

Senate Education Committee

Trevor Currier 271-4151

SB 532, increasing the requirements of the education freedom savings account oversight committee and modifying the purpose of the committee.

Hearing Date: February 10, 2026

Time Opened: 9:22 a.m.

Time Closed: 9:46 a.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Ward, Sullivan, Abbas and Altschiller

Members of the Committee Absent : Senator Prentiss

Bill Analysis: This bill extends the purpose of the education freedom savings account oversight committee to include the review of student data, eligibility requirements, and EFA expenditures. The bill also requires the committee to meet at a minimum monthly and for such meetings to be live broadcasted as well as recorded on the general court website.

Sponsors:

Sen. Altschiller

Sen. Fenton

Sen. Perkins Kwoka

Rep. Balboni

Who supports the bill: 117 People signed in support of SB 532. To see the full list of sign-ins, please email the committee aide (trevor.currier@gc.nh.gov).

Who opposes the bill: 7 People signed in opposition of SB 532. To see the full list of sign-ins, please email the committee aide (trevor.currier@gc.nh.gov).

Who is neutral on the bill: 1 Person signed in neutrality of SB 532. To see the full list of sign-ins, please email the committee aide (trevor.currier@gc.nh.gov).

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Senator Debra Altschiller, *Senate District 24*

- Senator Altschiller introduced and testified in support of Senate Bill 532
- Sen. Altschiller explained that this bill increases the requirements for the Education Freedom Savings Account Oversight Committee and modifies the committee's purpose.

- She stated that the Children’s Scholarship Fund was chosen by the Department of Education at the inception of the Education Freedom Account Program (EFA) to administer the program and continues to do so today.
- She established that an oversight committee was established at the beginning of the program to monitor the implementation and recommend legislative improvements.
- She explained that the Education Freedom Account Program has grown considerably and requires more robust oversight.
- Sen. Altschiller explained that the Oversight Committee did not meet between December 2024 and November 2025. She indicated that this demonstrates how meetings are optional when their frequency is left to discretion.
- Sen. Altschiller stated that the bill clarifies that the committee will review student data, eligibility requirements, and EFA expenditures. She added that this does not expand the committee’s authority.
- Sen. Altschiller explained that she would welcome an amendment to clarify that the data under review is aggregate student data to eliminate concerns over student and family privacy.
- Sen. Altschiller stated that the bill required the oversight committee to convene once a month. She compared the duties of this committee to those of a school board that meets at least once a month.
- Sen. Altschiller stated that the bill required meetings to be livestreamed and recorded on the General Court website. Additionally, the bill required agendas, minutes, and reports to be posted on the Department of Education website. She added that this ensures the information is readily accessible to citizens.
- Sen. Altschiller stated that the transparency standards set for public schools should be matched by the Education Freedom Account Program.
- Sen. Altschiller explained that this committee was formed in acknowledgment of the significant public expenses that will demand accountability and transparency.

Representative Peggy Balboni

- Representative Balboni stated that she has introduced a similar bill in the New Hampshire House of Representatives.
- Rep. Balboni explained that the purpose of this legislation is to hold the Oversight Committee accountable and maintain transparency between their work and the public.
- She explained that Senate Bill 532 does not propose any changes to the operations of the committee but clarifies the role and establishes a regular meeting schedule.

- Representative Balboni stated that committee meeting rooms already have live stream capabilities.
- She stated she would be open to an amendment addressing privacy concerns.

David Trumble

- Mr. Trumble testified in support of Senate Bill 532.
- Mr. Trumble explained that Senate Bill 532 reinforced the Right to Know provision in Article 8 of the New Hampshire Constitution.
- He stated that the Oversight Committee is the only body of elected officials with oversight powers over the Education Freedom Account Program.
- He explained that this committee should be able to host frequent and live-streamed meetings.
- He compared the oversight powers of the oversight committee to those of a school board.
- He explained that this committee should examine issues such as the reasons for the discontinuation of participation, the aggregate standardized test scores over time for students in the program, and the adherence to Civil Rights law.
- Mr. Trumble stated that 28% of Education Freedom Account payments are allocated to administrative costs when including both the private school and the Children's Scholarship Fund.

Summary of testimony presented in opposition: None.

Neutral Information Presented:

Matt Sutherton, *Children Scholarship Fund*

- Mr. Sutherton stated that the Children Scholarship Fund (CSF) complies with all government transparency requirements and standards. He also mentioned that his organization receives oversight from the Department of Revenue and the Department of Education.
- Mr. Sutherton expressed concern regarding the privacy of participating students and families.
- He requested that the legislation include a definition of student data, eligibility requirements, and Education Freedom Account expenditures.
- Senator Sullivan inquired whether Education Freedom Accounts are subject to audits available on the CSF website. Mr. Sutherton clarified that the program is legally required to undergo an annual audit. He explained that the audit covers student accounts to verify eligibility and expenses.
- Senator Sullivan inquired whether the current disclosure of the Children's Scholarship Fund reveals more information than what other organizations typically disclose. Mr. Sutherton explained that the New Hampshire law includes checks and balances and guarantees that a non-profit organization would oversee the Education Freedom Account Program.

- Senator Altschiller clarified that the Children’s Scholarship Fund is not mentioned in the bill. Mr. Sutherton responded that he testified to address testimony that referenced his organization.

T.C.

Date Hearing Report completed: February 11, 2026