



Creating Choice in Education and Planning Effectively for Taxes through HB 349

Bridgewater
Hebron
Groton

Our Responsibility

It's not Children OR Taxes, its about Taxes FOR Children

As a community we need to:

1. Protect our citizens from sudden unreasonable tax increases while -
2. Providing our children with the best education possible and -
3. Making sure taxes advance education not subsidizing other towns

Our Mission with Education and Taxes

- Create expanded educational options and choice for families
- Preserve the BHVS and its outstanding culture
- A focus on improving academic performance at Middle and High School levels through improved reading, math and science skills.
- Provide more immediate input for citizens through a smaller district
- Keep our resources directed toward education not subsidizing other towns

The Tax Issue –what is it?

- Currently, the cost sharing for education is ADM (Average Daily Membership)- it means we pay for what is used.
- We have 7% of the students. We support 7% of the education cost. (80 Bridgewater students in SAU4 out of 1150)
- The system proposed last year is called Equalized Valuation and is based on the total value of a town's property adjusted to 100%.
- It would greatly increase Bridgewater, Hebron and Groton taxes and lower taxes in Alexandria, Bristol, Danbury and New Hampton in the school district – **NONE** of our tax increase would go to the school **OR** the children.
- The proposal was NOT defeated, only delayed – it could be introduced any time in the future.

The Tax Issue –what it might look like

Total Tax Contribution by Town 100% ADM vs. Valuation											
Town	Student Enrollment	% of Students	School Funding -Town Assessment				Per Student Cost		School Tax rate		Overall Increase/Decrease
			Current	Current %	Proposed	Proposed %	Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed	
Alexandria	230	19%	\$ 4,293,026	19%	\$ 2,180,505	10%	\$ 18,665	\$ 9,480	14.33	\$ 7.28	-49%
Bridgwater	88	7%	\$ 1,634,703	7%	\$ 4,634,281	21%	\$ 18,576	\$ 52,662	2.57	\$ 7.28	183%
Bristol	367	31%	\$ 6,845,458	31%	\$ 5,739,514	26%	\$ 18,652	\$ 15,639	8.68	\$ 7.28	-16%
Danbury	144	12%	\$ 2,698,032	12%	\$ 1,277,909	6%	\$ 18,736	\$ 8,874	15.37	\$ 7.28	-53%
Groton	47	4%	\$ 884,637	4%	\$ 1,510,106	7%	\$ 18,822	\$ 32,130	4.26	\$ 7.28	71%
Hebron	51	4%	\$ 961,849	4%	\$ 3,026,857	14%	\$ 18,860	\$ 59,350	2.31	\$ 7.28	215%
New Hampton	254	22%	\$ 4,745,272	22%	\$ 3,691,588	17%	\$ 18,682	\$ 14,534	9.36	\$ 7.28	-22%
TOTALS	1181	100%	\$ 22,062,977	100%	\$ 22,060,760	100%	-	-	-	-	

Analysis based on final Article 5 committee proposal data (2021-22)

The Tax Issue –what would it do?

- Bridgewater's school tax would increase 183%
- The three smallest towns with only 15% of the students would pay 42% of the town's portion of the budget each year.
- We (3 towns) would be responsible for 42% of any new building projects voted on by all seven towns.
- To withdraw from the school district, all seven towns would vote to allow us to withdraw. We would be easily outvoted given the existing population statistics. HB 349 gives us a "pull out" window without the other towns voting on the withdrawal petition. **It is a one-time opportunity**. If you don't approve this in March, HB 349 will sunset.

The Tax Issue –your new town tax bill

"What If" Implications if Apportionment between Towns are modified to Valuation vs ADM

Tax	2022	2024 (If HB 349 Fails)
Municipal	2.90	2.90
County	1.79	1.79
Local Education	2.31	10.09
State Education (SWEPT)	1.26	1.26
Total	8.26	16.04
Village District	0.23	0.23
Total Tax Rate	8.49	16.27

Local tax based on final Article 5 committee dollar increase proposal data (2021-22)
Does not reflect any proposed bond issues

- Our overall tax bill would increase by **92%**
- We would also be responsible for **21%** of any new school construction if a bond issue were passed

Improving Education – our own SAU

- Preserve the BHVS and its outstanding culture – our elementary school would be independent from SAU 4– it could never be consolidated (this was a consideration with SAU 4), or grades reduced. Greater local control with a separate school board.
- A renewed focus on improving academic performance for grades 6 – 8. Numerous studies show improved performance for K-8 schools over traditional middle schools.
- Create expanded educational opportunities for parents and students by offering school choice with multiple high school options.
- Provide more immediate input for citizens through a smaller district

Our Vision – BHVS

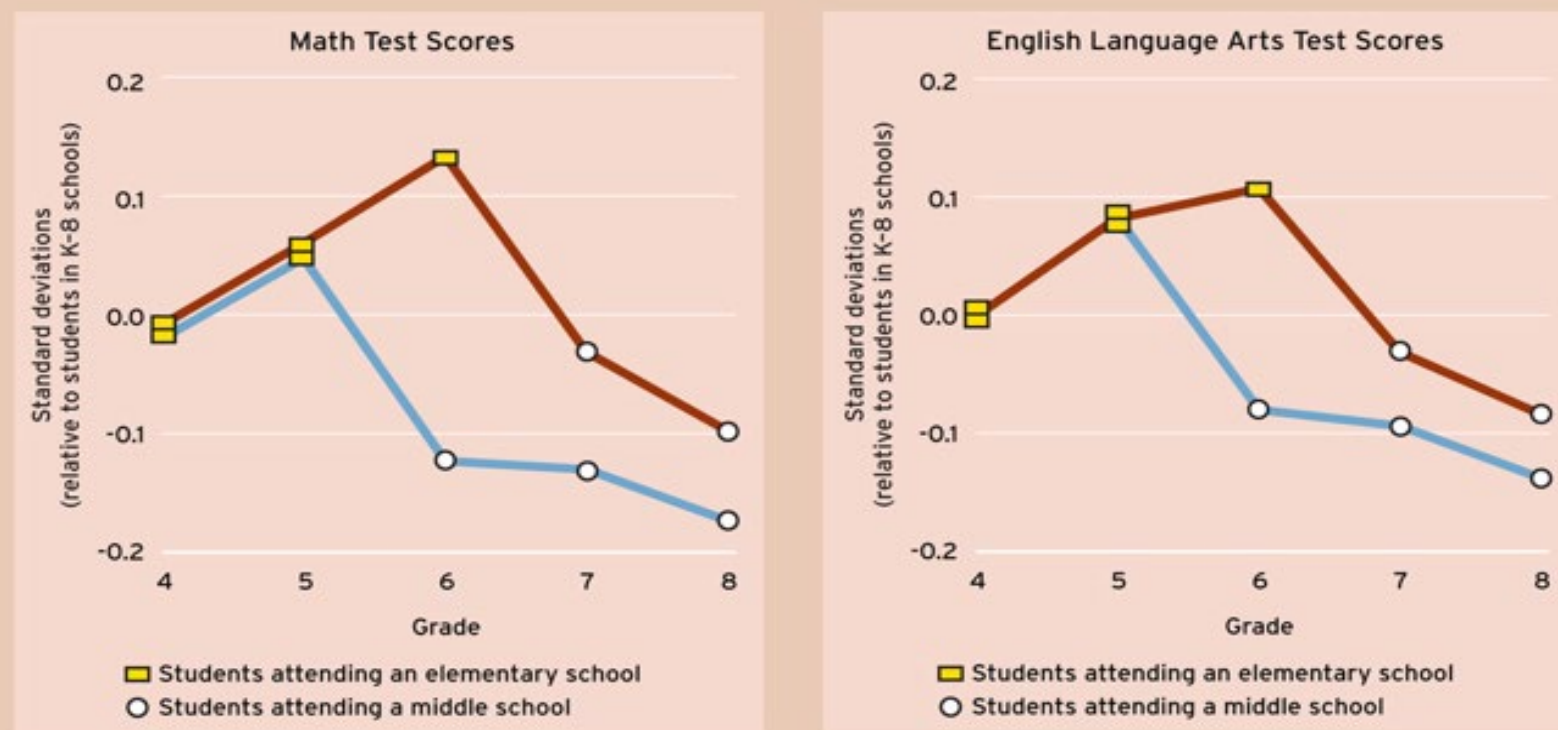
Continuing and expanding excellent tradition through 8th grade

- Ranked #24 New Hampshire Elementary Schools – US News and World Report
- Top 30% of New Hampshire Schools – Public School Review
- 22nd of 233 New Hampshire Elementary Schools – SchoolDigger
- Top 25% performance NH schools –NH Department of Education Report Card

Our Vision – Improved Middle School Scores

Losing Ground (Figure 1)

After they enter middle schools, students have lower test scores than students continuing in K-8 schools.



SOURCE: Authors' calculations

Our Vision – High School

Offering Students & Parents Options:

- Enroll at Newfound, Interlakes or Plymouth.
- Providing children the best educational choices

High School	ELA	Math	Science	Enrollment	Incidence of Violence	Per Capita Incidence of Violence	Cost Per Student
Newfound	53	32	38	387	23	0.059	\$ 20,777
Interlakes	63	57	43	293	9	0.031	\$ 23,312
Plymouth	63	44	38	688	18	0.026	\$ 23,826
Franklin	36	10	23	1182	44	0.037	\$ 16,251

Transitioning – “don’t hurt the kids”

Educational continuity and parental choice is a foremost concern

Protection through a “Tailing” and “opt in” agreement with SAU 4.

- If your child is in or entering the SAU 4 Middle School, you can continue through High School in the SAU 4 system. **Your choice.**
- If your child is at NRHS you can graduate from there.
- We are working with SAU 4 for a streamlined “opt-in” – if you believe SAU 4 is the right choice for your child – we support you.

Building our SAU – “so where’s the plan?”

HB 349 was signed by the Governor at the end of August, so we couldn’t start until then.

In less than 2 Months we have:

- Created a draft charter agreement between the 3 towns.
- Provided SAU 4 with both a template “tailing” contract & service request.
- Contacted bus, curriculum and cafeteria companies.
- Created a draft tuition agreement.
- Contacted several alternate school systems.
- Have had multiple meetings with the DOE on superintendent service alternatives.

Building our SAU – “so where’s the plan?”

Some of our progress depends on responses from other entities and organizations, we have been diligently setting deadlines and gathering information.

Other potential partners might need up to 30 days to respond to us – every week we have more answers and forward motion. We are using the town website to make information available to residents and continue to have update meetings – we want you to be informed.

If you think about a jigsaw puzzle – we have the puzzle framed, we need some time and patience from our citizens to fill in the puzzle.

Building our SAU – “is this going to cost more?”

Are taxes going to increase? Perhaps a little. Withdrawal puts controls back to our local communities of Bridgewater, Hebron and Groton.

- We are already paying for some services like busing but there may be items like food services where we lose some scale and end up paying more per unit.
- On the other hand, we may end up with less administrative overhead.
- There are also some expenses up front that may end up providing a long-term benefit like a two-classroom addition to the school. This would be a short-term expense with far reaching returns.
- So, while we might have a small increase, that directly benefits us, **it will be far less** than the expense of remaining in SAU 4 where our “dues” would only subsidize other towns.

Building our SAU – Questions we've heard

Q. Why are no parents on the committee?

- A. A selectman from each town was required; we then added a representative from each town-we were fortunate. The SAU 4 budget committee member from each town accepted. The initial part of the planning will be financial – who better than school budget members.
- B. We are appointing a parent representative as we recently agreed that we should have one on the committee. An invitation has been extended and we are waiting on a response.

Q. What about sports and clubs?

- A. The High School tuition agreements include sports and activities. For Middle School agreements offer several options which are being reviewed, These include tuition options and cooperative arrangements with other schools in the area. This is an important component of modern education.

Building our SAU – Questions we've heard

Q. Do we need a superintendent?

A. No. By law we only need to complete “superintendent services” which consist of 17 requirements. Many of those requirements have been addressed (e.g., Transportation). Districts have multiple models in addressing this requirement – we are exploring several options.

Response. **We favor strong, competent educational leadership in the new school district for the children and families.**

Q. We are leaving SAU 4, why are we negotiating with them?

A. We have a long history and many community ties with the other towns in SAU 4. It makes sense to remain open to preserving a relationship if it is mutually beneficial.

Building our SAU – Questions we've heard

Q. Why did we go to the legislature instead of a traditional withdrawal?

- A. We would never have been able to withdraw. The other towns were aware of the tax benefit for them with a formula change. The traditional method of leaving requires **ALL** the towns vote to let us leave. We would simply have been outvoted and forced to pay substantial increased taxes – forever!!.
- B. In addition, the re-configuration of our school was underway without our consent or knowledge.

Q. Why was this done in secret?

- A. It wasn't. The initial group drafting the legislation was a small group of concerned citizens, that came together after the Article 5 committee report was released. Once the legislation was filed in December, it became public and was posted on NH state sites. Over 400 people logged onto the Senate site to support it – if it was secret, it was certainly a badly kept one.
- B. The previous SAU 4 Superintendent cancelled two December meetings where we were trying to inform him of the legislation in advance. Furthermore, the administration belongs to numerous State association's that track legislative activities.

Building our SAU – Questions we've heard

Q. How come you didn't answer questions at the SAU listening session?

A. We went to listen and understand concerns not to debate them – we announced that at the start of the meeting.

Q. Running a school district is complex, can we do it?

A. The NH Education Commissioner and his staff supports us and our approach. We will draw on a list of educational consultants to move forward to help and address state licensure requirements and other issues. It might be challenging but is very doable.

Why you should vote in favor of exiting SAU 4

- 1. It prevents a 92% increase to your tax bill.**
- 2. We would not be responsible for 21% of new SAU 4 construction.**
- 3. It protects the BHVS from being closed or modified without our consent.**
- 4. It gives us the opportunity to improve grades 6-8 education.**
- 5. It gives us more and better potential High School options.**
- 6. It's a one-time opportunity; if we vote "no" we lose the opportunity and can no longer protect taxpayers.**
- 7. We have negotiated for and protected families who want to stay with SAU 4.**