

**Subject:** additional materials  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 16, 2021 at 2:55:58 PM Eastern Daylight Time  
**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** Portrie, Carrie  
**Attachments:** NewsNotes 1.pdf, NewsNotes 7.pdf

**Caution - External Email**

Good afternoon, Carrie

First... thank you for the opportunities of the continued conversations.

There are so many sides of the story and so many viewpoints that were expressed. I ended up being as frustrated as hopeful with some of the conversation. :(

I am part of the Home for Funding Advocacy Group. We've been meeting almost weekly since last November and have been composing and distributing what we are calling "News Notes". Most of the people on our email list are residents connected with Home, with some others added (like our State reps). Each edition is one to one and half sheets and covers relevant basic information:

- #1 School for Funding 101 the NH Basics
- #2 How Did We Get Here?
- #3 NH School Funding Formula Considered Damaged
- #4 Lessons from the Commission to Study Home for Funding
- #5 Many Lessons from the Commission
- #6 Taxes, Education and Numbers
- #7 No Winners, No Losers

All the info comes from the Carsey info, the DOE, the AIR report... we tried to summarize and make it "digestible".

My purpose here is to offer to other towns and groups the basic information that we have questioned and chewed so that we might spread the basic ideas and concerns before us in this process of changing the State formula. Although we have cited facts specific to Home (like contact info for our reps) and to Merrimack County, all the info is referenced and can be found to better fit other towns and cities.

We here in Home are pretty proud of the work we've done. We hope that other towns would benefit from the work we have already done as they spread facts and information so important to the school families and the taxpayers of our State.

Are you aware of other people/groups with whom we might share our materials?

Thank you for all you are doing!

Caro Asher (for the Home for Funding Advocacy Group) Charle Estes, Don Moyer, Michelle Munson, and Lucy Natke)

I'm attaching News Notes #1 and #7 to give you an idea. We'd like any feedback you have for us, too.

# HILL FAIR FUNDING ADVOCACY GROUP

supporting NH School Funding Fairness Project

Over two years ago, a group of concerned citizens created the NH School Funding Fairness Project, dedicated to equitably-funded quality education State-wide. To assist in the effort, the Hill Advocacy Group is working to educate and raise awareness in our community, not just about how bad the system is, but also about how we can help make things better. Please join us.

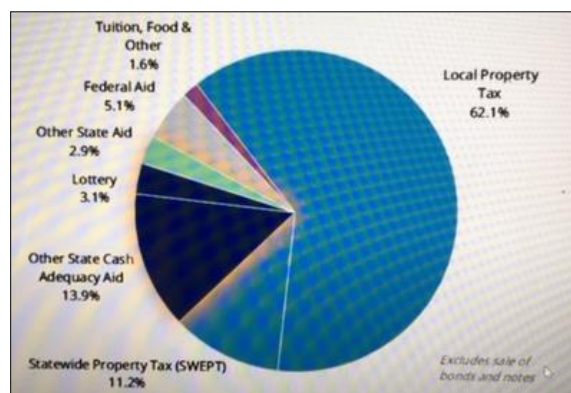
## News Notes #1 School Funding 101—the NH Basics

According to verified sources, NH ranks **8th highest in the nation per pupil** spent for education. Of that total amount, the state contributes 20% (**which is the lowest in the country**). Our property taxes make up the difference of the 80% needed to fund education. In 2018-19 New Hampshire school districts' revenue was \$3.29. Where did all of this money come from? The short answer is, primarily from local property taxes at rates that vary widely from town to town. **This system has to change!**

### 2018-19 Revenue of NH State Districts

**\$3.29 billion**

<b>Local Property Tax</b>	<b>62.1%</b>
Statewide Property Tax	11.2%
(still a property tax)	
State Adequacy Aid	13.9%
Federal Aid	5.1%
Lottery	3.1%
Other	4.6%



### BUT...

According to the New Hampshire Constitution, the State must provide an adequate education for all NH children K-12 from taxes that are equitable and uniform across the State.

#### 1. Define “Adequate”

In the Claremont Case, it was ruled that for education to be adequate, “Mere competence of the basics—reading, writing, and arithmetic—is insufficient.... A broad exposure to the social, economic, scientific, technological, and political realities of today’s society is essential for our students to compete, contribute, and flourish in the 21<sup>st</sup> century”. **An adequate education sets children up for success!**

#### 2. The State must determine the cost of the adequate education and pay for it

“Whatever the State identifies as comprising constitutional adequacy it must pay for. None of that financial obligation can be shifted to local school districts, regardless of their wealth and need”.

**Unfunded mandates for education adequacy are unconstitutional!**

#### 3. Education must be funded by a Constitutional tax

In other words, whatever tax is decided on must be applied equally across the State. We are far from this being true now. Property owners in small, property-poor towns, like Hill, are paying *much* higher rates than are those in rich towns. **Funding education this way is not constitutional and is not fair!**

### Contacts:

**New Hampshire School Funding Fairness Project (NHSFFP)** <https://fairfundingnh.org>. This website features a [30 minute video version](#) of its engaging *School Funding and Property Taxes* presentation.

Watch this informative video, learn more, and ask questions. Share the information.

**Hill Fair Funding Advocacy Group.** Please join us. Contact at [nhsffp.hill@gmail.com](mailto:nhsffp.hill@gmail.com). Get informed, talk to your friends and neighbors, sign up for our “News Notes”. Help us broaden our base! It will be the weight of our numbers and of our voices that will finally bring change.

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## News Notes #7 No Winners, No Losers

### The Basics:

- The NH Constitution stipulates that the State pay to provide the opportunity for an “adequate” education for ALL of New Hampshire’s children. If a community wants to enhance the educational experience for “their” children, they are free to do so at their expense, but the state pays for the basics. That’s equality under the law.
- Education must be paid for by a Constitutionally acceptable system of taxation, i.e. one that is applied equally in ALL communities across the state. Equality under the law.

### Immediate considerations/reactions when there is talk of changing the school funding strategy:

- This will open the door to a broad-based tax!! NO NEW TAXES!
- “I don’t want my town to become a ‘Donor Town’ again!”

The Legislature is now tasked with figuring out how to do all this.

One of the strategies that seems most promising includes at its base a state-wide property tax collected at the same rate from all communities that would be administered by the state and distributed to communities according to their needs. The Commission to Study School Funding has determined that the *sum total* of money that is currently spent on education in this state is sufficient to provide all of the children with adequate education, even factoring in expenses for special needs. Were we to adopt such a system, **no additional taxes would be required.**

For the rate of property taxation to be equal in all of New Hampshire’s communities, all would need to pay at the average rate. At the moment, 73% of NH towns pay at an above average rate, and just 27% pay at a lower-than-average rate. Obviously, the towns paying at a higher rate would need to pay less (like Hill – projected 20.7% lower), and towns that currently have a lower rate would see their taxes go up, just to be average. The current system has greatly benefited a minority of the towns in our state. We want **equality under the law.**

If taxes in Newbury and Portsmouth and Moultonboro rise to meet the state average, these towns won’t become “donors”; they’ll just become like all of the other towns. “Donor Town” is a misnomer. It is also a political tag line that makes it sound like raising their rate of property taxation is unfair, that they are being singled out. It is a tag that has been employed by the property rich communities and by their lobbyists to convince legislators to resist changing the system.

During a recent legislative meeting, it was heard that “The property rich towns have ‘little appetite for again becoming a donor town’” (reported on NHPR Exchange 2/19). Certainly, all of these years, those of us who live in small, less affluent towns haven’t had an appetite for higher taxes, either. **We just want equality under the law, as is guaranteed under the New Hampshire Constitution.**

Unfortunately, unless we (the 73% of NH communities that pay property taxes at a higher-than-average rate to support our schools), become “squeaky wheels”, the lobbyists and advocates for the wealthier 27% of NH communities will again carry the day, and we won’t see the equitable funding or equal tax burden that should be our due. **Equality under the law!**

Contact your friends in Hill and beyond (this is an issue for everyone in NH, not just in Hill). Share this issue of News Notes (and previous ones) with them to inform them of the issues facing us all. We need to build the numbers of people vocally supporting Fair Funding for our schools and equitable rates for the taxpayers if we want to be heard in Concord.

## **A Dilemma**

Your help is needed to resolve a dilemma. Members of the Hill Fair Funding Advocacy Group receive regular reports and alerts through the NH School Funding Fairness Project. Many times, on Fridays we are alerted to pertinent State legislative meetings scheduled for the following week. We must raise our voices about the issues being discussed. Unfortunately, this doesn't give us much time to get the word to you.

As we mentioned, we need to be "squeaky wheels". We don't want to inundate your emails with constant alerts, requesting you to sign on to endorse or oppose an upcoming bill.

So, we need your help. Please sign up for the New Hampshire Fair Funding newsletter ( their website is <https://fairfundingnh.org/>). You will get more timely information about how you can be most effective to advocate for change; how you can make a difference.

Do you want the Hill Advocacy Group to continue to alert you of legislative meetings with your chance to voice your opinion? Do you have another suggestion?

PLEASE let us know how we can help you to become a "squeaky wheel". We need to act together!

## **Questions Questions Questions**

What questions do you have about this whole process? How can we probe those questions together?