

**EDUCATION.** *Adopted by the board Jan. 18, 2018. (note that this position was reached thru study and consensus process in 2017-18. It will encompass other areas after phase two of the study and consensus process is completed, by summer 2018 we hope.)*

The League of Women Voters New Hampshire (LWVNH) believes that the responsibility to provide an equitable, quality public education for all children grades K through 12 is shared by the federal, state, and local governments, as expressed in the US and NH constitutions. A quality public education is essential for a strong, viable, and sustainable democratic society and is a civil right.

LWVNH believes a basic role of the state government in funding education should be to achieve equity among municipalities and school districts. This should be done with full understanding that equity does not mean equal, given that some sub-groups of students are more expensive to educate than others and that localities have specific needs.

LWVNH believes that the voters in each school district have the right and the power to choose to offer more educational opportunities beyond those that the state funds and determines to be an “adequate” education, and to raise funding locally, even if this creates greater disparities among school districts.

LWVNH believes that the disparity between actual per pupil costs in school districts and the amount the state contributes to school districts requires funding beyond current state property taxes. In determining our support for additional state revenue streams, LWVNH believes that revenue sources should be assessed in terms of their impact on the ability to pay, the stability and sustainability of the revenue stream, and whether the revenue stream results in regressive taxation or harmful social impact.

LWVNH believes that parents who choose not to use the public schools do so of their own volition and that public funds should not be used to support home schooling or private schools and academies, including religiously affiliated schools.

If any state funds are to be used to pay for all or part of private and/or religiously affiliated school costs, then LWVNH believes that the private/religious schools must have nondiscrimination policies, recognized accreditation, teachers that meet qualifications as set by the NH Department of Education, and that assessments of competencies must be used and reported to the NH Department of Education according to the timetables applied to public school districts.

Whether or not state funds are given to parents to pay for all or part of the expenses of home schooling, LWVNH believes that parents must be held accountable for outcomes, just as the public school districts are held accountable, by the administration and reporting of test results or performance-based assessments of competencies determined acceptable by the NH Department of Education.

LWVNH supports consideration of innovative approaches to education. If criteria are developed and met and approval is given for innovative programs, the League believes that time frames in which to assess, demonstrate and report outcomes must be included in the plan to move forward.