**
- **Daniel LeClair, Monadnock Regional School Board**
- **Cheryl McDaniel-Thomas, Monadnock Regional School Board**
- **Eric Stanley, Monadnock Regional School Board**
- **Elizabeth Tatro, School Board**

Tamworth

- **Siena Kaplan-Thompson, Tamworth School Board**

Troy

- **Scott Peters, Monadnock Regional School Board Chair**
- **Lisa Steadman, Monadnock Regional School Board Vice Chair**

Warner

- **Emma Bates, Kearsarge Regional School Board**
- **Faith Minton, Warner Select Board**

Washington

- **Samuel B. White, Washington School Board**

Weare

- **William Politt, Weare School Board**
- **Alyssa Small, Weare School Board**
- **Christine Heath, Weare School Board Chair**

Whitefield

- **Tara Giles, White Mountains Regional School Board**
- **Robert Loiacono, White Mountains Regional School Board Chair**

Wilton

- **John Zavgren, Wilton School Board**