



January 22, 2022

By Brian Hawkins, NEA-NH Government Relations Director

A week of “Teacher Loyalty” and Curriculum Related Bill Hearings

This week we saw a slate of legislation that sought to double down on the banned concepts law that has contributed toward chilling an honest and accurate education for our students and resulted in 2 federal lawsuits being filed against it, one of which NEA-NH is a plaintiff.

However, what we saw these last 2 weeks were educators and the public fighting back against these policies in a big way. People showed up to testify, educators took personal days to come to Concord, members signed and wrote into the committees that were hearing the proposed legislation. Thank you to all those who have been taking action in the way you can. Here are a couple of quick highlights:

HB 1255 – Teacher Loyalty Bill

This legislation takes a cold-war era law prohibiting the advocating of communism by teachers in schools and turns it into a bill that doubles down on the banned concepts law that NEA-NH is currently suing the state over. This legislation attempts to vaguely restrict the teaching of the history of slavery and racism in the United States and like the current law we are under, punishes teachers through the NH educator’s code of conduct. You can read the full text of the bill [here](#).

Educators showed up in force for this hearing with some incredible testimony that captured committee members and the public as to why this type of legislation does not belong in the classroom. In addition, there were **2,268 people who signed in opposition to this bill, and only 27 who signed in support**. The sponsors of the bill started backpedaling almost immediately from the start of the hearing and claiming (after defending it for the last 2 months) this was not the language they wanted. While we had a very positive hearing, we do expect the sponsors of this legislation to try and amend the bill to find some kind of language that they can pass so our battle with this legislation is not over yet.

ACTION REQUESTED: Write or call the members of the House Education Committee and tell them to reject this bill that has no place in our classrooms! You can go to our legislative action page on our website to find this bill and get connected to your legislator.

HB 1632 – Restrictions on how to teach the civil rights era bill

Like the “teacher loyalty” bill, HB 1632 is a bill which espouses how to teach the civil rights era, but in a veiled way is seeking a similar outcome to the loyalty bill. The bill attempts to legislate its interpretation of the civil rights era and how it should be taught alongside other atrocities that happened in the world. Our educators already teach American history, World History and other courses and don’t need the legislature to tell them how to do it. NEA-NH also testified in opposition to this bill. Read the bill for yourself [here](#).

ACTION REQUESTED: Write or call the members of the House Education Committee and tell them to reject this bill that has no place in our classrooms! You can go to our legislative action page on our website to find this bill and get connected to your legislator.

Curriculum Inspection/Objection bills Heard

This week NEA-NH also opposed the following legislation this week as well, related to curriculum objections and inspection under our education laws but also under New Hampshire’s right to know statute:

HB 1015, relative to school district policies regarding objectionable materials expands the 2 weeks’ notice for ANY curriculum course material being delivered. In addition, the legislation states that the student “shall be granted an agreed upon alternative to a portion of a course or program lesson that violates the student’s convictions.” You can read the full language of the bill [here](#), but can probably see just how broad the objection language is that these sponsors are proposing. We have seen similar types of language being shopped in other states.

This legislation would put a tremendous amount of additional work on educators by expanding the notice of the current law to ALL curriculum and add more requirements for agreed upon alternative course instruction.

HB 1434 would require that curriculum course materials taught to pupils in public schools and public academies be available to the public: “curriculum course materials lists shall be posted and readily accessible on the school administrative unit’s website. In addition, a physical copy of all such curriculum course materials shall be made available for public review at the location of the school administrative unit.” This is yet another bill in a line of legislation that would allow anyone into a school to view such documents, not just parents or guardians of the student attending the school. Many teachers and schools already post this kind of information, and from the hearing it was unclear from the sponsor how granular “curriculum course materials” meant.

HB 1147 and HB 1603 also looked to make specific items around curriculum, professional development, and other materials available under the right to know law. NEA-NH along with the NH School Boards and Municipal Association pointed out that much of the info these bills seek to uncover are probably already available under the right to know law and these are unnecessary.

School Voucher Rules Approval Postponed

This week the Legislature’s Rules Committee (JLCAR) chair told the New Hampshire Department to come back “after they have gotten their act together” on their proposed rules for school vouchers. Like their last attempt at rulemaking around the school voucher program, their rule writing was filled with flaws, omissions and other problems that left questions around student privacy concerns, the lack of provider background check guarantees, special education, and discrimination. NEA-NH raised several of these concerns as well as the lack of oversight and authority over this program during the State Board of Education Hearing, but the Department and State Board forged ahead. JLCAR did the right thing by not simply rubberstamping these rules given how many problems they contain. The committee will hear this again at their continued February meeting, though it is unclear whether the state board will need to go back and do a re-write first.

Next Week – More Hearings and Possible Committee Votes!

Next week we will have a number of hearings we will be monitoring, all of which you can see on our

legislative tracker. We also expect some committees including House Education to begin voting on some of the bills that have been heard over the last couple of weeks so if you haven't contacted these committees yet, now's the time!

Possible committee votes in House Education on HB 1255, 1632, HB 1313, and HB 1015

Just to name a few, but the 3 bills we will highlight here may be voted by the House Education Committee as soon as Tuesday among all the other that have been heard! As a reminder

HB 1255 – Teacher Loyalty Bill

HB 1632 – Restrictions on how to teach the civil rights era

HB 1313 – expanding the banned concepts legislation to public higher education institutions

HB 1015 – objectionable materials

Visit our Legislative Action Page to find these bills and how to write or call the House Education Committee!

Hearings on prohibiting masks in schools next week!

Next week another 17 bills will be heard in House Education committee having to do with Special Education, Charter Schools, the school voucher program, and COVID safety matters. We wanted to highlight a few hearings coming up on Thursday that fall into the 3rd bucket of priority bills we are concerned with, safety of staff and students in schools:

HB 1131, relative to facial covering policies for schools

This bill prohibits school boards and accredited nonpublic schools from adopting, enforcing, or implementing a policy that requires students or members of the public to wear a facial covering. The bill also enables any person who claims to be aggrieved by this proposed law to be able to initiate a civil action against a school, the district, or the local school board as well as other litigation. The bill also adds a violation of the law by a certified educator to the growing list of proposed violations of the code of conduct. This egregious bill that will make our schools less safe is being sponsored by Rep. Ken Weyler, the same representative who had to step down from chairing the House Finance Committee after making spreading wild claims about COVID-19 vaccinations.

ACTION REQUESTED: Please Sign-in, or write to the House Education Committee in **OPPOSITION** to this piece of legislation:

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/committees/remotetestimony/default.aspx>

Public Hearing: Top of Form

1/27/2022 at 10:30 a.m. **Location: Legislative Office Building, Rm 205-207, Time: 10:30 a.m.**

HB 1371, relative to school district policies on facial masks of students in schools

This bill would require each school district to adopt a written policy that would essentially prevent any universal masking policies to be adopted by a school. The language attempts to couch the bill, like others many of the same sponsors have put forward, as a bill preventing some sort of discrimination, but the effect of the bill is clear: it would prevent a district from adopting a universal masking

ACTION REQUESTED: Please Sign-in, or write to the House Education Committee in **OPPOSITION** to this piece of legislation:

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/committees/remotetestimony/default.aspx>

1/27/2022 at 11:15 a.m. **Location: Legislative Office Building, Rm 205-207, Time: 11:15 a.m.**

Dissolution of Cooperative School Districts – HB 1679

This bill would require cooperative school districts to review and adopt dissolution plans before January 1 of 2024 and then dissolve all cooperative districts by June 30, 2025. This legislation is being sponsored by the Vice-Chair of House Education, Glenn Cordelli, as well as the Chair of Senate Education, Ruth Ward. This obviously a very worrisome bill for the cooperative districts that have served their communities well, by forcing them to dissolve.

ACTION REQUESTED: Please Sign-in, or write to the House Education Committee in **OPPOSITION** to this piece of legislation:
<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/committees/remotetestimony/default.aspx>
1/27/2022 at 2:45 p.m. **Location: Legislative Office Building, Rm 205-207, Time: 2:45 p.m.**

Questions?

If you have questions on any of these bills or ones not mentioned here, please feel free to contact Brian Hawkins, NEA-NH Director of Government Relations at bhawkins@nhnea.org.
