



NEW HAMPSHIRE SENATE

NEWS RELEASE

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Senate Education Committee Chair Ruth Ward Releases Statement on Claremont Amendment

Concord, NH — Senate Education Committee Chair Ruth Ward (R-Stoddard) issued the following statement after the committee’s adoption of an amendment to address Claremont’s financial crisis:

“When we first learned of the gross financial mismanagement that has put the Claremont School District in such peril, my top priority has been to ensure that all Claremont students would be able to finish the school year at the school of their choice. For most Claremont families, that means Stevens High School, Claremont Middle School, or their local elementary school.

The changes we adopted today create the opportunity for Claremont to access state Adequacy Funds early, helping to alleviate the district’s severe cash flow challenges, while ensuring accountability and without any risk to New Hampshire taxpayers.”

BACKGROUND- HB 292 as amended by the Senate Education Committee creates the School District Adequacy Revolving Loan Fund, which will allow school districts to borrow against their state Education Adequacy payments with approval from the State Treasurer, Commissioner of Education, and Joint Legislative Fiscal Committee. The amendment adopted today incorporates changes requested by Rep. Jim Kofalt to address concerns raised by House members.

HB 292:

- Applying school districts would need to make monthly reports to state executive and legislative branch officials.
- Applying school districts would be subject to Performance Audits and Financial Audits from the state Legislative Budget Assistant’s Office.
- Voters in applying school districts would have the chance to adopt Tax Caps under RSA 32:5 and separate SAU budgets under RSA 194 C:9.
- Students in applying school districts would be eligible to apply for the Education Freedom Account program without regard to that program’s enrollment cap.
- Prohibitions on gross financial mismanagement, misappropriation of public funds, and failure to account for public funds would be added to the state Education Code of Conduct, allowing the State Board of Education to suspend or revoke credentials for superintendents that mismanage public funds.

The Senate Education Committee recommended adoption of HB 292 as amended by a vote of 3-2. The Senate will take up the bill when it convenes on January 7, 2026.

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