Committed to Improving Student Achievement and Education Quality

Our students’ job is to learn, and our job is to make sure they can. Our democracy will flourish only when we ensure every school is fully funded, every child is treated with dignity, and every learner has the freedom to pursue their passion. We must pass laws and fund policies that push forward the arc of justice—laws that protect all children’s access to a great public education, regardless of age, background, need, or zip code.

This upcoming year will be a challenge because of the sheer volume of bills that have been filed having to do with education and the nature of the bills themselves.

NEA-New Hampshire has identified 3 legislative priorities for 2022:

Defeat legislation that expands school privatization and school voucher programs.

This includes legislation such as retained bill HB 607, establishing local school voucher accounts, and newly crafted HB 1298 which would expand the education tax credit program eligibility to up to 500% of the Federal Poverty Level. We also aim to use proactive legislation to highlight for the public the pitfalls of the recently passed voucher program by supporting an overall repeal of the program, to bills that aim to make the program more accountable to the taxpayers paying for these vouchers.

Defeat legislation that would further expand or fortify the recently passed banned concepts law.

This would include various types of curriculum restrictions and penalties seeking to be put into law, such as HB 1255, the “teacher loyalty” bill that would ban more accurate curriculum from being discussed about the nation’s founding in our schools. We will also seek to push legislation to talk about the importance of protecting students’ freedom to learn from the mistakes of our nation’s past rather than punish educators for teaching them (i.e. HB 1090, which protects an educator’s ability to teach accurate current and historical discrimination).

Defeat legislation that would make our members’ and their students’ less safe in schools.

There are dozens of bills in this category that range from mask requirements (HB 1131 which would prohibit a school from adopting mask requirements) to issues around vaccines. But there are also important efforts we can support to improve our public schools and their safety including:

- school infrastructure by improving building safety like air quality
- improving the school funding formula for communities who struggle to raise adequate funds locally,
- and improving student health through the expansion and improvement of school meal programs.
As a civilized society focused on the well-being of our children and their future, our priorities must result in:

BIAS-FREE SCHOOLS
Safe and affirming schools are a core element of student success. When students feel that they are not welcome, their ability to learn and thrive is diminished. We can create schools where every student can learn, regardless of their skin color, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or ability.

ADEQUATE FUNDING OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS
The only way to make sure all learners have the tools and schools they need to succeed is to properly fund every aspect of public education.

SUPPORT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
High-quality early childhood education is one of the best investments we can make. Comprehensive early childhood programs should be widely available and affordable for children from birth to age five—particularly for those from low-income families.

SCHOOL MODERNIZATION
Funds for improving school conditions are critical to providing an effective, equitable education for students. Far too much learning and teaching is happening in schools that pose health and safety risks to students and staff. Twenty-first century learning requires 21st century tools, classrooms, and schools.

ACCESS TO NUTRITION PROGRAMS
Throughout the pandemic, school support staffs continued to deliver meals to students across the state. Access to nutritious meals is key to ensuring the health and well-being of all students. Food is a need, not a want, and if we want kids to be able to concentrate and grow and be healthy and happy, we must see to it that they are fed.

CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY
As taxpayer-funded schools, charter schools must be held to the same safeguards and high standards of accountability, transparency, oversight and equity as public schools. NEA-NH is committed to advocating for measures ensuring that all charter schools operate in a high-quality manner that is equitable, accountable, and transparent.

OPPOSING VOUCHERS IN ALL ITS FORMS
Voucher programs rob students of educational equity and opportunities. Scarce funding for public schools should not be siphoned off to unaccountable private and religious schools. No matter how you look at it, vouchers undermine strong public education and student opportunity. They take scarce funding from public schools—which serve 90 percent of students—and give it to private schools—repositories that are not accountable to taxpayers.