

March 13, 2026 - Dover School Board testimony on SB 659 and HB 1815

Members of the Senate Education Finance Committee:

My name is Micaela Demeter and I am a third term member of the Dover School Board. I am testifying today on behalf of the entire board.

The Dover School Board opposes both SB 659 and its companion bill, HB 1815. The proposed language would have far-reaching impacts in our state and risk weakening our public school system and the state funding that supports it.

Nearly 30,000 people signed in against HB 283 last year, which attempted to gut the definition of an adequate education, underscoring the reality that NH residents do not want legislators weakening academic standards. The bills before you today attempt something similar in new, troubling ways.

RSA 193-E specifies the state establishes minimum standards and academic standards and funds them, while local school districts implement curriculum and instruction. This bill removes that distinction by stating these two entities are “indivisible” from each other for the purposes of providing an adequate education.

Our Board is concerned this opens the door wide for two problematic outcomes:

- 1) This language absolves the state of its responsibility to solely fund an adequate education by redefining funding as a joint responsibility between the state and local municipalities. Under this new language, what would stop the state from reducing or nearly eliminating its share of education funding? Without clear written definitions of responsibility, verbal assurances from legislators are unenforceable.
- 2) This language blurs the line of authority for implementation of curriculum, which our local districts currently retain. If this bill passes as written, what would prevent the state from implementing a state-wide curriculum on all districts? The Dover School Board rejects any attempts to remove our local authority over curriculum decisions.

In the face of a court decision that states this legislature is failing to adequately fund public schools, why respond by rewriting and reducing the state’s responsibility rather than doing the work to fund education properly?

For these reasons, the **Dover School Board urges you to ITL SB 659 and HB 1815** so the legislature can focus on fixing our broken education funding system, not weakening it further.