

New Hampshire Public Schools 2025 Update

State Representative Dave Luneau, Hopkinton

PRESENTATION TO AMHERST DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE

JULY 16, 2025

Roadmap

Facts about public schools in
New Hampshire

Funding/Conval/Rand

EAs/Vouchers

Policies to watch

Facts

- ▶ New Hampshire public school student outcomes consistently ranked Top 5 of all states
- ▶ 2024 NAEP SCORES “The Nation’s Report Card”
 - ▶ Ranked #5 in grade 4 reading and math
 - ▶ Ranked #5 in grade 8 reading
 - ▶ Ranked #10 in grade 8 math

Facts

- ▶ Strong budgets
- ▶ Per student spending currently ranked 9th
- ▶ Public schools cost \$4B/year

U.S. School System Current Spending Per Pupil by Region: Fiscal Year 2023

Nationwide Average: \$16,526

MIDWEST



Average per pupil current spending: **\$16,220**

NORTHEAST



Average per pupil current spending: **\$25,330**

WEST



Average per pupil current spending: **\$16,630**

SOUTH



Average per pupil current spending: **\$13,344**

Note: Data include public pre-K through 12th grade systems.

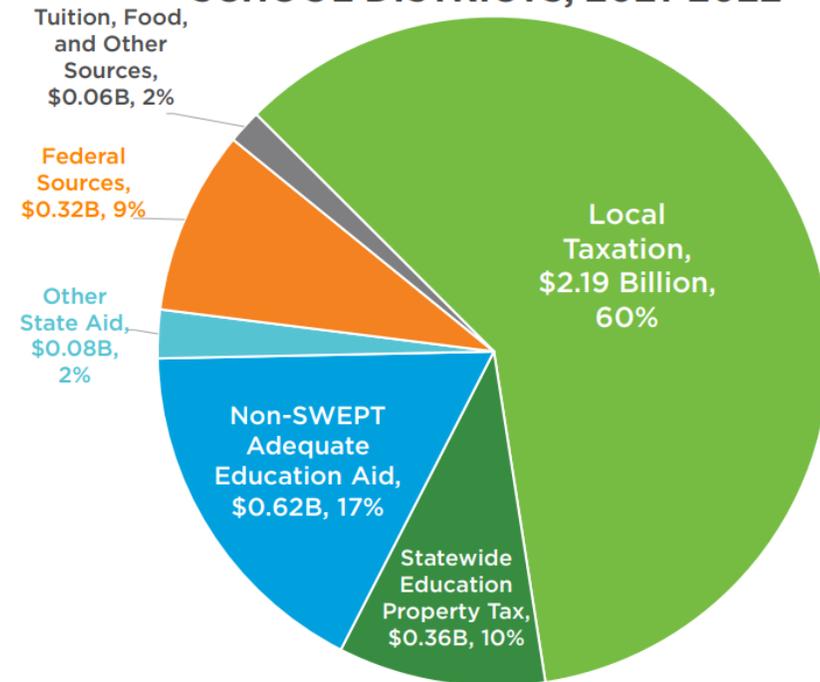
Facts

- ▶ Lowest state funding in the country

STATE FUNDING FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY PUBLIC EDUCATION AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL REVENUE TO THESE SCHOOLS, FISCAL YEAR 2022		
State or Nation	Percentage Funding for Local Public Education from State Sources	Estimated Rank Among 50 States
Vermont	87.4%	1
Hawaii	84.7%	2
Nevada	69.3%	3
Arkansas	67.0%	4
Kansas	65.2%	5
United States	44.0%	--
Florida	32.3%	46
Texas	31.0%	47
South Dakota	30.6%	48
Nebraska	30.0%	49
New Hampshire	29.4%	50

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 Annual Survey of School System Finances

TOTAL REVENUE TO NEW HAMPSHIRE SCHOOL DISTRICTS, 2021-2022

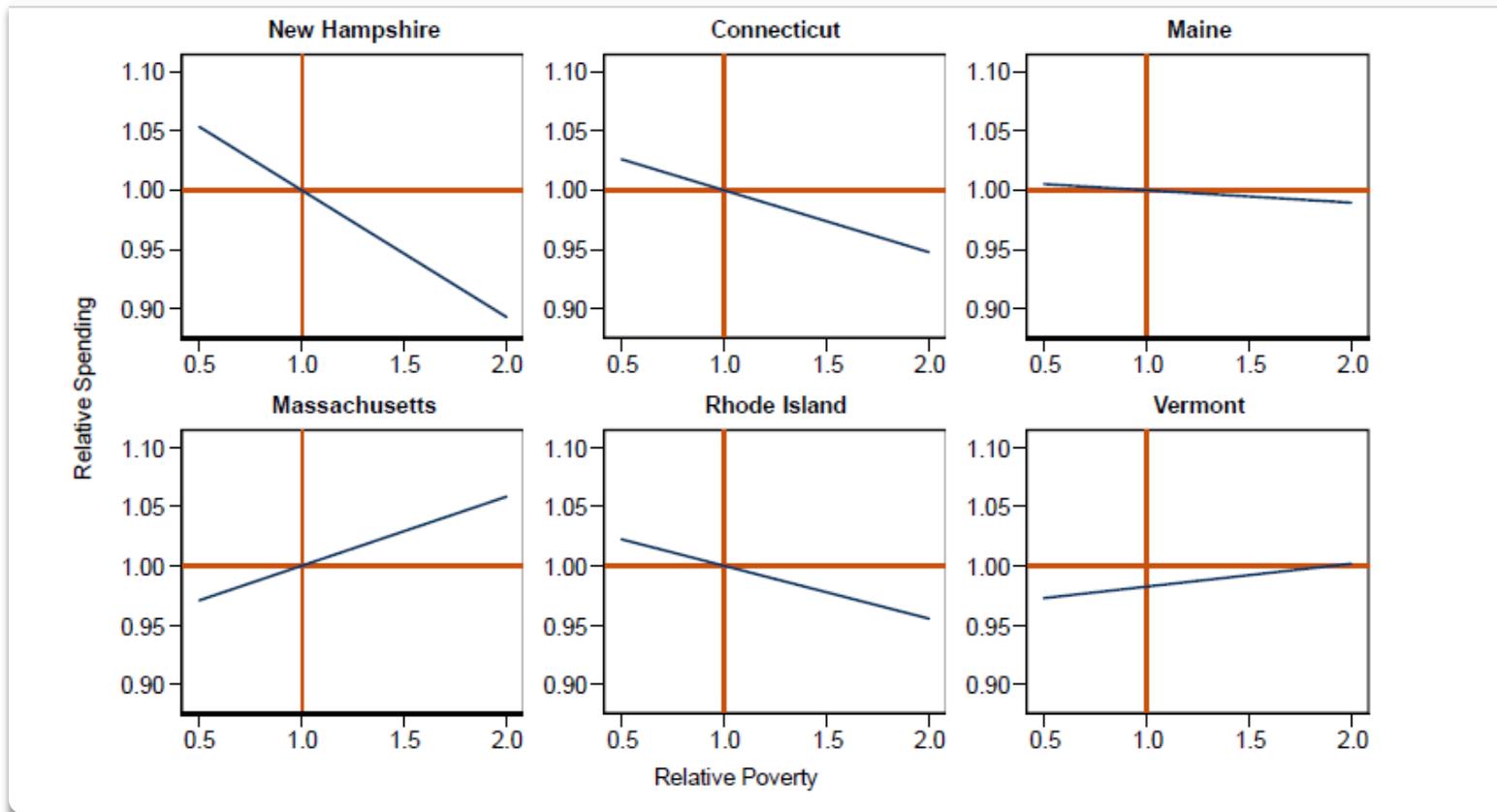


Source: New Hampshire Department of Education

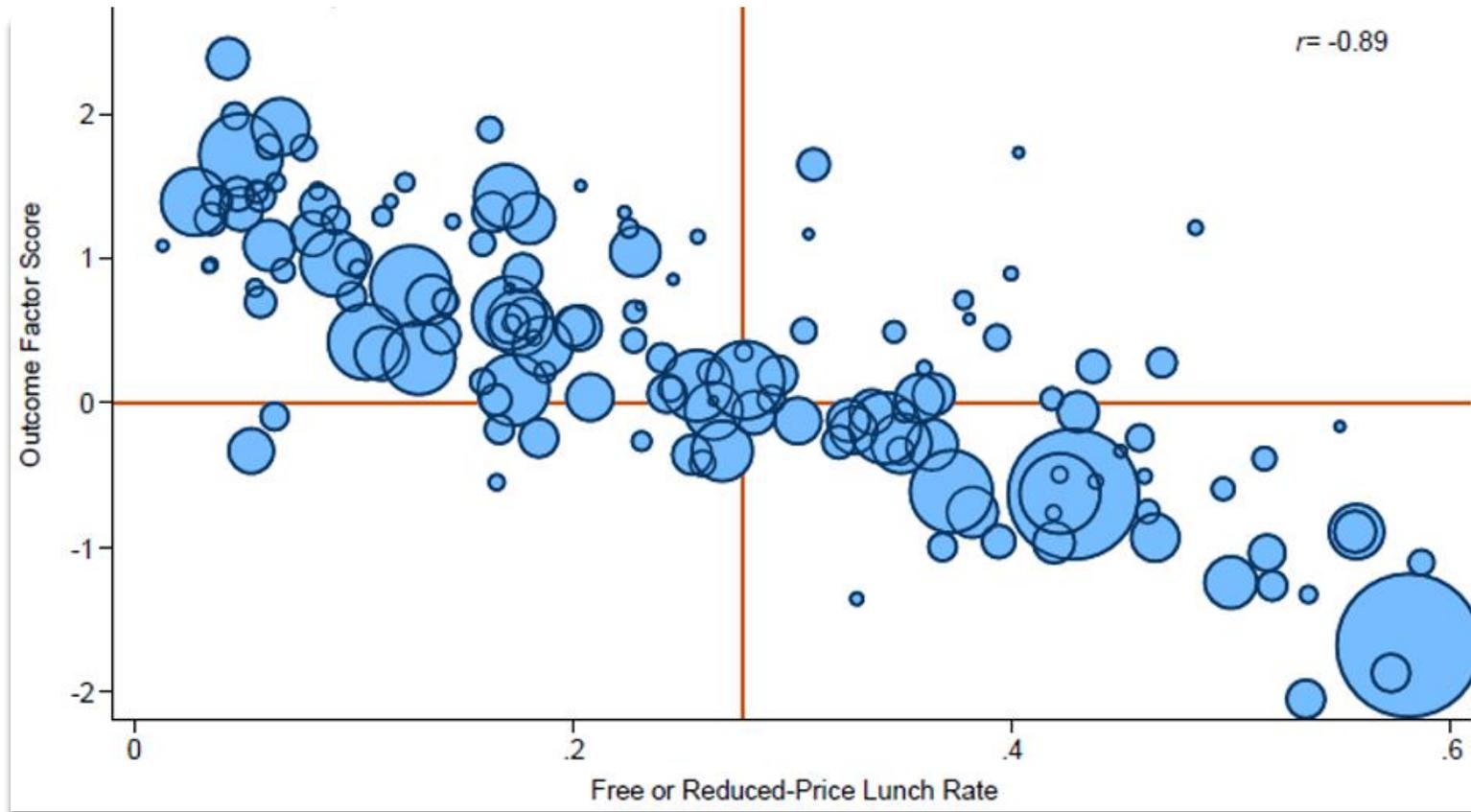
School Funding Commission Findings

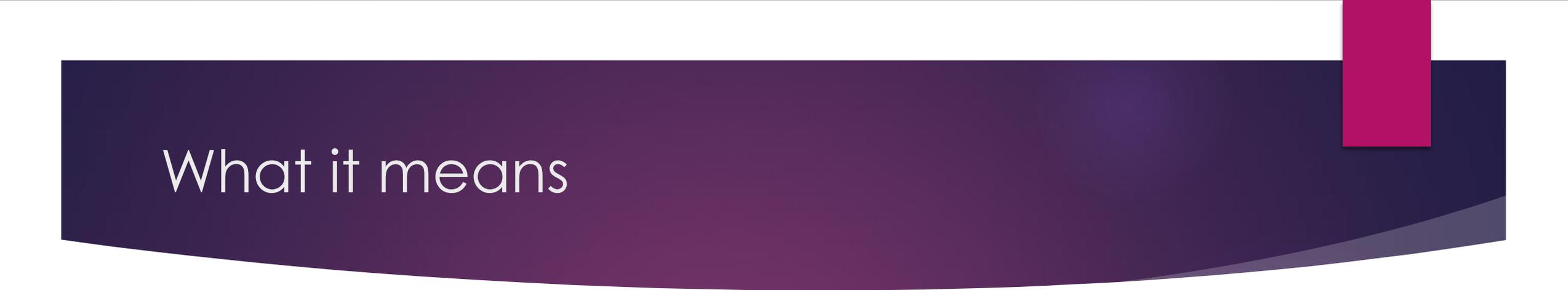
- ▶ Averages don't tell the whole story
- ▶ Student outcomes lower in districts with higher incidences of poverty, special education and ELL
- ▶ Districts with the greatest needs had under-funded budgets and higher property taxes
- ▶ The state should make sure every district has the financial resources they need

School district budgets



Student outcomes





What it means

The state's current system of funding public schools is unfair for students and taxpayers

Claremont “OG”

- ▶ CONVAL challenges the state’s cost
- ▶ RAND lawsuit challenges the constitutionality of the statewide education property tax (SWEPT) and current equitable grants
- ▶ NH Supreme Court affirms cost, sets minimum threshold, overturn injunction, puts it on the legislature to act
- ▶ Ayotte and elected Rs reject the decision and declare sole authority not subject to judicial review

Amendment to HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL

1 1 Legislative Declaration of Authority Regarding Public Education. In its 1993 and 1997
2 decisions, in the so-called *Claremont* series of public school funding cases, the New Hampshire
3 Supreme Court ruled that the New Hampshire Constitution imposes upon the legislature 4
4 obligations with respect to public K-12 education: (1) define an adequate education; (2) determine its
5 cost; (3) fund it with constitutional taxes; and (4) ensure its delivery through accountability.
6 Although the legislature has from the beginning had grave reservations as to the court's authority to
7 impose these obligations upon a coordinate branch of government, in the spirit of comity it has over
8 the subsequent quarter-century devoted extensive time, energy and public tax dollars to satisfying
9 them. However, in the most recent of these cases, the judicial branch has asserted authority to
10 review and set aside the legislature's determinations with respect to its 4 supposed obligations, and
11 to fund education at levels determined by the court through a process which, though adjudicatory in
12 form, is legislative in substance. Accordingly, the legislature now deems it necessary to definitively
13 proclaim that, as the sole branch of government constitutionally competent to establish state policy
14 and to raise and appropriate public funds to carry out such policy, the legislature shall make the
15 final determination of what the state's educational policies shall be and of the funding needed to
16 carry out such policies.

School funding reform and HB 772

- ▶ The time is now for comprehensive funding reform
- ▶ Start with student equity
- ▶ Taxpayer equity will follow

To put it another way, FIRST address school funding reform and then debate the tax issues!

EFAs (a/k/a school vouchers)

- ▶ Introduced in 2021-22 school year
- ▶ Promoted as a public assistance program
- ▶ Income eligibility < \$110K family of four
- ▶ Nearly all students were already in private/home education
- ▶ After four years
 - 5,800 students and \$30M for FY25
 - (So far \$75 million of taxpayer money from education trust fund)

EFA changes for next school year

- ▶ New for 2025-26 school year: No income cap (SB 295)
- ▶ Josiah Bartlett Center estimates \$35M/year
- ▶ Reaching Higher NH estimates \$100M/year
- ▶ HB 2 budgets about \$40M/year (but it's a blank check)
- ▶ Eligible students --- and a wildcard!
 - 16,000 private school students
 - 4,000 home school students
 - And 20,000 kids age 6-18 not currently in public/private/home

More Policy Changes

- ▶ HB 2 state budget for 2026-27
 - \$15M/year cut to USNH
 - Eliminates \$27M increase to public school funding
 - Low balls state cost for vouchers (budget busted!)
- ▶ HB 675 State imposed school budget caps
- ▶ HB 741 Open enrollment
- ▶ SB 100 Prohibition on teaching “banned concepts”
- ▶ HB 324 Book ban and HB 10 “Parents bill of rights”



Thank You and Questions



SCAN THE CODE TO DOWNLOAD THE SCHOOL
FUNDING COMMISSION REPORT

[CARSEY.UNH.EDU/SCHOOL-FUNDING](https://carsey.unh.edu/school-funding)