



2/18/25

Dear Members of the House Education Policy and Administration Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the New Hampshire Association of School Principals (NHASP) to express our opposition to HB 709, a bill that would allow parents or guardians to enroll their children in any school district where they pay property or school district taxes, as well as to HB 741, a bill that would permit parents to send their children to any school district of their choice. We envision a future in which all school leaders, dedicated to the success of every student, leverage collaborative relationships—particularly with members of the legislature—to advocate for educational equity and opportunity. While the intention to provide parents with more choices is commendable, these proposals overlook critical issues that directly impact student achievement and equity within our education system.

Open enrollment may seem beneficial at first glance, but it does not address the systemic disparities in funding and resources that plague our public schools. It is important to note that the quality of education is not solely determined by the school a student attends; it is significantly influenced by the funding and resources available to that school.

The core issue we must confront is the funding of our public schools. Research consistently shows that schools in wealthier districts receive significantly more funding than those in less affluent areas. For example, a report from the Education Trust indicates that students in high-poverty districts receive about \$1,000 less per student than their peers in low-poverty districts. This disparity leads to unequal educational experiences and outcomes, undermining the very purpose of our education system.

Policies like these do not remedy these disparities; instead, they risk exacerbating them. By allowing open enrollment based on property taxes or free choice, we will likely see a further drain of resources from already underfunded schools. Students who remain in these schools, often from lower-income families, will suffer the consequences of reduced funding, larger class sizes, and fewer educational opportunities.

Additionally, open enrollment can create instability within communities. Schools thrive on consistent funding and enrollment numbers. When families choose to leave for other districts, it can lead to financial strain on the schools left behind, further diminishing the quality of education available to those students who have no choice but to remain.

In conclusion, I urge you to reconsider the implications of these proposed bills. Instead of focusing on open enrollment as a solution, we must prioritize equitable funding for all public schools. Ensuring that every student has access to robust and equitable systems for learning should be our primary goal. It is imperative that we address the root causes of educational inequity—namely, the disparities in funding and resources—rather than implement policies that may inadvertently deepen those divides.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. I hope you will join me in opposing such legislation and advocating for policies that genuinely support all students and families.

Respectfully submitted,

*Bridey Bellemare*

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Executive Director

NHASP