



CITY OF FRANKLIN, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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December 5, 2018

To: His Excellency Governor Chris Sununu, Honorable NH State Senators, and Honorable NH State Representatives.

On behalf of the City of Franklin and School Administrative Unit 18, we respectfully request that you make "public education funding" a priority in the upcoming State budget season.

As community leaders, working adults, and business owners we know you all understand the essential role public education fulfills in providing our students with the necessary skills to compete in a global economy. We are sure you all agree that a well-educated workforce is critical to our local and state economic vitality and future prosperity.

In addition, strong, supported, well-funded, public school systems can attract businesses, skilled workers, and families who consider moving to New Hampshire from other areas of the country. Additionally, well-funded and equitable public-school settings consistently create communities that are vibrant and contribute to the greater economy of our cities, state, and country.

The City of Franklin is struggling with three areas of the adequacy grant formula: base adequate education funding, disparity/stabilization aid, and the measurement date for determining Average Daily Membership (ADM).

Base Adequacy Funding: the state provides base adequacy funding for most students at \$3,636 per year. In addition, approximately \$1,750 is added for special education students, and \$750 is provided for students who qualify for free/reduced lunch. This State funding averages to about \$4,500 per student statewide while the average cost of educating a child in New Hampshire is \$15,000 per year. It is abundantly obvious that state funding levels for a basic education need to be increased.

Disparity/Stabilization Aid: in FY2012, the State legislature changed the adequacy funding formula to eliminate "disparity" funding relating to the most property poor communities in New Hampshire and replaced the disparity funding with a stabilization grant to keep a community's adequacy funding allotment whole from the previous fiscal year. To help level the educational playing field, the lowest valued communities received the largest stabilization grants. Franklin's stabilization grant was just over \$4,000,000 or just under 50% of the previous year's adequacy allotment. Subsequently, in FY2017 the legislature voted to reduce stabilization grants by 4% each year until the grants are eliminated. Ironically

the property poorest communities are getting the greatest reductions per year. At a time when decreasing enrollment is substantially reducing our adequacy grants, Franklin must also absorb an additional \$162,000 per year of burden due to the 4% reduction in stabilization aid. Simply stated, Franklin residents having to shoulder the burden of replacing both adequacy and stabilization aid reductions is unsustainable.

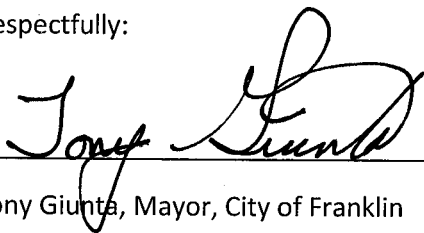
Average Daily Membership Date: the ADM date upon which the final adequacy grant numbers for the upcoming fiscal year is based is so late that final adequacy grant numbers often dramatically change after the school district's budget has been adopted, the school year has begun, and staffing and programs are already in place. Over the past three fiscal years, The Franklin school district has had to absorb \$177,000 in FY19, \$87,000 in FY18, and \$105,000 in FY17 of state funding decreases imposed after the school year had begun.

Governor, Senators, Representatives, we need you to move education funding to the front burner now and consider education funding first when developing the State's next biennium budget. We are asking the State to be a full partner and pay its fair and legal share. We are asking you as our state leaders to address this inequity and to bring fairness to the funding model by:

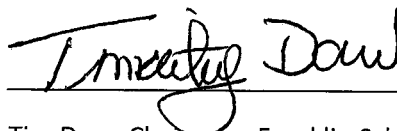
- 1) Providing for a fair sharing of costs between the state and local school districts
- 2) Reinstating cuts made over the last five years.
- 3) Providing for a substantially increased investment per student in our public schools
- 4) Reinstating disparity/stabilization funding for the most property poor communities in the state
- 5) Creating a formula that uses an ADM measurement date such that adequacy allotments are known before the adoption of the budget and do not change mid-year after school has begun.

New Hampshire succeeds when our children succeed. We must act now and act together to strengthen our public education system and bring fairness to New Hampshire's education funding structure. We thank you for your consideration and partnership.

Respectfully:



Tony Giunta, Mayor, City of Franklin



Tim Dow, Chairman, Franklin School Board