

Senate Education Committee

Trevor Currier 271-4151

HB 1836-FN, relative to the input-based accountability system requirements and enforcement.

Hearing Date: March 31, 2026

Time Opened: 10:52 a.m.

Time Closed: 11:39 a.m.

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

Members of the Committee Absent : Senator Sullivan

Bill Analysis: This bill requires the commissioner of the department of education to withhold grant funds from a public school or district until such time as the input-based school accountability system report is submitted to the department.

Sponsors:

Rep. Ladd

Rep. Popovici-Muller

Rep. Peebles

Rep. Kofalt

Sen. Ward

Sen. Innis

Sen. Murphy

Sen. Sullivan

Who supports the bill: Representative Rick Ladd (Grafton 5), Senator Dan Innis (District 7), Senator Ruth Ward (District 8), Representative Katy Peternel (Carroll 6), Cory Stone, and Eric Pauer.

Who opposes the bill: Timothy Horrigan (Strafford 10), Jerry Frew (NH School Administrators Association), Stephanie Osborne, Richard Osborne, William Copeland Jr., Joyce Weston, Rosemary D'Arcy, Brian Flynn, Julie Retelle, Tami Lanzillo Zeimetz, Steven Zeimetz, and Suzanna Derynioski.

Who is neutral on the bill: No one.

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Representative Rick Ladd, *Grafton 5*

- Representative Ladd introduced and testified in support of HB 1836-FN
- Representative Ladd stated that he assembled a packet referencing statistics and the purpose of the input-based school accountability system (IBAS).

- He referenced the 2024 IBAS report and expressed that there are two ways to hold schools accountable for providing an adequate education: the performance-based accountability system (PBAS) and IBAS.
- He stated that the IBAS is a narrative provided by the schools to the Department of Education (DOE), where schools report their efforts to provide an adequate education in thirteen specific areas.
- Representative Ladd explained that he filed HB 1836-FN because he realized his school district did not submit its IBAS report to the DOE.
- Representative Ladd explained that, via previous legislation, schools were not required to submit the IBAS if they had completed the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accreditation.
- He stated that he supported accreditation, but the IBAS report is now asking for more information than the NESAC report provided.
- He added that the IBAS form now includes a section on how well each school provides adequate education in the form's listed subject areas.
- Representative Ladd stated that the areas with the most partial or non-compliance are English and Language Arts, Health Education, Technology Education, and Engineering.
- Representative Ladd stated that twelve elementary schools and three middle schools did not submit the IBAS report, and the Department stated there currently is no enforcement mechanism to ensure districts are compliant.
- He explained that when he was asked why the NEASC report was an accepted substitute for the IBAS form, he was unable to give an answer and reasoned that this interaction between the two reports should not exist.
- Representative Ladd added that this NEASC repeal never made it into the LSR, which he mistakenly had overlooked.
- Representative Ladd explained that the bill originally only withheld grant funds, but the House amended it to include withholding all school funds, which he does not support. He said there is a precedent for withholding grant funds and referenced a situation involving emergency management plans.
- He stated that there needs to be a method to hold school districts accountable, and that the NEASC report should not be allowed to serve as a substitute for the other reports.
- Senator Abbas asked what would happen to the partially compliant districts after the passage of HB 1836-FN. Representative Ladd replied that we fully expect honest reporting, and with that, some districts will be partially compliant. He explained that by examining self-reported partially compliant districts, the DOE can identify schools that need targeted support to become fully compliant with the state's standards.

- Senator Abbas asked whether grant money would be withheld from partially compliant schools. Representative Ladd replied that partially compliant schools are not penalized; the bill only requires the submission of the IBAS report.
- Senator Altschiller noted that local schools are increasingly burdened by the state's report requirements. She asked whether, instead of seeking a "hammer" to penalize schools that fail to submit, it might be better to consider the support the state can offer to school districts. Representative Ladd agreed that there is over-regulation of schools but emphasized that these reports are essential and directly related to adequacy. He mentioned that a leadership change is expected but not an excuse for not submitting critical reports. Ladd also explained that part of the reporting problem stems from staffing shortages at the DOE, noting that about 75% of the department's staff are funded by federal dollars and are primarily involved with federal programs. He questioned why the state would require the submission of the IBAS form if it cannot enforce a timely response.
- Senator Altschiller asked whether it would be more appropriate to establish a support system and clearer procedures for districts struggling to deliver this important data to the department. She also inquired whether a hierarchy of crucial reports should be created due to the overwhelming volume. Representative Ladd explained that the IBAS report focuses on instruction and curriculum and emphasized that the DOE needs the proper amount of staff and high-quality superintendents. He added that several bills this session aim to create additional positions at the DOE to provide analytical support. Representative Ladd also pointed out that very few times has DOE staff visited schools to assess whether they meet academic standards, highlighting the need for accountability in education and curriculum, and therefore emphasized the need for high-quality district staff.
- Senator Altschiller expressed support for accountability but voiced concerns about the number of reporting requirements and asked which reports could be eliminated to ensure that the most important information is conveyed promptly. Representative Ladd mentioned that key stakeholders need to take part in the discussion. He highlighted that the accountability section of education law is the most crucial, including the IBAS and PBAS.
- Senator Prentiss asked if there has been a change in how the IBAS report is completed and filed. Representative Ladd responded that there has been a change, and the commissioner would be able to elaborate.
- Senator Prentiss asked if there have been situations where principals struggled to get guidance from the DOE on completing the report. Representative Ladd replied that he hasn't heard of this firsthand, but he can imagine it occurring. He added that sometimes principals are too busy with daily tasks to finish these reports during school hours and end up working during breaks. Representative Ladd

explained that the department can't do their job effectively if these IBAS reports aren't finished properly.

- Senator Prentiss stated that if principals and superintendents do not receive enough assistance and answers to their questions about the IBAS report, then the data will be unusable and meaningless, regardless of whether there is staff in the DOE or not. Rep. Ladd explained that the missing piece in this case is professional development at the local level. He said that principals should be experts in curriculum and instruction in their schools, be held accountable, and show consistency in reporting.
- Senator Prentiss asked how we can assist principals in completing the IBAS reports. Rep. Ladd replied that strong leadership is essential for quality education in schools. He explained that once schools are fully compliant with the IBAS, they can share their methods with other districts to promote best practices.
- Senator Prentiss asked how the legislature can provide technical assistance to the principals who are unclear on how to properly fill out the IBAS report.
- Senator Altschiller asked what year the data provided was collected. Representative Ladd responded that the data was from 2024 and that he is aware all schools were compliant in 2025.
- Senator Altschiller asked what the reporting date is for the IBAS form. Representative Ladd responded that the IBAS report must be submitted by January 15th.

Representative Katy Peternel, *Carroll 6*

- Representative Peternel clarified the language regarding Senator Altschiller's question about establishing a hierarchy. She stated that the "carrot and stick" method is only enshrined in RSA 198, which requires estimates of what school boards will need for funding.
- Representative Peternel viewed the legislation as an incentive to complete the reports in a timely manner.

Summary of testimony presented in opposition:

Jerry Frew, *New Hampshire School Administrators Association*

- Mr. Frew expressed his appreciation to Representative Ladd for including the NEASC option in the initial compliance requirements.
- Mr. Frew explained that, as a superintendent, he conducted some of the school visits mentioned by Representative Ladd.
- Mr. Frew stated that schools take the IBAS report seriously.
- He established that the IBAS reports are an effective tool for accountability and assessment.

- He found that ninety-six percent of schools completed the report on time. He also found that sixteen schools that did not submit the report in 2024 were under the same four school administrative units (SAUs). He stated that these SAUs were Fall Mountain, Claremont, Newport, and Farmington.
- Mr. Frew explained that all of those districts experienced significant leadership turnover that year, leading to situations where people may not be fully aware of all their obligations in the new district.
- Mr. Frew stated that in 2025, all schools submitted the IBAS report, showing there is no need for this bill.
- He questions whether it was legal to withhold adequacy funds for not filing a report.
- He explained that the IBAS report is important to the state and SAUs, and that schools that did not submit the report in 2024 required additional support from the DOE.
- Senator Altschiller asked whether the schools that missed the IBAS reporting deadline in 2024 completed their reports later. Mr. Frew responded that he is unsure but knows that all schools submitted the report in 2025.
- Senator Altschiller asked if Mr. Frew thought IBAS under-reporting was a chronic issue in New Hampshire. Mr. Frew responded that he does not see this as a critical issue.

Neutral Information Presented: None.

