

February 23, 2026

Dear Chair Noble and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to offer my opposition to HB 1804-FN.

My name is Matt Pappas and I serve as Chair of the Rochester School Board and as President of the New Hampshire School Boards Association. I am writing today based on my experience in local and statewide school governance.

While this bill is presented as a reform to strengthen local control and accountability in New Hampshire schools, it would fundamentally destabilize the professional governance structure that has served our students and communities for decades.

First, converting chief school administrators from appointed to elected positions risks politicizing what is, at its core, a professional educational leadership role. Running a school district requires specialized training and experience in curriculum, finance, special education law, personnel management, and state and federal compliance. Turning that role into an elected position invites partisan influence, fundraising pressures, and short-term political thinking into decisions that should remain focused on students.

Second, shifting expanded curriculum and financial authority directly to school boards blurs the lines of responsibility between boards and administrators. School boards are meant to set policy. Administrators are trained to carry out those policies within complex legal and educational frameworks. Changing those roles could create confusion, inefficiency, and conflict instead of greater accountability.

The bill also adds new requirements related to background checks and reporting. While student safety and transparency are essential, these responsibilities are already addressed under current law and professional standards. Combining these changes with a major restructuring of governance increases administrative workload without clear evidence that it will improve outcomes. In addition, electing chief administrators while having county conventions set their pay creates a split system of accountability that would lead to inconsistency and confusion across districts.

Our students deserve stability, qualified leadership, and governance structures that prioritize educational expertise over electoral politics. If our goal is stronger accountability

and safety, we should pursue focused improvements, not a sweeping restructuring that could create more problems than it solves.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to recommend HB 1804-FN as Inexpedient to Legislate.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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