

# Senate Education Committee

*Trevor Currier 271-4151*

**HB 1828-FN**, requiring the department of education to establish an auditing process relative to teacher preparation programs at the post-secondary educational level.

**Hearing Date:** March 31, 2026

**Time Opened:** 10:35 a.m.

**Time Closed:** 10:51 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 department of education to review professional educator preparation programs to ensure effective literacy instruction is provided in institutions of higher education. The bill also authorizes the department to make rules relative to the auditing process of preparation programs.

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**Sponsors:**

Rep. Noble

Rep. Layon

Rep. Peternel

Rep. Freeman

Rep. Korzen

Rep. Litchfield

Rep. Colcombe

Sen. Ward

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**Who supports the bill:** Senator Ward (Senate District 8), Representative Kristin Noble (Hillsborough 2), Representative Katy Peternel (Carroll 6), Devin Babcock (Excel in Ein Action), Cory Stone, and Eric Pauer.

**Who opposes the bill:** Jill Arabas, Amy Erickson, Linda Burnap, Debra Merrick, Kathy Spielman, Debra Rodd, Daniel Rodd, Meredith Piotrow, Abigail Mather, Debora Hatcher, Barbara Zaenglein, Eric Zaenglein, Erin Kerwin, Janet Robertson, Susan Fanburg, Priscilla Dube, Ruth O'Neal, Cary Grant, Thomas Stewart, Deborah Fexis, Stevem Zeimetz, Tami Lanzillo Zeimetz, Cynthia Rodenhauser Stewart, and Lois Cote.

**Who is neutral on the bill:** Lauren Banker (University System of New Hampshire), Andrew Coppens (University of New Hampshire), Tim Lenihan (State Advocate for Special Education), Steve Appleby (New Hampshire Department of Education),

**Summary of testimony presented in support:**

**Representative Kristen Noble, Hillsborough 2**

- Representative Noble introduced and testified in support of House Bill 1828-FN.

- Representative Noble explained that this bill would direct the Department of Education (DOE) to develop and implement an audit process for post-secondary education teacher prep programs focused on literacy. She clarified that the audit would examine whether educators participate in coursework on evidence-based literacy instruction aligned with the science of reading and ensure that clinical training for reading educators is consistent with the science of reading.
- She mentioned that the audit results would be posted on the department's website.
- She said that the bill would support the ongoing effort to improve literacy in the state.
- Senator Altschiller asked if the bill is for college and if it applies to private colleges as well. Representative Noble responded that it is specific to college programs and believed that it also covered private colleges.
- Senator Altschiller asked about the motivation behind the legislation. Representative Noble responded that she inherited this bill from the previous committee chair, who is no longer serving in New Hampshire. She added that it attempts to address statewide literacy issues.

**Representative Katy Peternel, *Carroll 6***

- Representative Peternel explained that this bill is important because any educator at the early grade levels educates students on how to read as they build their foundation.
- She stated that previous legislation was passed to address issues at the district level regarding how to teach reading at the elementary levels.
- Representative Peternel stated that HB 1828-FN addresses a lack of evidence-based teaching for our perspective educators at the college level.

**Summary of testimony presented in opposition:** None.

**Neutral Information Presented:**

**Lauren Banker, *University System of New Hampshire* and Andrew Coppens, *University of New Hampshire***

- Ms. Banker explained that Amendment 2026-1294s sought to make a change so that the reporting requirements align with the other reports made by the university system for efficiency's sake.
- Mr. Coppens stated that the universities follow a review cycle where they re-evaluate their pathways every seven years and prepare an annual interim report. He highlighted that it would be helpful if the process aligned with existing procedures.

- Senator Altschiller asked for clarification regarding the annual reviews. Mr. Coppens explained that professional educator pathways (PEPS) are approved by the state and serve as the pathway for educators to obtain their credentials. He mentioned that this process is reviewed every seven years. He described an annual review process that reports on the progress of candidates. He believed that the process outlined in the bill could align with current practices.
- Senator Altschiller asked if the bill was written at someone's request. Mr. Coppens responded that there was no contact made regarding the legislation.

**Tim Lenihan, *New Hampshire State Advocate for Special Education***

- Mr. Lenihan stated that he had spoken to the previous prime sponsor of this bill regarding the lack of reading service providers in New Hampshire.
- He stated that eighteen to twenty percent of the requests to his office involve reading services.
- Mr. Lenihan explained that in some districts, they have to hire private contractors to meet the needs of their students. He added that this can be costly for districts.
- He stated that due to extenuating circumstances, like online learning during the pandemic, there has been an increase in early diagnosis for literacy issues.
- Mr. Lenihan stated that he did not propose this solution but only expressed concern about this statewide issue; however, he supports any legislation that would aid our students' literacy.
- Senator Altschiller asked if the concern is a lack of reading specialists, which is a master's level specialty. Mr. Lenihan responded that this is the case.
- Senator Altschiller asked whether this bill would address the specific concern regarding the number of qualified specialists needed for students. Mr. Lenihan replied that, in some cases, districts are making the best of what is available to them.
- Senator Altschiller asked for clarification on whether this bill solely applies to Bachelor level individuals. He replied that she is correct.

**Steve Appleby of the New Hampshire Department of Education**

- Mr. Appleby explained that the State Board approves the state's education preparation programs based on reviews conducted by the Council for Teacher Education on a seven-year cycle.
- Mr. Appleby stated that the legislation could be aligned with the current program review process.
- He explained that this bill would enhance consistency in the way reading instruction is provided throughout New Hampshire.

- He stated that in New Hampshire, there are eleven approved professional educator preparation programs, both public and private, and all of the institutions are governed by the state board of education.
- Mr. Appleby stated that all elementary educators must pass the foundations of reading exam, which tests their knowledge of how to teach reading and recognize early signs of reading disabilities.