

Senate Education Finance Committee

Karen Davis 271-7875

HB 366-FN-A, modifying the priority of applications for school building aid grants.

Hearing Date: February 12, 2026

Time Opened: 9:40 am

Time Closed: 9:50 am

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Murphy, Innis, Carson, Ward, Rosenwald and Altschiller

Members of the Committee Absent: None

Bill Analysis: This bill removes the prioritization of school construction project applications that received insufficient funds in the previous fiscal year and applications with critical needs over newer applications.

Sponsors:

Rep. Cahill

Rep. Cloutier

Rep. Edgar

Rep. Weinstein

Sen. Fenton

Sen. Perkins Kwoka

Sen. Long

Who supports the bill: Janet Robertson, Linda Burnap, Amy Erickson, Deborah Fexis, Barbara Langworthy, Cassandra Curtis, Debora Hatcher, James Chapman, Marilyn Monsein, Stephen Monsein, Susan Moore, Donna Tully, Mary Till, Ruth O'Neal, Beth Edwards, Eric Pauer, Debrah Howes (American Federation of Teachers - NH), James Moore and Lois Cote

Who opposes the bill: Karen Burnett-Kurie, Curtis Howland, Timothy Finney, Pamela Harders, Daniel Richardson

Who is neutral on the bill: None

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Representative Michael Cahill, Newmarket, NH – Prime Sponsor

- Rep. Cahill explained that this bill was retained by the House last year and then it was “gutted.” He said it has no similarity to his original bill, and he opposes the current version.
- He used the following example: a school on the building aid list for a while, and had not yet received the requested funding. Under the current version, that

school would still hold priority for building aid over a school with more urgent needs and more public support.

- With recent legislation, the method for paying school building aid has meant the state is funding less projects. The state used to pay “over the life of the bond,” instead of the current system of 80% up front, and 20% upon completion.
- He recommended that the \$50 million maximum becomes a \$60 million minimum, half of which would go towards funding new projects and half would be retroactive payments for projects already started. The moratorium is ongoing because there is “nothing in the second year” of the current budget.
- Rep. Cahill explained that school buildings do not always need repairs because they aren’t being properly maintained. Sometimes, issues such as a leaky roof or a furnace are beyond repair or out of date.
- Property taxpayers don’t always have the same access to their elected officials.
- He would consider creating a study committee to find ways that the state can fulfill its obligation to NH families for better schools. In his own district, Newmarket needs \$39 million to fix their two schools.

Q: Senator Rosenwald asked about a provision of the bill which strikes out the priority for schools with substantial deficiencies. Does that mean priority would no longer be given to schools with critical safety needs?

A: Rep. Cahill agreed with that interpretation.

KJD

Date Hearing Report completed: February 16, 2026