

To: House Education Policy and Administration Committee  
From: Amy Bottomley, Head of School, MicroSociety Academy  
Date: January 29, 2026

Greetings:

My name is Amy Bottomley, and I am the Head of School at MicroSociety Academy in Nashua, NH. I am here to testify in strong support of HB 1093, which ensures that charter schools are treated by municipalities in accordance with our legal status as public schools under NH RSA 194-B.

While NH RSA 194-B:3 states that charter schools have the same rights and privileges as other public schools, our experience shows that this is not consistently upheld at the local level. Because the law lacks explicit language, municipalities are able to interpret it in ways that favor their position, often resulting in the application of zoning and permitting requirements to charter schools.

The lack of clarity in the current law has resulted in direct expenses for our school. I will share our specific experience at MicroSociety Academy:

- **Permit Fees:** Over the past four years, MicroSociety Academy has undertaken three major construction projects: a modular addition, a site reconfiguration, and a full building renovation. Just before starting our first project, the City of Nashua reversed its original interpretation that we are a government entity, which resulted in our being charged permitting fees. Traditional district schools are typically exempt from these costs.
- **Property Taxes:** During the renovation project, although we owned the building, we paid more than \$50,000 in property taxes. We were not able to apply for tax-exempt status until the building was fully operational as a school.
- **Redundant Approvals:** We were required to appear before both the Zoning Board and the Planning Board, despite already being subject to state-level oversight from the State Fire Marshal and the Department of Education, in addition to complying with local building codes. This resulted in legal fees as we needed representation at these meetings.

For our site reconfiguration, being required to go through the full approval process necessitated several modifications to our site plan, all at the school's expense, in order to obtain project approval:

- A traffic study
- Relocation of our entrance, including moving a fire hydrant and a telephone pole
- Relining and repainting the main road with reflective-grade paint

These requirements resulted in more than \$100,000 in unexpected costs.

HB 1093 provides the legislative authority needed to ensure fair and consistent treatment by:

1. **Amending RSA 155-A:2:** Formally recognizing facilities owned or occupied by charter schools as "public school buildings."

2. **Providing Equal Construction Assistance:** Guaranteeing that charter school facilities have the same access to building code exemptions and construction grants as district schools.
3. **Ensuring Consistent Local Application:** Recognizing charter schools as public school buildings under state code would prevent municipalities from imposing unnecessary and expensive zoning approvals.

Every dollar spent on property taxes, permit fees, or unnecessary upgrades to accommodate city “preferences” is a dollar diverted from our classrooms and essential school operations. HB 1093 ensures that the “rights and privileges” promised to charter schools under RSA 194-B are finally upheld.

I highly urge the committee to recommend **Ought to Pass** on **HB 1093**.

Thank you for your consideration.