

Senate Education Committee

Trevor Currier 271-4151

HB 1267, prohibiting school district attorneys and non-school personnel from questioning students without their parent or guardian present.

Hearing Date: March 17, 2026

Time Opened: 10:44 a.m.

Time Closed: 10:54 a.m.

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

Members of the Committee Absent : Senator Abbas

Bill Analysis: This bill requires school boards to develop and adopt a policy to prevent the questioning of minor students by non-school employees and certain school employees without prior written permission of the parents or guardians, and such policy shall require that an adult student be asked if they want their parents or guardians notified before any such questioning.

Sponsors:

Rep. Sheehan

Rep. Corcoran

Rep. DeRoy

Rep. DeVito

Rep. Litchfield

Rep. McGrath

Rep. Pauer

Rep. Reinfurt

Rep. Tenczar

Who supports the bill:Representave Vanessa Sheehan, Representative Melissa Litchfield, Ann Marie Banfield, Abigail Mather, Joshua Custer, Eric Pauer, Pamela Harders, Aubrey Freedman, Timothy Finney, and Jamie Craig.

Who opposes the bill: Dawn McKinney (NH Legal Assistance), Karen Burnett-Kurie, Stephanie Osborne, Richard Osborne, Janet Lucas, Priscilla Dube, Sheila Donahue, Nancy Donahue, William Copeland Jr., Linda Barnes, Georgia Lambert, and Carol Lenahan.

Who is neutral on the bill: Jillian Godbout

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Representative Vanessa Sheehan, Milford

- Representative Sheehan introduced and testified in support of House Bill 1267.
- Representative Sheehan explained that she introduced the bill after students at Milford Middle School were asked to testify to a teacher's conduct. She added

that the parents of the students wanted to be notified beforehand, but they were neither notified nor present during the interviews.

- Rep. Sheehan said she knew that legislation is often not the best fix for a single issue. She added, however, that if this bill had already become law, the situation would never have happened.
- Rep. Sheehan stated that HB 1267 is needed to protect students.
- She added that there are certainly cases where parents should not be included, for example, in legitimate welfare cases that are considered in the bill.
- Senator Altschiller asked who would be responsible for drafting the sample policy needed to comply with this legislation. Rep. Sheehan responded that it would be up to each individual school district.
- Senator Altschiller mentioned that the department often is tasked with creating a sample best practices policy for districts to consider. She added that this might be relevant in this case, given the child welfare cases referenced in the bill's introduction. Rep. Sheehan responded that the child welfare issues are already covered in the legislation.
- Senator Prentiss asked if no notification is made, whether there is an actionable remedy if the school district fails to comply with the law. Rep. Sheehan stated that the issue would be submitted to the Department of Education as a complaint.
- Senator Sullivan asked if line 16 addressed Senator Prentiss's concern. Rep. Sheehan confirmed it does.
- Senator Prentiss asked whether there is a local complaint process that might be better suited to handle the issue. Representative Sheehan indicated he would be open to a change that would start the process at the local school board.

Ann Marie Banfield

- Ms. Banfield testified in support of House Bill 1267.
- Ms. Banfield explained that having parents in the rooms where questioning takes place would help the child stay calmer and be more willing to share important information.
- Ms. Banfield said that this bill is practical legislation and should be clearly defined in law to protect parental rights.

Summary of testimony presented in opposition: None.

Neutral Information Presented: None.