

K12 ACADEMICS — STATE EDUCATION SERIES



New Hampshire Education Guide

A complete profile — schools, testing, graduation, accountability, school choice, teacher certification & financial aid, each in depth.



Find Your Community
2026 EDITION

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Everything about school in New Hampshire.

This guide profiles **New Hampshire's** education system in seven parts, each a two-page deep dive with the key facts, plain-English explanations, and a link to the full, regularly-updated guide online. From K12 Academics, the world's largest education resource, online since 2004.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Education Overview · State Testing · Graduation Requirements · Accountability & Report Cards · School Choice · Teacher Certification · Financial Aid

SEARCH 200+ DIRECTORIES

K-12 Schools · Colleges & Universities · Vendors · Summer Programs · International Programs · Performers

Education Overview

EDUCATION IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

New Hampshire educates roughly 160,000 public K–12 students across about 180 school districts , administered through roughly 90 School Administrative Units (SAUs) , overseen by the New Hampshire Department of Education and the State Board. New Hampshire's "Live Free" ethos shows up strongly in education. It runs one of the country's...

WHO MUST ATTEND SCHOOL

- ✓ **Start age** — 6 (by September 30)
- ✓ **End of compulsory age** — 18
- ✓ **Districts** — ~180, within ~90 SAUs
- ✓ **Satisfying it** — Public, approved nonpublic, or home education

PRE-K IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

New Hampshire is one of only a handful of states with no state-funded prekindergarten program — the state does not appropriate funds for public pre-K. Early learning is instead provided through federal Head Start , private preschools, and preschool special education for eligible children (with some communities offering locally funded...



AT A GLANCE

Compulsory	Ages 6–18
Districts	~180
Testing	NH SAS · SAT
Diploma	Competency
Choice	EFA (universal)

DISTRICTS & CHARTERS

New Hampshire's largest districts include Manchester (the state's largest), Nashua , Concord , Rochester , and Salem . Districts are administered through SAUs , and many small towns share services. New Hampshire also has a growing charter-school sector — around 30 public charter schools, chartered by the State Board of Education and...

PRIVATE & INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

- ✓ **Independent boarding schools** — Nationally known schools such as Phillips Exeter Academy , St. Paul's School (Concord), New Hampton School, Brewster Academy, and Proctor Academy
- ✓ **Independent day schools** — Schools such as the Derryfield School (Manchester)
- ✓ **Catholic & religious schools** — Diocese of Manchester schools (such as Bishop Guertin and Trinity), plus other faith-based options
- ✓ **Specialty schools** — Montessori and schools for specific learning needs

READ NEW HAMPSHIRE'S FULL EDUCATION OVERVIEW GUIDE
tools.k12academics.com



State Testing

WHAT YOUR STATE TESTS

New Hampshire uses the NH SAS (New Hampshire Statewide Assessment System) in grades 3–8 for ELA and math (plus science), and the SAT in grade 11. Run by the New Hampshire Department of Education. There's no exit-exam gate.

WHICH TESTS, WHICH GRADES

- ✓ **NH SAS ELA & Math** — Grades 3–8 (adaptive)
- ✓ **NH SAS Science** — Grades 5, 8, and 11
- ✓ **SAT (grade 11)** — The statewide high-school test — a real, college-usable score
- ✓ **NH Alternate (DLM)** — For eligible students

FORMAT & SUBJECTS

NH SAS is online and adaptive ; the grade-11 SAT follows the national digital SAT format.

IS PASSING REQUIRED TO GRADUATE?

No exit-exam gate. New Hampshire doesn't require passing a state test to graduate; districts set course and credit requirements (and many use competency-based approaches). The grade-11 SAT provides a college-usable score.

HOW IT'S SCORED

NH SAS reports achievement levels; the grade-11 SAT is scored 400–1600.



AT A GLANCE

Grades 3–8	NH SAS
Subjects	ELA, Math; Science 5, 8, 11
High school	SAT (grade 11)
Grad requirement?	No exit-exam gate
Format	Online, adaptive
Standards	NH College & Career Ready

TESTING WINDOWS

Testing runs in a spring window set by each district.

HOW TO PREPARE

- ✓ **SAT prep for grade 11** — Our SAT guide and free Khan Academy Official SAT Practice apply
- ✓ **State practice tests** — The state provides free practice tests matching the real format

PARTICIPATION & OPTING OUT

Students in tested grades participate. Ask your district about make-up windows and any questions.

ACCOMMODATIONS & MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

Accommodations follow a student's IEP or 504 plan ; eligible students take the state's alternate assessment. Multilingual learners take an English proficiency test (WIDA ACCESS or the state equivalent) and may receive designated supports.

READ NEW HAMPSHIRE'S FULL STATE TESTING GUIDE
tools.k12academics.com



Graduation Requirements

AT A GLANCE

New Hampshire is a national leader in competency-based education : students earn credit by demonstrating competencies , not just seat time. The state minimum is 20 credits , with no exit exam — and districts often require more.

CREDIT & COURSE REQUIREMENTS

New Hampshire's 20-credit minimum includes 4 English, 3 math, 3 science (including 2 with lab), 2.5 social studies, 1 arts, 0.5 health, 1 PE, 0.5 computer/ICT, and electives — with credit awarded by competency . Districts commonly require more.

TESTING TO GRADUATE

No exit exam. New Hampshire uses competency-based assessment; students take state assessments, but a passing score is not required to graduate.

DIPLOMA TYPES & HONORS

New Hampshire issues a standard diploma, with the Seal of Biliteracy available. Districts may add honors.

ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

New Hampshire pioneered Extended Learning Opportunities (ELOs) — students can earn credit through internships, projects, and other real-world experiences by demonstrating competencies.



AT A GLANCE

Model	Competency-based
Credits	20 (state minimum)
Exit exam?	No
Districts	Often require more
Confirm with	Your district

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- ✓ **How many credits does New Hampshire require?** — The state sets a minimum, but your district may require more — confirm locally.
- ✓ **Does New Hampshire require a test to graduate?** — No — New Hampshire is competency-based; a passing test score is not required to graduate.
- ✓ **Are there different diploma types?** — Yes — plus honors designations and seals; see the diplomas section.
- ✓ **What if my student is behind on credits?** — Talk to the counselor about credit recovery and alternative pathways.
- ✓ **Where do I confirm the exact requirements?** — Your school counselor, district, and the state department of education.

READ NEW HAMPSHIRE'S FULL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS GUIDE
tools.k12academics.com



Accountability & Report Cards

AT A GLANCE

New Hampshire publishes school report cards / profiles and identifies lower-performing schools for support under ESSA — rather than assigning a single letter grade or star rating.

HOW THIS STATE RATES SCHOOLS

New Hampshire reports proficiency, growth, graduation, English-learner progress, and school-quality measures (like attendance), and identifies schools for comprehensive or targeted support. Read across the indicators and any support status.

WHAT GETS MEASURED

- ✓ **Academic achievement** — How students score on state tests (proficiency in reading/ELA and math)
- ✓ **Academic growth / progress** — How much students improve year to year — not just where they land
- ✓ **Graduation rate** — For high schools (the 4-year cohort rate)
- ✓ **English-learner progress** — How English learners are progressing toward proficiency
- ✓ **School quality / student success** — An extra indicator — often attendance/chronic absenteeism, college/career readiness, or similar

FINDING & READING THE REPORT CARD

Look up any school on New Hampshire's iPlatform data site and school profiles (via the NH Department of Education). Review the indicators and the trend.



AT A GLANCE

Format	Report card + support identifica...
No	Single grade or stars
Tool	NH IPlatform / school profiles
Look up at	education.nh.gov

HOW FAMILIES SHOULD USE RATINGS

- ✓ **Read it in context** — A school's score reflects its students' circumstances too, not only its quality
- ✓ **Look at growth, not just scores** — Growth shows how much a school moves students — often more telling than raw proficiency
- ✓ **Check the trend** — Is the school improving over time?
- ✓ **Look past the summary** — Dig into the underlying data (subgroups, attendance, readiness)
- ✓ **Then visit** — Data raises questions; a visit answers them (see our guide on evaluating a school)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- ✓ **How does New Hampshire rate schools?** — New Hampshire uses report cards plus federal support identification — not a single grade or stars.
- ✓ **What do the ratings measure?** — Test scores, growth, graduation rate, English-learner progress, and a school-quality indicator.
- ✓ **Where do I look up my school?** — On the state's official report-card portal (see below).
- ✓ **Should I choose a school by its rating alone?** — No — use it as a starting point, weigh growth and context, and visit.
- ✓ **What are CSI and TSI?** — Federal labels for schools flagged for Comprehensive or Targeted Support and Improvement.

READ NEW HAMPSHIRE'S FULL ACCOUNTABILITY & REPORT CARDS GUIDE
tools.k12academics.com



School Choice

AT A GLANCE

New Hampshire has Education Freedom Accounts (EFAs) — an ESA program — along with a long tradition of town tuitioning (some towns without their own schools pay tuition elsewhere) and a tax-credit scholarship . The EFA program has been expanding toward universal eligibility .

THIS STATE'S CHOICE PROGRAMS

The Education Freedom Account (ESA) gives eligible families a state-funded account for private-school tuition and approved expenses. Originally income-limited , the program has been expanding (moving toward universal eligibility, with caps lifting). New Hampshire also has the Education Tax Credit scholarship and town tuitioning in towns...

ELIGIBILITY

EFA eligibility has been expanding toward universal (from income-limited). Confirm the current-year income rules and any caps.

APPLYING

Apply for the EFA through the program administrator; town-tuitioning rules depend on your town. Confirm windows and requirements.

LEGAL & LEGISLATIVE STATUS

The EFA program is actively expanding toward universal eligibility — confirm the current-year rules.



AT A GLANCE

Program	Education Freedom Accounts (ESA)
Direction	Expanding toward universal (2026...
Also	Town tuitioning & tax-credit sch...
Plus	Public charters
Confirm with	The state program

PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE, TOO

- ✓ **Open enrollment / transfers** — Attend a public school outside your zone, where allowed (see our finding-your-school guide)
- ✓ **Charter schools** — Tuition-free public schools of choice (where available)
- ✓ **Magnet schools** — Tuition-free public schools with a specialized focus
- ✓ **Homeschooling** — Legal in all 50 states (rules vary)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- ✓ **Does New Hampshire have a private-school-choice program?** — Yes — New Hampshire has Education Freedom Accounts (expanding toward universal), town tuitioning, and a tax-credit scholarship.
- ✓ **What's the difference between an ESA and a voucher?** — A voucher pays a private school directly; an ESA is a flexible parent-managed account for many approved expenses.
- ✓ **What is a tax-credit scholarship?** — Donors get a tax credit for giving to organizations that fund private-school scholarships.
- ✓ **Is there public school choice too?** — Yes — open enrollment, charters, and magnets (plus homeschooling).
- ✓ **Where do I confirm the details?** — On the official state program site (see below).

READ NEW HAMPSHIRE'S FULL SCHOOL CHOICE GUIDE
tools.k12academics.com



Teacher Certification

HOW LICENSURE WORKS HERE

New Hampshire certifies teachers through the New Hampshire Department of Education . You complete an approved program, pass the required Praxis exams (and a reading test where applicable), and earn a Beginning Educator credential, later an Experienced Educator credential.

WHICH TESTS THIS STATE USES

- ✓ **Praxis Subject Assessments** — Content test(s) for your endorsement area
- ✓ **Foundations of Reading** — Required for elementary candidates
- ✓ **Note** — Basic-skills requirements may be met via qualifying scores/coursework — confirm current options

WHAT YOU NEED TO GET LICENSED

- ✓ **A bachelor's degree** — From an accredited college or university
- ✓ **A state-approved teacher-preparation program** — Completed at a college or through an approved alternative route
- ✓ **Student teaching / clinical practice** — Supervised classroom experience
- ✓ **Pass the required exams** — See the exams section above
- ✓ **A background check** — Fingerprint-based criminal background check
- ✓ **Apply to the state** — Submit your application and documents to the licensing agency



AT A GLANCE

Agency	New Hampshire Department of Educ...
Content	Praxis Subject Assessments
Reading	Foundations of Reading (elementa...
Credential	Beginning Educator — then Experi...

OTHER PATHS INTO TEACHING

Most states offer alternative routes for career-changers and those with a degree in another field. In New Hampshire, these typically let you start teaching while completing licensure requirements — through district or university alternative-certification programs, residencies, or emergency/provisional permits. Requirements (and the...

RECIPROCITY & OUT-OF-STATE LICENSES

- ✓ **Interstate agreements** — Most states participate in the NASDTEC Interstate Agreement, which eases (but doesn't guarantee) recognition of an out-of-state license
- ✓ **You may still owe exams** — States often require you to meet their own testing (or coursework) requirements, sometimes within a grace period
- ✓ **Check both states** — Confirm the specific steps with New Hampshire's agency and your current state

READ NEW HAMPSHIRE'S FULL TEACHER CERTIFICATION GUIDE
tools.k12academics.com



Financial Aid

THE STATE AID PICTURE

New Hampshire historically offers limited state grant aid compared with other states, but it does run a state scholarship and free-tuition guarantees at its public universities. Aid is coordinated through the New Hampshire Department of Education and the university/community-college systems.

NEED-BASED STATE GRANTS

- ✓ **Governor's Scholarship Program** — A state scholarship for New Hampshire high-school graduates with financial need (with additional amounts for career/technical completers).
- ✓ **Granite Guarantee** — Free tuition at University System of New Hampshire (USNH) institutions for eligible Pell-eligible New Hampshire students.

PROMISE & FREE-COLLEGE PROGRAMS

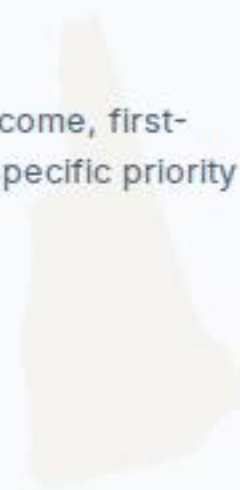
The Community College System of New Hampshire offers workforce and free/reduced-tuition initiatives in high-demand fields — check current offerings.

COLLEGE SAVINGS (529 PLAN)

New Hampshire's UNIQUE College Investing Plan (529) is the state's savings plan (New Hampshire has no broad income tax).

DEADLINES & TIMING

State deadlines are typically much earlier than the federal FAFSA deadline, and some aid is first-come, first-served until funds run out. File the FAFSA as soon as it opens (in the fall) and confirm the state's specific priority date.



AT A GLANCE

State scholarship	Governor's Scholarship
Free tuition (Pell)	Granite Guarantee (USNH)
529 plan	UNIQUE College Investing
Note	Limited state grant aid
Agency	NH Dept. of Education

APPLYING & THE STATE AGENCY

- ✓ **File the FAFSA early** — It's the trigger for state grants and many scholarships
- ✓ **Register with New Hampshire Department of Education** — Create the state agency's student account to track and claim awards
- ✓ **Confirm your details** — Verify residency, GPA, and enrollment as required
- ✓ **Meet any extra requirements** — Some programs need a separate form, GPA, or service commitment
- ✓ **Reapply every year** — State aid is awarded annually

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- ✓ **How do I get New Hampshire state aid?** — File the FAFSA (and any state form) by the deadline; New Hampshire Department of Education administers the programs.
- ✓ **Is it need-based or merit?** — Both — New Hampshire offers need-based grants and merit scholarships.
- ✓ **Are the deadlines earlier than federal?** — Usually yes — file early, as some aid is first-come.
- ✓ **Can I use it out of state?** — Most New Hampshire aid is for in-state schools; check each program.
- ✓ **Does this list private scholarships?** — No — this guide covers official state programs only.

READ NEW HAMPSHIRE'S FULL FINANCIAL AID GUIDE
tools.k12academics.com



KEEP EXPLORING

Find Your Community.

One of 51 state guides in the largest education resource online. Explore **1,297 free guides** plus directories of schools, colleges & more in your community.

tools.k12academics.com →

