

Tom Raffio
Bow
Chairman

Cindy C. Chagnon
Bedford

Bill Duncan
New Castle

Gary Groleau
Laconia

Helen G. Honorow
Nashua

Gregory Odell
Dalton

Emma Rous
Durham

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
STATE OFFICE PARK SOUTH
101 PLEASANT STREET
CONCORD, N.H. 03301
TEL. (603) 271-3144
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February 14, 2017

The Honorable Christopher T. Sununu
Governor of New Hampshire
State House
107 North Main Street
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Dear Governor Sununu:

A broad and extensive cross-section of the public has communicated with state board members on the nomination of Mr. Edelblut as education commissioner. Since his Executive Council hearing, we have had a large number of phone calls and emails and today many people have come to comment. Others have expressed themselves in the press. Virtually all have expressed concerns about the appointment, primarily about the nominee's lack of relevant qualifications in both "education and experience."

In addition, board members had questions of their own pursuant to the board's statutory responsibility to oversee the operations of the department of education. Here are our queries and your responses from today's consultation:

In your judgment, in what respect does Mr. Edelblut meet the "qualified by education and experience" requirements of RSA 21-N:3?

Yes. The requirements for commissioner are different from those for an educator. He must be prepared to manage a large system, communicate with legislature, and communicate with the many other constituencies of New Hampshire public education. He has a great understanding of how the system works and where we should go. He has a great depth of knowledge.

Will you require Mr. Edelblut to forgo political activism while serving?

The position itself should not be political. The commissioner must work with people from all sectors and across the political spectrum.

The governor did not appear to respond directly on the question of whether he would allow Mr. Edelblut to participate in political activities.

Has Mr. Edelblut committed to serving out his 4-year term as commissioner?

The governor had a one-word answer, "Yes."

Given Mr. Edelblut's lack of familiarity with the management of public education, how would he gain the trust and credibility among superintendents, principals and teachers needed to lead in this local control state where the levers of command and control are not available?

Mr. Edelblut has said that one of his first initiatives will be to take a "brown bag tour" across the State. He will sit down one-on-one with educators, school leaders, students, everyone. People will realize his depth of knowledge. No one coming into this position should be able to rely on a resume. They should have to prove their ability to perform. Mr. Edelblut will do that.

Mr. Edelblut says that school choice is important because "parents are voting with their feet." Actually, the numbers are pretty small. How would you and Mr. Edelblut balance your commitment to those students with your commitment to the 180,000 students in New Hampshire's district schools and our current home grown charter schools?

The question is based on a misunderstanding of what Mr. Edelblut and the governor mean by "choice." Actually, the focus is on the choice each individual student has to conform her or his educational path to be prepared for a chosen career. Establishing career pathways in high school is not sufficient. Students should be able to identify their pathways much sooner in their educational careers and be supported by their schools in pursuing those pathways whether through our career schools or other forms of coursework leading to post-secondary education.

What should be done at this point about the math and English Language Arts standards given the virtually full adoption by the field? Would a review of the standards be good?

The governor said first that review could be called for, that review of anything is always good. But mainly he wanted to be clear that he and Mr. Edelblut agree that standards are a good thing and are necessary. Yes, they have publically opposed the common core standards but it's not really the standards that are the issue. It's how we assess these standards. He said he very much believes in assessments but that whoever had the idea of publishing the results in the newspaper had a terrible idea. The result is that teachers feel they teach to the test to avoid public criticism.

The governor summed up by saying that perceptions that he and Mr. Edelblut wanted to blow up public education are erroneous.

How can the support for vouchers be reconciled with New Hampshire's constitutional prohibition against using public money for "the support of schools of any sect or denomination" (Article 6)?

The governor said he was open to a potential voucher system and that constitutional and other issues would need to be worked out as we go along.

If substantial numbers of parents in any school refuse to let their children take the annual statewide assessment, the tests will not reflect the performance of that school. So is support for bills encouraging refusal of assessments that give parents feedback on their schools consistent with constitutional obligation to provide an adequate education?

If there are many people opting out of the statewide assessment, the question would be why is that happening?

He absolutely supports parent refusal to participate in the statewide assessment. He acknowledged that there are repercussions, and maybe negative repercussions, we'd have to figure that out.

Has Mr. Edelblut foresworn investments in education related ventures?

The governor gave the impression that he had not discussed this question with Mr. Edelblut and said, "I would assume so."

We understand Mr. Edelblut to have said at his hearing that he wants to give teachers greater freedom to decide what to teach in their classrooms. Would the governor be concerned if teachers taught creationism, climate denial, that homosexuality is unnatural, etc. in New Hampshire classrooms.

The governor clarified that, "We are not saying do what you want." But they do want to give teachers flexibility in how they meet the State's academic standards. He went on to say that we definitely need state-wide standards, oversight, and management of educators.

New Hampshire educators and the state board are deeply engaged in transforming public education for the 21st century, through personalized competency education, the PACE initiative. Is that a vision you and Mr. Edelblut share?

I believe so. I've talked with Mr. Edelblut about PACE. I'm very encouraged by the results we have seen and I would look forward to seeing Mr. Edelblut expand on that.

Will NH respond to the requirements and timelines of ESSA?

I will review that but I expect so.

Would you ensure that money for choice does not come at the expense of district schools?

When a system is looking for more money, we need to provide more financial flexibility to allow that system to meet its priority needs and to meet the goals we set out for ourselves, not necessarily the goals that Washington sets. Anywhere we can break down the regulations that might not be applicable to those local communities, that's a good thing. And Mr. Edelblut really understands the numbers.

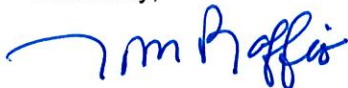
Parents have expressed a concern about Mr. Edelblut's commitment to special education. What can you say about that?

The governor said he had the utmost confidence in Mr. Edelblut's commitment to serve children with special needs. That will be a top priority. He will make sure that, not just at the teacher level but at the administrative level, schools have all the support and flexibility they need to support children with special needs.

We have attached 57 pages of individually composed emails and communications we have received from concerned citizens, mostly parents in opposition to this nomination. We did hear testimony from one person this morning in support of Mr. Edelblut's nomination.

After discussion with the public today and among board members, we have to say, Governor, that we share the public's concerns about Mr. Edelblut's qualifications for the role of New Hampshire Education Commissioner. The high level of concern parents have voiced about this nomination that is so important to them puts the State Board of Education on notice. We owe parents the Board's full commitment to our statutory responsibility as the board of directors of New Hampshire public education. We are prepared for that role and will exercise it with full transparency.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Raffio". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tom" and last name "Raffio" clearly legible.

Tom Raffio, Chairman
State Board of Education

TR:aa

Enclosures - Communications received concerning the Edelblut nomination

cc: New Hampshire Executive Council

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

Quotes

I am the parent of two children about to enter the public school system in New Hampshire and I want that system to be whole heartedly supported by the Commissioner. I do not believe Frank Edelblut will offer that support.

Sarah McDonald, West Lebanon Parent

Mr. Edelblut does not have the experience, expertise, or education to take on this very important role.

Amanda L. Russell, parent, educator, member Dover School Board

We greatly fear the effects of Frank Edelblut's nomination to head the NH Department of Education.

David and Jean Robins , Harrisville

Surely the Governor could find a different, better-qualified candidate.

Robin Mower Durham

Mr. Edelblut will certainly face educators that have no confidence in his ability, rendering him unable to lead.

Cathleen Abruzzese, Hampstead parent and school board member

If a charter or private school does not currently employ a school nurse or has limited number of nurse hours, and a student who requires school nursing support chooses to attend, under a plan of school choice that Mr. Edulblut might promote, will that school need to hire a nurse to meet those medical needs or will the school have the right to deny that student's right to a free and appropriate public education in that setting?...is Mr. Edleblut in support of school choice for everyone regardless of whether they have a condition or disability or is he in support of a system that offers choice only for those who can afford it and have no exceptional needs?

Leigh Prince, Lyme

I am hoping you will be able to think creatively about how Mr. Edelblut may best serve the state in an area wherein he is qualified, not as the Commissioner of Education.

Judy McCarthy, Grantham teacher and charter school supporter

I encourage the Board to insist that Governor Sununu withdraw his nomination of Mr. Edelblut, and nominate a more qualified and suitable candidate for the position.

Patti Emerson, Milford

If we expect our teachers to have Bachelors and Masters degrees in Education I think we should expect the same of our Commissioner.

Erik Corbett, Bartlett

We need someone with a passion for learning and educating our children and building our educational system.

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

Lisa Serling, educator

I am very disturbed, very concerned and very apprehensive of the direction Governor Sununu has decided to take from day one in regards to education in the state of NH.

Jennifer Basile, Nashua

Nominating someone without any experience and with his abhorrent views on our LGBTQ community sends the wrong message to everyone in the state.

Rick Cecchetti

Please work to find a more well rounded Education Commissioner to represent our Granite State that has a background welcoming inclusive behaviors and one that includes Education would be good too.

Jodi Gilman Jones, Portsmouth

I am concerned that he does not intend to fulfill the full term of the appointment. I sincerely hope this is not the case, as our students deserve a Commissioner who is fully committed to the role and to public education, not someone looking to use the position as a stepping stone to something else.

Jason Cipriano, Chairman, Hampstead School District, Chairman, SAU 55

New Hampshire needs a leader who values public education, who has touched the lives of children and teachers and has been touched **by** them, and who is passionate about advocating for public education.

Diane St Germain, Teacher, Center Barnstead

It is very clear to me from the initial hearing and the public information available about Mr. Edelblut that he does not have the knowledge or expertise, nor the vision needed to lead our public education system.

Jeanne Dallahi, Londonderry parent

NH is among the top states for education. We need to make our public school system solid first, then we can expand on that.

David Holt, Somersworth

I fear he would not have the best of intentions toward supporting our public schools.
Marti Kennedy, Milford

He states that he will only act as a facilitator for educational policies and laws that come from the legislature and the governor which I find deeply troublesome.

Marcia Connors, Manchester

He is not an expert on education and was unable to answer questions in a straightforward manner during his nomination hearings. I also have serious

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

concerns that he will not have the interest of ALL our children in mind — including LGBTQ youth.

Julia Rodriguez, Durham

Mr. Edelblut is well known for his divisive statements in the Legislature, based on these statements and Gubernatorial campaign records, he appears to be a vocal opponent of a strong public school system. Additionally, Mr. Edelblut's stated views on social issues, including his defense of conversion therapy on gay minors, raises valid concerns that his policies may not be inclusive of all students.

Lynn Stanley, LICSW, Executive Director, National Association of Social Workers New Hampshire Chapter

This is a position that requires expertise in the field of education, knowledge of how education works, and how students are best educated. To appoint this man to such an important position would be a great disservice to the students and educators of New Hampshire as well as the electorate.

Jamie Pringle, educator

Clearly, his lack of relevant education and experience should automatically disqualify him from holding the important office of Education Commissioner.

Janet Szarmach, Stratham

Public education drives our communities. Our towns are judged by the quality of the public schools. Please do not sell NH short. Reject Edelblut.

Nancy Jachim, Newport

If you look deeper at Edelblut's record you will find alliances with the secession supporting Free State Project, extreme anti-LGBTQ history, and a checkered record on fact-based science.

Sarah Brown, parent

He holds extreme positions on a number of issues related to education, and I question his ability to think clearly about complex issues affecting thousands of children and families.

Sally Thursby, Lyme

I am the parent of a public school elementary student and I find Mr. Edelblut's expressed attitudes toward public school and his lack of experience deeply troubling.

Jennifer LeBlanc, Lebanon parent

Businesses regularly cite an educated workforce as a key factor in deciding where to locate their headquarters; placing our educational system under the direction of a person with no experience will only harm New Hampshire's economy.

Dr. Katherine Porter, Concord

New Hampshire's public schools are responsible for the care and wellbeing of all of our children, whatever their sexuality; our public schools are responsible for HIV/AIDS prevention education, suicide prevention, and, unless parents opt out, sexual education. While Mr. Edleblut is free to worship as he pleases, he is not free to impose his theological agenda on our public schools, children, families, and communities, most especially when that agenda poses a direct risk of harm. Conversion therapy uses techniques such as shame and aversive conditioning to suppress specific sexual attractions and identities. When minors seek assistance with issues of sexuality, they must receive competent therapy, not a response which is condemned by the following leading professional organizations:

American Academy of Nursing
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Academy of Physician Assistants
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
American Association of School Administrators
American Counseling Association
American Federation of Teachers
American Medical Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychoanalytic Association
American Psychological Association
American School Counselor Association
American School Health Association
Child Welfare League of America
The Interfaith Alliance
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Association of Social Workers
National Education Association
Pan American Health Organization
United Nations Committee Against Torture
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Personally and professionally, I have witnessed the despair of children and teenagers when their sexuality is denounced, a despair which all too often leads to self-harm, a life in the shadows, or even death.

If Mr. Edleblut cannot unequivocally state that he is opposed to conversion therapy in our public schools, he should not receive your support.

Sarah M. B. Henry, M.D., Concord

I am concerned about positions that Mr. Edelblut has taken that are outside the mainstream. He voted against banning gay conversion therapy, and seems to be

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

against providing special needs students with the services they need, as evidenced by his vote against a bill that required the Department of Education to assign a reading specialist to support schools with dyslexia. Clearly Mr. Edelblut does not believe in providing all students with the tools they need to succeed.

Marcey Rawitscher, Amherst parent and educator

Furthermore, as a taxpayer, I am happy to contribute my tax dollars so that all students will receive a fair and equal education, one based on the real world, facts, and data. I understand that Mr. Edelblut is a believer in Creationism and a Climate Change denier. I do not want my tax dollars to contribute toward vouchers that can be used for those who live in an alternate reality to indoctrinate their children.

Beth Olshansky, Durham educator

How will he strengthen the public schools and apply the much-talked-about idea of school choice within those schools as well as outside of them? How will he balance the need to improve and be efficient with the need to recognize the humanity of our students, our teachers, and our communities? There is nothing in his background that suggests that he will be able to do this.

Marie McCormick, Lebanon parent

I believe the Governor's nomination to head the NH State Board of Education is a mistake. He does not have the expertise to serve in this capacity. New Hampshire cannot make the same mistake that was made at the national level.

Blithe Reed, Henniker teacher

However, he also has no experience with public education in his personal, professional or political life. No understanding of what superintendents, principals, teachers and support staff do or need, no experience as a school board member. Yet he has been nominated to head the department charged with overseeing the most important business in which our state is involved.

Tom St.Martin, Candia

Edelblut is a danger to our children: His sponsorship of the Parental Rights Amendment would remove community protections for children and potentially interfere with adequate and inclusive education.

Cheryl Smith, Nottingham

I attended the confirmation hearing for Frank Edelblut with my four-month-old daughter and was disappointed with his lack of experience and frankly terrified of his strong support for "school choice."

Sara Persechino, Contoocook

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

Emails

From: Sarah McDonald

Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2017 11:31 AM

To: Lori.Kincaid@doe.nh.gov; Tom Raffio <traffio@nedelta.com>; gobuild@together.net; waduncansboe@gmail.com

Subject: Frank Edelblut

Dear all,

I am writing to register my opposition to Mr Edelblut for Commissioner of Education for the following reasons:

1. Mr Edelblut lacks a background in education. His nomination is clearly political and pay for play.
2. He is a supporter of creationism and of school choice. Both of these positions undermine our ability to produce an educated work force suitable for a future economy, which will likely be tech based requiring highly skilled workers. I work for a local biotech company. We are always looking for individuals educated in STEM subjects and we have trouble filling positions. Teaching creationism and underfunding the public school system through school choice programs will not help produced an educated, skilled work force.
3. His answers on guns in schools and using his personal agenda in the position of commissioner were highly unsatisfactory.

I am the parent of two children about to enter the public school system in New Hampshire and I want that system to be whole heartedly supported by the Commissioner. I do not believe Frank Edelblut will offer that support.

Many thanks,

Sarah McDonald
14 Farman Ave
West Lebanon NH 03784

From: **Amanda L. Russell**

Date: Wed, Feb 8, 2017 at 6:03 AM

Subject: Commissioner of Education

To: tomRaffio@nedelta.com, hhonorow@barrylawoffice.com, chags@comcast.net, gobuild@together.net, waduncansboe@gmail.com, rousemma@gmail.com, ggroleau@nhbb.com

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

Dear Board Members,

I write to ask that you encourage the governor to withdraw his nomination of Frank Edelblut for the position of Commissioner of Education. Now, more than every before, New Hampshire needs an educational leader who understands how students learn, how schools work and how to move them forward. Mr. Edelblut does not have the experience, expertise, or education to take on this very important role.

The success of our state and our nation depends on the education of our children.

Respectfully,
Amanda L. Russell
23-year educator
Mother of four public school students
Dover School Board (2012-present)

From: David Robins
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2017 12:01 PM
To: Tom Raffio <traffio@nedelta.com>; hhonorow@barrylawoffice.com;
chags@comcast.net; gobuild@together.net; waduncansboe@gmail.com;
rousemma@gmail.com; ggroleau@nhbb.com
Subject: Frank Edelblut

Dear Chairman Raffio and Members of the NH Board of Education,

We greatly fear the effects of Frank Edelblut's nomination to head the NH Department of Education. We fear that he will expand charter schools and vouchers which will be a financial disaster for NH towns. We fear the effects of less funding for special needs children in our public schools. We fear the adoption of a business model in NH education that treats students as "products". They are not products, they are our children and our future!

Sincerely,
David and Jean Robins

6 Sargent Camp Road
Harrisville, NH 03450

From: Heather Werner
Date: February 7, 2017 at 8:24:11 PM EST
To: "TomRaffio@nedelta.com"
<TomRaffio@nedelta.com>, "hhonorow@barrylawoffice.com"
<hhonorow@barrylawoffice.com>, "chags@comcast.net"
<chags@comcast.net>, "gobuild@together.net"

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

<gobuild@together.net>, "waduncansboe@gmail.com"
<waduncansboe@gmail.com>, "rousemma@gmail.com"
<rousemma@gmail.com>, "ggroleau@nhbb.com"
<ggroleau@nhbb.com>, "gcweb@nh.gov" <gcweb@nh.gov>

Subject: Frank Edelblut

Hello,

My name is Heather O'Connor and I am a public school teacher. In light of the appointment of Betsy DeVos today, I am extremely worried about the competence of Mr. Edelblut as Commissioner of Education. As a teacher, I am expected to be highly qualified in my area of expertise. In reviewing Mr. Edelblut's higher education and work history, I do not see where or how he is qualified to make such important educational decisions.

It is also my understanding that Mr. Edelblut is a strong believer in school choice and chose to home school his own children. In many non-public schools, no teaching background is required. Those are not the people we want educating our students. We need trained, qualified personal that will led our children in the right direction. We also NEED those qualities in the Commissioner of Education and Mr. Edelblut is not the best choice for our students.

Though I am not able to be at the public meeting Thursday at 9 because I will be educating students, I ask that you take my opinion into consideration.

Respectfully,
Heather O'Connor
15 Edgewood Ave
Merrimack NH
03054
[603-459-3269](tel:603-459-3269)

From: RobinM

Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2017 1:00 PM **To:** Tom Raffio <traffio@nedelta.com>;
hhonorow@barrylawoffice.com; chags@comcast.net; gobuild@together.net;
waduncansboe@gmail.com; Emma Rous <rousemma@gmail.com>;
ggroleau@nhbb.com

Subject: nomination of Commissioner of Education

Greetings, Board Members --

I was dismayed to learn that the so-called vetting process of Frank Edelblut for Commissioner of Education was primarily superficial and hope that you will be taking the time to consider citizens' concerns as you take the next step.

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

I write to ask that you vote against the confirmation of Mr. Edelblut. Surely the Governor could find a different, better-qualified candidate. That would no doubt have become clearer to you with a more forceful vetting process.

Here are my concerns:

First and foremost, Edelblut has no experience as an educator. (How one can even consider candidates for any office who have no experience in the field is beyond my understanding.)

Second, PUBLIC education is the fundamental underpinning of both a successful economy and democratic society. It is through exposure to multiple different views that we grow and learn to work together and from which innovation stems. Any diversion of funding away from public education harms us all. A Commissioner of Education who is focused on charter schools rather than on public schools would not be serving the majority of New Hampshire residents.

Third, political and religious ideology (let alone outdated and misguided *theories*) have no place in any educational institution that serves the broad public. Nonpartisan: both you and any new Commissioner. Can't say it strongly enough.

Fourth, any Board member vote based on Republican or Democratic affiliation betrays our SHARED goal of creating a citizenry that can inform itself via critical thinking and that chooses to contribute to our shared society. We are all in one boat. We need to row together if we are not just to remain floating but to move forward.

Your job is to vote for a Commissioner who:

-- Provides leadership that distinguishes between fact and opinion, who applauds science and the associated rigor and objectivity associated with the scientific discipline and approach to challenges. There are no *alternative facts.* Opinion and belief must not be elevated to equal status as fact.

-- Brings relevant experience and promotes vision to guide New Hampshire into the increasingly global and stormy waters of our future.

-- Commits to broadening -- not narrowing -- opportunities to help New Hampshire's future citizens.

Thank you for your work on behalf of all of us, regardless of our political orientations and private beliefs. I'm sure that we all want the best for our state's future.

Regards,

Robin Mower Durham, NH 03824

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

From: Cathleen Abruzzese

Sent: Monday, February 6, 2017 12:19 PM **To:** Tom Raffio <traffio@nedelta.com>; hhonorow@barrylawoffice.com; chags@comcast.net; gobuild@together.net; waduncansboe@gmail.com; rousemma@gmail.com; ggroleau@nhbb.com

Subject: NH Education Commissioner nominee Edelblut

Greetings Members of the NH State Board of Education,

I am very concerned with Governor Chris Sununu's nomination of Frank Edelblut for the Commissioner of Education for New Hampshire. I am a school board member serving on the Hampstead School Board, a PTA member, an active volunteer in Hampstead's schools and a mother of two students who are 7 and 10 years old and thriving in our public education system. I support education and am aware of the many obstacles and triumphs that exist within the system.

Education is a constantly evolving field. Much of the measurable success that Hampstead displays is due to the dedicated administrators, faculty, staff, parents, volunteers and community members who support our students in public education. Hampstead uses researched based initiatives, well thought out implementations and tremendous collaborative efforts to continuously achieve excellence in education.

The Education Commissioner of NH is a role that is best filled by an educator, which Frank Edelblut is not. Perhaps, Governor Sununu nominated this candidate with the intention that his focus would be on financial issues, the most significant of which is the NH Retirement System. If the commissioner of education had anything to do with resolving the issues our public schools face because of the broken retirement system, I would welcome his expertise in accounting to be applied to resolving that problem. However, the commissioner of education has nothing to do with that. The education commissioner is charged with providing leadership to educators. The members of the education community that I have spoken with do not consider Mr. Edelblut an adequate candidate to lead educators. Should this nomination be accepted, Mr. Edelblut will certainly face educators that have no confidence in his ability, rendering him unable to lead. I am reminded of the ancient African proverb "when elephants fight, it is the grass who suffers". In this circumstance, the elephants would be our leaders of education and the grass would be our students. I am respectfully requesting that Governor Sununu withdraw his nomination of Frank Edelblut. He is not a qualified candidate for this role.

On a personal note, I am gravely concerned that Mr. Edelblut has been out of the loop on public education for far too long. The only experience that I was able to find through research was his own experience as a student. This experience is not only outdated and irrelevant now, but also inadequate to fulfill the experience

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

requirements mentioned in RSA 21-N:3 for the entire job description that is outlined in RSA 21-N:4. Education has changed drastically since Mr. Edelblut attended school. The classroom we attended as students is nothing more than a memory as there have been revolutionary improvements being implemented for years. As a parent who is actively involved in my children's education, I implore you to reconsider the nominee and put forward a more qualified candidate capable of leading NH educators towards continuously striving for excellence in all areas related to education.

Thank you,

Cathleen Abruzzese

From: I Robinson

Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2017 9:18 AM

To: Tom Raffio

<traffio@nedelta.com>; hhonorow@barrylawoffice.com; chags@comcast.net; gobuild@together.net; waduncansboe@gmail.com; rousemma@gmail.com; ggroleau@nhbb.com

Subject: ggroleau@nhbb.com

To The Esteemed Council,

Please consider using whatever influence you have to persuade governor Sununu to reconsider his current pick for nomination for Commissioner of Education, Mr. Frank Edelblut. While i understand he exercised his choice to homeschool children, I am concerned about his lack of experience, stance in transgender issues, public monies used to pay for an individual child'd private tuition, among other concerns.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Irma robinson
Belmont, NH

From: Lisa Rancourt

Date: February 7, 2017 at 9:18:16 PM EST

To: TomRaffio@nedelta.com, Lisa Rancourt <marcolisa@comcast.net>

Subject: PLEASE, NO NO NO Edelblut !!!

Dear Tom,

Frank Edelblut's qualifications for New Hampshire's Commissioner of Education are **sorely lacking**.

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

His experiences do NOT meet even the minimum requirements of the position.

Please vote NO when asked to support this nominee.

There are MANY individuals more qualified to serve, with exceptional educational leadership experience.... Mr. Edelblut has none!

Please ask Governor Sununu to put forward a better choice !!

New Hampshire needs a leader that will have the best educational interests of ALL of our children in mind.

Mr. Edelblut is NOT the right choice!

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa

Lisa Rancourt 4 Massasoit Road, Nashua
-28 years, voting resident of NH
-3 highly successful children, ALL NH public school educated
-30 years as a public school educator in NY & NH

From: susan raymond

Sent: Monday, February 06, 2017 1:31 PM

To: Kincaid, Lori

Subject: My Comment for the Public Hearing Thursday February 9th, 2017 -
Nomination of new Commissioner of Education

I would like to address this letter to all the NH Board of Education members : Cindy C. Chagnon, Bill Duncan, Gary Groleau, Helen Honorow, Gregory Odell, Tomas Raffio, and Emma Rous.,

I am unable to attend the public hearing this coming Thursday February 9th concerning the Nomination of Frank Edelblut by Governor Sununu for Commissioner of Education in NH. I would like my objections to be known to all of you despite being unable to say it in person.

I have already informed Governor Sununu that I believe he made a flawed decision to nominate Frank Edelblut and hope he will withdraw this nomination. I have requested the Executive Council all vote against this appointment when it was apparent that our Governor was not going to discuss this nomination with the Board of Education prior to their vote.

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

I have submitted letters to the Editor of newspapers pointing to Frank Edelblut's lack of qualifications and commitment to Public Education. In all my appeals to the conscience of the Governor and others, I have explained my reasons as follows:

Frank Edelblut has no public school experience, no formal background or training in education. He has not served on a local school board. He failed to support Public Education in our state by not even enrolling one of his 7 children in a public school. More distressing than any of these legal reasons why he should not be appointed (education and experience) is his record as a one term State Representative. He voted to take taxpayer money and put it to use at private and religious schools. He voted against full-day kindergarten. He voted for allowing parents and guardians to opt their students out of statewide assessment testing. I also object to Frank Edelblut being my Commissioner of Education because he voted against banning unethical gay conversion therapy. This therapy seeks to change a child's sexual orientation or gender identity and is inhumane. In his testimony Frank Edelblut compared this anti - LGBT counseling to therapy to end smoking, drinking or drug habits. That statement is outrageous. Mr. Edelblut sponsored an ALEC model Parental Rights Amendment that would remove community protections for children - even those children who were determined to be at risk. This nominee has refused to answer direct questions about his support for teaching creationism in science curriculum. I studied Chemistry at Mount Holyoke College and Rutgers University. I believe Mr. Edelblut has no idea what Good Science is. I believe everyone should be aware that Mr. Edelblut is on the board of Patrick Henry College Foundation, the fundraising arm of a 17 year old evangelical college outside Washington, D.C. that specializes in training Christian home schoolers as politicians. Please research that the president of this same College has called public schools "godless monstrosities" and how everyone associated with the College is required to agree with a statement of faith with a number of provisions, including that Hell is a place where "all who die outside of Christ shall be confined in conscious torment for eternity". Did Mr. Edelblut sign this? Is this man to be promoted to a leadership role for all of us in NH? Has Mr. Edelblut pledged to refrain from endorsing candidates or other partisan activity with the state? I believe the Education Commissioner position should be above politics. Our Governor is supposed to represent all of us. He made a very bad choice for his nomination. Frank Edelblut is not qualified for the role of Commissioner of Education and his views are abhorrent to me as they are to a majority of citizens of this State.

Sincerely,

Susan J. Raymond
287 Great Hill Road
Tamworth, NH 03886

From: Gail Gutterman

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

Date: February 5, 2017 at 9:43:24 AM EST
To: "TomRaffio@nedelta.com" <TomRaffio@nedelta.com>
Subject: Edelblut

Have we lost our mind in this state?? Would you allow a doctor to operate on you who had never been in an operating room.
Edelblut cannot be allowed to head our Dept. of Education.
Do the right thing and recommend an experienced candidate
Thank you,
Gail Gutterman
Sunapee, NH

From: Leigh Prince
Date: February 5, 2017 at 10:46:17 AM EST
To: TomRaffio@nedelta.com
Subject: **Concerns about Protecting the Rights of ALL Students in NH Public Schools**

Dear Mr. Raffio ,
I am a parent and I have grave concerns about the nomination of Frank Edelblut for the position of Commissioner of Education for New Hampshire and I wanted to make sure my concerns are heard, especially since I feel there are very important issues at stake that have not been questioned or explored by the executive counsel as of yet. I attended the confirmation hearing last week, driving a round trip of 3 hours to do so, with the hopes of speaking, however, had to leave before having the opportunity to do so.

I heard that one of the councilors felt that the message they had received from the "consumers" was one of discontent with public education and in favor of this nomination. I would argue that the "consumers" the executive counsel heard were a small minority, and hope that the Executive Council, Board of Education, legislators, and the Governor ensure that a diverse perspective is heard, to include working families who may have not been able to attend.

I was disappointed that none of the executive counselors asked Mr. Edelblut some very important questions about students who have disabilities and chronic medical conditions. Therefore I will pose them here in hopes that the State Board of Education, though not in a position to vote on the issue of Mr. Edelblut's nomination, will consider and advise the governor on the full spectrum of issues that confirmation of this candidate, given the agenda he expressed in regards to school choice, will have on our public school system and the local towns who work very hard to make their schools great.

Questions:

If confirmed for the position of Commissioner of Education for the state of New Hampshire, would Mr. Edulblut:

- **require equal accountability in ALL schools and educational programs that receive taxpayer funding?**
- **Require that private schools and public charters that receive public funding accept all students and cannot deny admission based on race, color, religion, national/ethnic origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability?**
- **support the requirement that all schools that receive public funding provide the necessary services and support mandated by IDEA and Section 504 for student who have disabilities to ensure equal access to all available programs and choices?**
- **propose that funding for special education supports, health services, and related service for students who have disabilities and healthcare needs attending these non-traditional settings, be the responsibility of the Charter or private school or the student's home town and school district?** The latter, expecting the home school district to divide it's personnel or fund additional personnel to provide services to students at multiple school locations, would take away resources from the traditional public school and add significant financial burden on the local community to raise funding through taxes.

I feel the answer to these questions are imperative for New Hampshire citizens and should be strongly considered before a vote is made in regards to this confirmation. It was evident by those present at Mr. Edulblut's confirmation hearing, that he is well supported by school choice advocates. However, very few specific questions regarding his vision for this and the impact of school choice on our traditional schools, students, and towns were asked.

I would like to take a minute to share the needs of thousands of New Hampshire public school "consumers". According to a 2011-2012 National Survey, there were over approximately 59,000 children (0-17 years of age) who met the broad definition of children with **special health care needs in NH**.

(<http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/29-childrenwith-special-health-care-needs#detailed/2/2-52/false/1021,18,19,12/any/298,299>)

I am the parent of a child who has a chronic medical condition, epilepsy, who requires a school health plan and implementation of an emergency action plan which includes medication administration. In addition to epilepsy, there are several other chronic medical conditions that require school nursing support to enable students to safely access their education including, but not limited to: Type I diabetes, severe allergies which lead to anaphylaxis, asthma, cardiac conditions, metabolic issues, and gastrointestinal conditions.

A NH school nurse survey conducted by *Special Medical Services* in 2014 (http://www.education.nh.gov/instruction/school_health/documents/schoolnurse_survey-2014.pdf) reported that in addition to providing oral medication,

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

monitoring blood glucose, providing nebulizer treatments, providing toileting assistance, and bowel program support, NH school nurses reported having 30 students on average with rescue medications (to treat medical emergencies in students with epilepsy, diabetes, and asthma), with some schools having far greater numbers into the hundreds.

Limitations in availability of school nurse services can have grave impact on students with chronic medical conditions and could even have life threatening consequences. Reliance on local EMS services to address these students' needs can be insufficient in rural communities which rely on volunteer fast squads, which are unable to guarantee a medical professional with the needed training and scope of practice to meet the medical demand.

According to the NH Department of Education *Statewide Census by Disability*, more than 28,800 NH students have diagnosed disabilities. (http://www.education.nh.gov/instruction/special_ed/documents/child_count_october_1_2015.pdf). Many of these students require special education services to benefit from their education. This may include specialized instruction from special education teachers, related services including speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, behavior specialists, and, for some, educational assistant support. Our public schools are mandated to meet the needs of **ALL** students and provide the necessary supports and services each individual student needs to make effective progress in their educational program.

The following scenario allows examination of the many questions and concerns that arise from the prospect of a model of school choice, whereby, public funds are diverted from traditional public schools to private or public charter schools for a student to attend by choice. If a charter or private school does not currently employ a school nurse or has limited number of nurse hours, and a student who requires school nursing support chooses to attend, under a plan of school choice that Mr. Edulblut might promote, will that school need to hire a nurse to meet those medical needs or will the school have the right to deny that student's right to a free and appropriate public education in that setting? Would the private or charter school be required to fund a nursing position as to not discriminate against that student, or would the student's home school district be expected to divide it's personnel or fund additional personnel to provide services at the alternate school location, thus taking away resources from the traditional public school and adding significant financial burden on the local community to raise funding through taxes?

Currently, students with disabilities and chronic medical conditions often have to sign away their rights under IDEA and Section 504 to attend private and non-traditional schools, a practice that should be absolutely unacceptable if these schools begin to receive any public funding.

I am concerned that if the Commissioner of Education is not knowledgeable about IDEA and Section 504 and/or pushes an agenda to use government money to fund charter or private schools without holding them equally accountable to our public

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

schools to meet the needs of students with chronic medical conditions and disabilities, it will be discriminatory practice and undermine our public school systems.

In summary, is **Mr. Edleblut in support of school choice for everyone regardless of whether they have a condition or disability or is he in support of a system that offers choice only for those who can afford it and have no exceptional needs?** The latter, in my opinion, would have the potential to take our system back several decades to a more segregated educational system. Please do not support Mr. Edleblut for this position unless he will meet the following fundamental requirements of this role:

- guarantee that all students will be able to access all aspects of the state's public education system regardless of wealth, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or disability.
- Fully support and ensure equal accountability of schools that receive federal, state, or local funds to meet the needs of all students.

Thank you for your time in considering these concerns, discussing them within the domain of your role now as this nomination is considered, as well as in the future, as policies, practices, and legislation regarding education in NH are being developed.

Sincerely,

Leigh Prince

P.O. Box 193
Lyme, NH 03768
[\(603\)277-0707](tel:6032770707)
leigh.princeot@gmail.com

From: Judy McCarthy
Date: February 5, 2017 at 6:51:41 PM EST
To: tomraffio@nedelta.com
Subject: Frank Edelblut

Hello Tom,

I am writing to you as a NH resident and a public school teacher for over 30 years. That said, I financially support one Charter School and am a big fan of the Ledyard Charter School in Lebanon, NH. I am, however, very concerned about the nomination of Mr. Edleblut for the position of Commissioner of Education in our state. His qualifications for this position are negligible. He may be a very accomplished and intelligent guy, but he seems much better suited to a position wherein he would be able to work in the area of school choice. Is there such a position as Deputy Commissioner of Education with this focus?

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

I am confused as to why the governor would choose someone who has never had any interest or experience with public schools to serve in this important capacity. I don't think anyone in this position, at least since I started teaching, has ever been so unconnected to public school practice. The history of public schools in this country is a noble one. I believe it was Benjamin Franklin who began the first one in Massachusetts.

I am not sure what influence you may have in this area, but I am hoping you will be able to think creatively about how Mr. Edelblut may best serve the state in an area wherein he is qualified, not as the Commissioner of Education.

Thanks for reading this. Judy McCarthy, Grantham, NH

From: Representative Jan Schmidt
Date: February 5, 2017 at 9:01:05 AM EST
To: TomRaffio@nedelta.com
Subject: Qualifications matter

Chairman Tom Raffilo,

Please advise the Governor that his appointment was not the best choice for NH, and he can find much more qualified candidates that will do a better job and not drive a spike into our educational system - and our state.

Regards,
Rep. Jan Schmidt
N.H. House of Representatives
Ward 1 Nashua [603-880-6060](tel:603-880-6060)

From: Patti Emerson
Sent: Monday, February 6, 2017 1:56 PM
To: gobuild@together.net; ggroleau@nhbb.com; chags@comcast.net; Tom Raffio <traffio@nedelta.com>; hhonorow@barrylawoffice.com; rousemma@gmail.com; waduncansboe@gmail.com
Subject: NH Commissioner of Education

Dear State Board of Education,

I will be brief. I strongly oppose the appointment of Mr. Frank Edelblut to the office of NH Commissioner of Education. I attended the Executive Council hearing at the State House last week, and it is clear that Mr. Edelblut is both unqualified and unsuitable for the post.

I encourage the Board to insist that Governor Sununu withdraw his nomination of

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

Mr. Edelblut, and nominate a more qualified and suitable candidate for the position.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Respectfully,

Patti Emerson
73 Crosby Street
Milford, NH 03055

From: Erik Corbett
Sent: Monday, February 6, 2017 10:51 AM
To: Tom Raffio <traffio@nedelta.com>
Subject: Frank Edelblut

Mr. Raffio,

I am writing to let you know that I object to Gov. Sununu's nomination of Frank Edelblut for the Commissioner of Education position. Mr. Edelblut has no background or education in the profession of education. If he had served as a member of his local school board or was on the Education Committee during his 1 term in the NH House I wouldn't feel so strongly but he has no qualifications for this very important position. If we expect our teachers to have Bachelors and Masters degrees in Education I think we should expect the same of our Commissioner. This appointment is a blatantly political move to appease the new base of Governor Sununu's party. Our children's education must rise above partisan politics. I hope you will object to this nomination at the next meeting of the Board of Education.

Erik Corbett
Bartlett

From: **Lisa Serling**
Date: Sat, Feb 4, 2017 at 6:31 AM
Subject: Edelblut's lack of experience
T

I am writing with deep concern with regard to Mr. Edelblut becoming commissioner of education for New Hampshire. I am a seasoned educator with nearly 20 years of experience in k-12 schools, I have a Masters degree and nearly 70 additional credit hours in related education courses. This man knows NOTHING about public education and there is a strong red flag for me that he does NOT agree with public education at all.

When families choose to homeschool their children the message is they disagree with public education, so my question is; how can he be a proactive representative

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

for children's public education when he doesn't agree with it? How can we support someone who's views are so narrow and limited in the world of education? Isn't education about expanding knowledge and experiences and growing from a rich environment and providing opportunities for all?

Our education system is important and we need to listen to the CREDENTIALLED professionals NOT the greedy politicians and their cronies. We need an experienced educator in that position someone who has the credentials and school experience and knows the pluses and minuses of the system from the inside out. Why in the world would we put someone with no experience in a position so important? Would you go to a doctor who had no medical education? That would be considered life threatening wouldn't it? In my mind a poor education is even more life threatening. We need someone with a passion for learning and educating our children and building our educational system.

Please hold our governor accountable to the process of this state it is there for a reason.

I thank you for your time and energy in this matter.

From: JENNIFER BASILE

Sent: Thursday, February 2, 2017 9:56 AM

To: Tom Raffio <traffio@nedelta.com>

Subject: Opposing Frank Edelblut as Commissioner of Education

Mr. Raffio -

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me this morning. Since I can not make it to the meeting on Feb 9th I do appreciate and thank you for your offer to share my email in the public comments portion of the meeting.

By backing this nominee Governor Sununu, Executive Council Members; Wheeler, Prescott and Kenney are telling the citizens and students of NH that they believe the best person to lead our public schools is someone who does not believe in public schooling. Does this mean they too don't believe in public schooling? Are they fundamentally against public schools in NH? What other measures against our public schools can we expect from them in the future?

I am very disturbed, very concerned and very apprehensive of the direction Governor Sununu has decided to take from day one in regards to education in the state of NH.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Basile
Nashua, NH

From: **Nancy Smith**

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

Date: Thu, Feb 2, 2017 at 11:02 AM
Subject: Edelblut
To: waduncansboe@gmail.com

Please do not support Frank Edelblut as Commissioner of the DOE. He knows NOTHING about education and will certainly hurt small communities who will be forced to fund vouchers. If there is extra money, let's end it to the "poorer" districts to meet basic needs. Please do not support him.

Nancy Smith
Enfield

From: **Biddy Irwin**
Date: Thu, Feb 2, 2017 at 4:42 PM
Subject: Next Commissioner of Education
To: waduncansboe@gmail.com

Dear Mr. Duncan; I am writing to you today to object to the appointment of Frank Edelblut as Commissioner of Education. Mr. Edelblut has no experience in education, let alone knowledge of the NH public schools. It would be a dis-service to the dedicated staff at the DOE to bring in a leader who does not support public education or understand the myriad duties of the Department. Just complying with all the Federal regulations takes someone with a background in education. As a former DOE employee, I would respectfully ask that the State Board review his credentials and experiences and opine to the Governor's Council that Mr. Edelblut is wrong for New Hampshire.

Thank you for your time.
Rep. Virginia O'Brien Irwin
Newport NH

From: Joan Jacobs
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2017 9:31 AM
To: ggroleau@nhbb.com; Tom Raffio
<traffio@nedelta.com>; Tom.Raffio@doe.nh.gov; hhonorow@barrylawoffice.com;
Emma Rous
<rousemma@gmail.com>; waduncansboe@gmail.com; chags@comcast.net; Gregory.Odell@doe.nh.gov
Subject: Fwd: LTE: Governor Sununu must withdraw his nomination of Frank Edelblut for Education Commissioner

Dear Members of the NH Board of Education,

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

I feel strongly that Mr. Edelblut should not be our next Commissioner of Education. I am sharing my letter to the editor on this matter that was published in yesterday's Portsmouth Herald for the Board consideration. I do hope the Governor withdraws his nomination and goes back to square one and names a qualified person to serve as commissioner.

Thank you very much.

To the Editor:

I cannot fathom why Governor Chris Sununu nominated Frank Edelblut to be NH Commissioner of Education. His nominee has absolutely no academic or work experience in education. Moreover, by choosing to home school his own children, Mr. Edelblut has never interacted with a public school. He was both ill-informed and evasive at his recent hearing before the Executive Council (e.g., would not disavow conversion therapy or including creationism in the curriculum, nor continuing partisan involvement with state GOP).

I am equally dismayed at the Governor's carelessness. He appears unwilling or unable to govern responsibly. First, he chose someone guaranteed to be in over-his-head from day one. And, then he disregarded state law by neglecting to consult with the state board of education prior to the Feb. 1 meeting of the Executive Council (EC). Because Sununu didn't do what he had to do in the first place, the approval process has to be reset. The Board of Education meets Feb 9 for consultation and the EC votes on Feb 15. There is still time to object to this foolhardy appointment and insist that the Governor withdraw the nomination of Edelblut. The Governor's office phone number is [603-271-2121](tel:603-271-2121). In addition, I plan to contact the EC at [603-271-3632](tel:603-271-3632) to insist that all of them vote against Edelblut.

I recognize this is an uphill battle. Nevertheless, we must hold Governor Sununu and the EC accountable. We owe to our kids.

Joan Jacobs
Portsmouth, NH

From: Anna Manning
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2017 2:30 PM
To: Tom Raffio <traffio@nedelta.com>
Subject: Frank Edelblut

I am appalled at what is happening!!!! As a former teacher for many years, this is one of the worst appointments that could happen to the educational system in New Hampshire. Frank Edelblut is not qualified for the position of Commissioner of Education. He is a businessman with no formal background in public education who chose to home-school his seven children. I absolutely cannot not fathom how ANYONE can support him. This is an outrage to say the very least. Some people

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

(actually too many) have lost common sense. Power and greed seem to be at the forefront in many of our politician's minds. What a travesty! I WILL NOT vote for any person that approves this nominee and I know my family members will also not for them. We will also very carefully check which representatives, etc.. who voted or will vote for some of the most damaging bills to our state, country and the world.

Sincerely,
Anna Manning

From: **Rick Cecchetti**
Date: Wed, Feb 8, 2017 at 4:59 PM
Subject: Nomination of Mr. Edelblut
To: waduncansboe@gmail.com

Mr. Duncan,

I know there are hearings schedule tomorrow but it doesn't look like a good travel day. I would like to express my displeasure with the Nomination of Mr. Frank Edelbut to be the next NH Commissioner of Education. As far as I can tell he has no experience with public education, except avoiding it for his own children, we need a strong voice in the Commissioners Office supporting public education.

Public education is the bedrock of our Republic, a well educated electorate (and workforce) is absolutely essential for our country to flourish. Nominating someone without any experience and with his abhorrent views on our LBGTQ community sends the wrong message to everyone in the state.

I spent the last eight years encouraging engineers and technical candidates to apply and come to work at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, one of our best selling points is the overall quality of public education throughout the state. It would be a shame to damage that reputation by placing someone with a disdain for public education in the Commissioners Office.

Thank you for your time and if you have any questions I can be reached at [603-767-9860](tel:603-767-9860).

Regards,
Rick Cecchetti

From: **Jodi Gilman Jones**
Date: Wed, Feb 8, 2017 at 4:56 PM
Subject: Education Nominee Edelblut
To: "tomraffio@nedelta.com" <tomraffio@nedelta.com>,
"hhonorow@barrylawoffice.com" <hhonorow@barrylawoffice.com>,

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

"chags@comcast.net" <chags@comcast.net>, "gobuild@together.net" <gobuild@together.net>, "waduncansboe@gmail.com" <waduncansboe@gmail.com>, "rousemma@gmail.com" <rousemma@gmail.com>, "ggroleau@nhbb.com" <ggroleau@nhbb.com>

Board Members,

I appreciate you taking time to read this email. I am writing with grave concern over the nominee. I would like this email to be included in public comment for tomorrow (Thursday February 9, 2017)'s State Board of Education meeting. I am sorry I cannot attend in person as I cannot get off work.

I would like to request you demand Governor Sununu to rescind his nomination. Are you aware that Frank Edelblut opposes banning gay conversion therapy for children? That is not sitting well with me that an experienced politician and businessman - be in charge of Education and that he opposes banning a therapy that would/could include shock therapy of minors.

I would encourage you all to watch this special program and realize that there are many challenges facing our youth and we want them to grow up confident and contributing members of society. Does it really matter who they choose for a relationship as part of educating them?

[Gender Revolution: A Journey with Katie Couric](#)

Please work to find a more well rounded Education Commissioner to represent our Granite State that has a background welcoming inclusive behaviors and one that includes Education would be good too.

Thank you,
Jodi

Jodi Gilman Jones
45 Winchester St
Portsmouth NH 03801
[603-957-1312](tel:603-957-1312)

From: **Jason Cipriano**
Date: Wed, Feb 8, 2017 at 5:27 PM
Subject: Phone Call Follow-up
To: waduncansboe@gmail.com

Bill,

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

Thanks for taking the time to speak with me this afternoon regarding the nomination of Mr. Edelblut for NH Commissioner of Education.

I have attached the comments that I made before the Executive Council regarding Mr. Edelblut. In addition, based on his testimony before the Council, I am concerned that he does not intend to fulfill the full term of the appointment. I sincerely hope this is not the case, as our students deserve a Commissioner who is fully committed to the role and to public education, not someone looking to use the position as a stepping stone to something else. I am concerned that when directly asked about serving a full term by Executive Councilors, Mr. Edelblut was evasive and noncommittal.

I hope that you will take my comments with you to Concord, and press the Governor on how he determined that someone with no experience in public education was the right person to lead public education in the state.

Respectfully,

Jason Cipriano
Chairman, Hampstead School District
Chairman, School Administrative Unit 55

From: **Diane St Germain**

Date: Wed, Feb 8, 2017 at 7:03 PM

Subject: Edelblut is wrong for New Hampshire public education

To: waduncansboe@gmail.com, gobuild@together.net, chags@comcast.net, hhonoro@barrylawoffice.com, TomRaffio@nedelta.com, ggroleau@nhbb.com, rousemma@gmail.com

Dear Members of the Board of Education,

I am a retired New Hampshire educator and I am writing to ask you to reject the nomination of Frank Edelblut as Commissioner of Education. New Hampshire needs a leader who values public education, who has touched the lives of children and teachers and has been touched **by** them, and who is passionate about advocating for public education.

Mr. Edelblut embodies none of the above.

I have taught in Barrington, Strafford, and Nottingham as a classroom teacher, reading teacher and special education teacher. In my thirty-plus years teaching in New Hampshire's public schools I have always felt supported by the leadership of the New Hampshire Department of Education. Our leaders know public schools well, recognize the excellence, the gifts and the challenges of students and teachers alike,

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

and celebrate the strengths of our schools in ways that scaffold them in building responsive and innovative communities.

An effective leader has to know her community deeply and personally. Mr. Edelblut knows only the structures that would siphon funding from our public schools. He is driven by the unfounded assumption that others can do a better job.

Please recognize that the nomination of Frank Edelblut has not been thought through. He does not have the knowledge, the experience or the passion to lead our public schools. Please be sure that Governor Sununu receives the message from the education community of New Hampshire that it is critical to sustain leadership that supports our work and the goals of public education.

Thank you.
Diane St Germain
Center Barnstead

From: Jeannie Dallahi

Date: Wed, Feb 8, 2017 at 8:49 PM

Subject: Please Vote "No" on Mr. Frank Edelblut's Nomination as Education Commissioner

To: tomraffio@nedelta.com, hhonorow@barrylawoffice.com, chags@comcast.net, go-build@together.net, waduncansboe@gmail.com, rousemma@gmail.com, ggroleau@nhbb.com

Cc: cpappas@nh.gov

To: Board of Education

RE: Opposition to the Confirmation of Frank Edelblut as the NH State Education Commissioner

I am writing this letter to strongly oppose the nomination of Frank Edelblut as the NH Education Commissioner. As a parent of 3 children, I do not think that Mr. Edelblut has the qualifications needed to lead this critically important leadership role for NH's public education system. Here are the reasons that I urge you to vote "No":

- Mr. Edelblut does not have any experience as an education, a school administrator, or as a parent of children who attend public schools. This is extremely concerning due to the complexities of the various constituencies that the position must manage – Administrators, Teachers, Therapists, Paraprofessionals, Parents, and Students.
- I am extremely concerned about Mr. Edelblut's interest in moving to a private voucher system or school choice system that would take tax payer dollars out of the public school system and into private, faith-based schools. Will all NH students have equal access to these schools, and how will Mr. Edelblut ensure

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

- that private schools uphold the federal mandates of IDEA. I do not see private vouchers as adding any value to our public education system, but rather it undermines it. This will take funding and resources away from public schools, leaving marginalized groups like low income students and students with disabilities behind as they will be left in underfunded schools.
- I am concerned about Mr. Edelblut's lack of experience with implementing and supporting IDEA and ADA, particularly given the complexities of educating students with disabilities and medical challenges. We chose to live in Londonderry due to the high quality of the school system and because it supports inclusion. My youngest daughter has Down syndrome, is 12 years old, and she is in the 6th grade at Londonderry Middle School. She is thriving because she is included and concurrently is able to get the services she needs to meet her needs. We know from the research that in most cases, kids with disabilities demonstrate more growth in academics, speech and language, social and interpersonal skills, and fewer behavior challenges when educated in an inclusive environment – how does Mr. Edelblut plan to lead our students in this regard?
 - I have 2 sons who attend UNH in Durham and would like to know how Mr. Edelblut plans to make college more affordable for NH residents. Both of my sons will graduate with enormous debt due to the high cost of our state schools, and we have also have a heavy debt burden through the Parent Plus loans. What are Mr. Edelblut's plans to make higher education more affordable to middle and low income students?

It is very clear to me from the initial hearing and the public information available about Mr. Edelblut that he does not have the knowledge or expertise, nor the vision needed to lead our public education system. I urge you to put our children FIRST and vote no on his confirmation.

Thank you for your consideration,
Jeanne Dallahi
13 Cheshire Ct.
Londonderry, NH 03053

From: David Holt
Date: Thu, Feb 9, 2017 at 5:10 AM
Subject: Edelblut is unacceptable for Education Commissioner
To: rousemma@gmail.com, ggroleau@nhbb.com, waduncansboe@gmail.com,
gobuild@together.net, chags@comcast.net, hhonorow@barrylawoffice.com,
TomRaffio@nedelta.com
Cc: Joseph.Kenney@nh.gov, represcott@nh.gov, David.Wheeler@nh.gov,
Andru.Volinsky@nh.gov, cpappas@nh.gov

I am a lifetime resident of NH, with a BA in Sociology and an MBA.

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

I can't imagine Edelblut as a serious choice for Commissioner of Education, first he has no experience whatsoever in education. Second, he opposes a strong Public School system; both of these points disqualify him.

Such rhetoric as the school system has failed and thus we have to provide alternatives is a false narrative. First the NH School system has not failed, NH is among the top states for education. We need to make our public school system solid first, then we can expand on that. We must fully fund our Public Schools and look at Education as the investment in our future that it is.

The idea that we would be able to offer school choices is a lie, there are areas in NH that do not have alternative schools even if stripping funding from public schools to pay for them was a serious option. Even in areas where there are choices, vouchers or credits would not cover the full cost of private schools so it would not be an option to a majority of families, therefore it would only be a discount for the wealthy to send their children to private schools.

If (let's pretend) that somehow we are able to cover the cost of private schools it still does not mean that it would be a true choice for most families because transportation may be prohibitive, people working a 9-5 job or multiple jobs do not have the luxury of being able to change their schedule to be able to transport their children to another school. In other words this choice is a lie. Just as I have the choice to buy a multi million dollar mansion, I don't have the resources to do so, therefore I do not really have that choice.

Edelblut is a ridiculous choice for Commissioner of Education and should not be allowed to be put forward as such.

David Holt
7A Ash Street
Somersworth NH
[603-781-8649](tel:603-781-8649)

From: **Marti Kennedy**
Date: Thu, Feb 9, 2017 at 10:51 AM
Subject: Frank Edelblut
To: TomRaffio@nedelta.com, hhonorow@barrylawoffice.com, chags@comcast.net, gobuild@together.net, waduncansboe@gmail.com, rousemma@gmail.com, ggroleau@nhbb.com

Greetings,

I respectfully, and strongly, urge you to recommend to Governor Sununu that he remove Frank Edelblut from consideration for Commissioner of the Department of Education. I am not convinced he displays the experience required for the position,

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

and I fear he would not have the best of intentions toward supporting our public schools. Please urge Governor Sununu to choose a more qualified candidate for this position.

Thank you,
Marti Kennedy
Milford, NH

From: Marcia Connors
Sent: Thursday, February 9, 2017 10:22 AM
To: Tom Raffio <traffio@nedelta.com>
Subject: concern

I urge you to carefully consider the fact that Frank Edelblut is *highly unqualified* to become the next NH Commissioner of Education. He lacks experience in dealing with public education issues and understanding how public schools function. His knowledge is one-sided. He states that he will only act as a facilitator for educational policies and laws that come from the legislature and the governor which I find deeply troublesome. As a NH taxpayer, I request the next NH Education Commissioner be a leader and a champion who promotes all viable educational models! I urge you to find another nominee who promotes EVERY type of school model and will hold all of them equally accountable in learning outcomes, that state and federal dollars are equally distributed and that the same rules of financial accountability are enforced on and reported by all school models in NH.

Thank you,
Marcia Connors
373 Tory Road
Manchester, NH 03104

Sarah M. B. Henry, M.D.
110 School Street
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

February 12, 2017

Dear Members of the New Hampshire Executive Council and State Board of Education,

Thank you for this opportunity to contribute to the record before you pertaining to the nominee for the Commissioner of Education for our State.

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

By way of introduction, my family moved to New Hampshire thirty years ago this June, and our children attended Concord's public schools. Our daughter returned to complete her pre-medical studies at UNH at both the Manchester and Durham campuses and with that strong preparation went on to medical school at Johns Hopkins. I graduated from medical school at Dartmouth and am a pediatrician on the staff of Boston Children's Hospital. I have graduate degrees from Yale University and the University of Connecticut and am an assistant professor at the Harvard Medical School and fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

I was able to attend the hearing before the Executive Council on January 31st. There, Mr. Edelblut's relationship with Patrick Henry College and his obligation to incorporate the College's statements of faith and biblical worldview fully into his professional life came to light. At that hearing, Mr. Edelblut also responded inaccurately to questions from Councilor Papas about his position on banning conversion therapy for gay and lesbian minors. These deeply troubling revelations merit your close scrutiny.

New Hampshire's public schools are responsible for the care and wellbeing of all of our children, whatever their sexuality; our public schools are responsible for HIV/AIDS prevention education, suicide prevention, and, unless parents opt out, sexual education. While Mr. Edleblut is free to worship as he pleases, he is not free to impose his theological agenda on our public schools, children, families, and communities, most especially when that agenda poses a direct risk of harm. Conversion therapy uses techniques such as shame and aversive conditioning to suppress specific sexual attractions and identities. When minors seek assistance with issues of sexuality, they must receive competent therapy, not a response which is condemned by the following leading professional organizations:

American Academy of Nursing
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Academy of Physician Assistants
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
American Association of School Administrators
American Counseling Association
American Federation of Teachers
American Medical Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychoanalytic Association
American Psychological Association
American School Counselor Association
American School Health Association
Child Welfare League of America
The Interfaith Alliance
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Association of Social Workers

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

National Education Association
Pan American Health Organization
United Nations Committee Against Torture
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Along with many other organizations and institutions, Boston Children's Hospital, where I trained and have been a staff pediatrician since 2000, is a member of a coalition to ban conversion therapy in Massachusetts as it has been elsewhere. Personally and professionally, I have witnessed the despair of children and teenagers when their sexuality is denounced, a despair which all too often leads to self-harm, a life in the shadows, or even death.

If Mr. Edleblut cannot unequivocally state that he is opposed to conversion therapy in our public schools, he should not receive your support.

Thank you for your attention to this letter.

Sincerely yours,

Sarah M. B. Henry, M.D.

To:

New Hampshire Executive Council:
Joseph D. Kenney
Andru Volinsky
Russell E. Prescott
Christopher C. Pappas
David K. Wheeler

New Hampshire State Board of Education:
Cindy C. Chagnon
Bill Duncan
Gary W. Groleau
Helen G. Honorow
Gregory Odell
Thomas Raffio
Emma Rous
By Email

From: Julia Rodriguez
Sent: Monday, February 13, 2017 9:51 AM
To: Julia Rodriguez <juliar1122@gmail.com>
Subject: Concerns about Edelblut

To the NH State Board of Education,

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

I have some serious concerns about Frank Edelblut as the nominee for State Commissioner of Education. Edelblut does not seem qualified for this position. He is not an expert on education and was unable to answer questions in a straightforward manner during his nomination hearings. I also have serious concerns that he will not have the interest of ALL our children in mind — including LGBTQ youth.

Our children deserve the best - an advocate, an experienced and cutting- edge educator. Frank Edelblut does not fit the bill. He should be withdrawn from consideration, or blocked from reaching this important post.

Sincerely,

Julia Rodriguez
Durham, NH

Dear New Hampshire State Board of Education,

February 10, 2017

This letter is to express the strong concerns the National Association of School Workers New Hampshire Chapter (NH-NASW) has with the nomination of Frank Edelblut as Commissioner of Education. Social workers make up the vast majority of mental health professionals in our country and state with over 600 members in New Hampshire.

The NH Department of Education is responsible for the education of all students, regardless of their socio-economic standing, and overseeing federal and grant funding that supports homeless children and youth, substance misuse prevention, and pro-social behavior that facilitates learning and college and career readiness. Guiding school districts in creating places of learning that support all students, families, and communities is the cornerstone of the Department. Based on Mr. Edelblut's previous legislative statements, his beliefs seem to not align nor embrace the long-standing commitment of the Department to developing a high-quality system of public education for all children.

Mr. Edelblut is well known for his divisive statements in the Legislature, based on these statements and Gubernatorial campaign records, he appears to be a vocal opponent of a strong public school system. Additionally, Mr. Edelblut's stated views on social issues, including his defense of conversion therapy on gay minors, raises valid concerns that his policies may not be inclusive of all students. His stance on the issue of full-day Kindergarten indicates that he is comfortable only with having school districts that can afford to implement full-day Kindergarten provide it. This basic lack of understanding of the value of early learning experiences and its impact on children and om future workforce is alarming. Mr. Edelblut's position on school

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

choice, while on the surface is laudable, when put into practice could divert money from school districts further endangering the education of the children from our most vulnerable communities.

Of further concern is Mr. Edelblut's lack of experience with public education. New Hampshire's law concerning the Department of Education states, "The commissioner and deputy commissioner shall be qualified to hold their positions by reason of education and experience." Mr. Edelblut has never worked in the education sector or even served on a local school board. There is no evidence, based on public record, that Mr. Edelblut has the experience or the knowledge to be Commissioner of Education leading New Hampshire's public schools and serve our 180,000 students.

NH-NASW finds it ill-advised to support and appoint someone such as Mr. Edelblut who has never held a leadership position in a public school and has expressed his opposition to supporting a strong public school system. While NH-NASW welcomes innovative approaches, Mr. Edelblut is seemingly coming to the table with a focus on vouchers which serve to undermine public education along with social issue views that may radically change what our students can learn in a public school classroom and which students have access to the supports they need to learn.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Stanley, LICSW
Executive Director
National Association of Social Workers New Hampshire Chapter
cc: Governor Chris Sununu
New Hampshire Executive Council

From: Rene Reeves
Sent: Sunday, February 12, 2017 7:32 PM
To: Hamilton, Mary Ellen
Subject: Frank Edelblut

Dear Ms. Hamilton,

I am writing to oppose Frank Edelblut as the nominee for New Hampshire's Commissioner of Education. Not only is Mr. Edelblut unqualified for this position, but his views on education are reprehensible and will undermine New Hampshire's public education system, a system upon which the vast majority of the state's families and their children depend.

Sincerely,
Rene Reeves
3 Concord Street
Peterborough NH 03458

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

From: Sarah Puglisi
Sent: Monday, February 13, 2017 8:34 AM
To: Hamilton, Mary Ellen
Subject: Frank Edelblut

I am a resident of New Hampshire, living at 20 Quarry Circle Dr., Milford, NH. 03055. Although I no longer have children in the public school system, my four children attended public school and I value the education they received. Mr. Edelblut seems ill prepared to head the state's education department, having had no experience teaching or heading a board of education. Furthermore his 7 children have been home-schooled. These facts show his is not the right person for this position. The public school system is essential in developing informed and educated citizens for the next generation.

Sarah Puglisi, Milford parent

From: Marcia Tripp
Sent: Monday, February 13, 2017 7:47 AM
To: Hamilton, Mary Ellen
Subject: Edelblut

Please help stop him from being confirmed. He is NOT QUALIFIED.

Thanks, Marcia Tripp, Frankestown

From: Susan Richman
Sent: Sunday, February 12, 2017 9:29 PM
To: Tom Raffio <traffio@nedelta.com>
Subject: Commissioner of Education

Tom Raffio, Chairman
State Board of Education

Dear Chairman Raffio,

I am writing to request that you oppose the confirmation of Frank Edelblut as Commissioner of Education. I have been a New Hampshire resident for 28 years, and have two children who have successfully and proudly gone through the public school system in New Hampshire.

New Hampshire in the 21st century needs an educated workforce. The great majority of our students rely on the public education system. If that system is dismantled or handicapped, we will have greater problems of unemployment, weakening of local business, and possible rising addictions and crime rates. It is my

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

understanding that 4th grade reading scores are used to project future need for prison beds.

With education of such vital importance for the future of our state, we need a Commissioner of Education who is qualified. Frank Edelblut has no training in education, no experience within our schools, and has not served on any local school board. This creates a clear conflict with state law, which requires that the commissioner be qualified "by reason of education and experience."

I urge you to support strong public schools. Frank Edelblut lacks the qualifications to be NH Commissioner of Education. Please vote no on his confirmation. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Susan Richman
16 Cowell Drive
Durham, NH 03824 [603-868-2758](tel:603-868-2758)
susan7richman@gmail.com

From: Jamie Pringle
Sent: Sunday, February 12, 2017 10:12 PM
To: Tom Raffio <traffio@nedelta.com>
Cc: hhonorow@barrylawoffice.com; chags@comcast.net; gobuild@together.net; waduncansboe@gmail.com; rousemma@gmail.com; ggroleau@nhbb.com
Subject: Commissioner of Education

Dear Mr Raffio and fellow members of the board of Education,

I am writing you to state my opposition to the appointment of Frank Edelblut to the position of Commissioner of Education.

I am a twenty year science educator and take great pride in my profession. I also take my job of educating young people in various science disciplines, about the process of science, and the importance of thinking in a unbiased, and factual way quite seriously. That is why I am baffled, really appalled at the choice of Mr Edelblut to the position of Education Commissioner. This is clearly a choice made along political lines based on Mr Edelblut's unorthodox world views. His lack of experience and knowledge of education, particularly science education, do not reflect main stream opinions of the people of the state of New Hampshire or frankly anywhere else.

This is a position that requires expertise in the field of education, knowledge of how education works, and how students are best educated. To appoint this man to such an important position would be a great disservice to the students and educators of New Hampshire as well as the electorate. I trust you can make a decision that reflects good judgment and not a nod to a political extremism.

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

Thank you,

Jamie Pringle

From: Janet Szarmach

Sent: Monday, February 13, 2017 10:36 AM

To: Tom Raffio

traffio@nedelta.com; hhonorow@barrylawoffice.com; chags@comcast.net; gobuild@together.net; waduncansboe@gmail.com; rousemma@gmail.com; ggroleau@nhbb.com

Subject: Frank Edelblut Nomination

Dear Board Members,

I am writing as a parent and a New Hampshire resident who cares about our public schools to ask you to please reject Frank Edelblut's nomination for Commissioner of Education. As you know, NH RSA 21-N:3 requires that "the commissioner and deputy commissioner shall be qualified to hold their positions by reason of education and experience." Frank Edelblut, according to his own website, has zero experience in the field of education, having spent his entire career in business and finance. Nor does he hold a degree in education. He was granted a B.S. in business and a Masters degree in theology. He has no experience with schools as a parent, having home schooled all his children, nor has he ever served on a local school board. Clearly, his lack of relevant education and experience should automatically disqualify him from holding the important office of Education Commissioner. I ask again that you please reject Frank Edelblut. Thank you.

Janet Szarmach

4 Laurel Ln.

Stratham, NH 03885

[\(603\)773-0182](tel:6037730182)

From: Nancy Jachim

Date: Sun, Feb 12, 2017 at 8:36 PM

Subject: Edelblut and Kindergarten

To: "TomRaffio@nedelta.vom" <TomRaffio@nedelta.vom>, "chags@comcast.net" <chags@comcast.net>, "waduncansboe@gmail.com" <waduncansboe@gmail.com>, "ggroleau@nhbb.com" <ggroleau@nhbb.com>, "rousemma@gmail.com" <rousemma@gmail.com>, "gobuild@together.net" <gobuild@together.net>, "hhonorow@barrylawoffice.com" <hhonorow@barrylawoffice.com>

As members of the NH State Board of Education, please, please reject Edelblut as commissioner of education. His lack of experience punctuated by his bigotry makes me want to scream that he may be confirmed. Public education drives our

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

communities. Our towns are judged by the quality of the public schools. Please do not sell NH short. Reject Edelblut.

Education is what drives jobs in NH. NH has to start educating our citizens more and more. We know that early education, kindergarten at lease, is the solid basis for a good education. Please support full time kindergarten.

Nancy Jachim, Newport, NH

On Feb 12, 2017, at 7:15 PM, Sarah Brown <sarah@greenalliance.biz> wrote:
Dear State Board of Education Concillors,

I ask you all to reject Frank Edelblut as Commissioner of Education.

His lack of public education experience and extreme ideological positions will influence his decision-making in this position. In these uncertain and frankly, scary times, your job is so very important. You all are the last check on an ill-informed and purely political appointment. NH's education system deserves the best and brightest, with good intentions – not someone who wants to poke a stick in the eye of our schools just because. Remember, we now have a national Secretary of Education whose main goal is to dismantle public education as we know it. Now, more than ever, we need someone qualified and rational at the helm of NH's education.

Edelblut seems (is this even possible?) an even poorer choice than DeVos. Today more than ever it is absolutely imperative that we have hard working, intelligent and experienced people working in our state's educational system. There are no doubt, experienced administrators, teachers and educational experts who have put a lifetime of service into our educational system. Why is someone like that not being appointed to this position? Why is this job being given to a political hack and someone who wants to dismantle and disrupt education rather than improve and strengthen it?

If you look deeper at Edelblut's record you will find alliances with the secession supporting Free State Project, extreme anti-LGBTQ history, and a checkered record on fact-based science.

I have 3 children in the public school system. My husband is a middle school teacher in Chester. Please don't play Russian roulette or political games with our educational system. Edelblut is not qualified. Please reject his candidacy. For starters, one-term State Rep. Frank Edelblut lacks the necessary qualifications to lead the Department of Education. He has no formal background or training in education. He has never once served on a local school board. He home schooled his own seven children but has no experience with public schools, which the majority of our state's children attend. The state law is very clear: the commissioner must be qualified "by reason of education and experience." Edelblut fails to pass the test on

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

both counts. His only real experience with public education includes voting to divert taxpayer dollars to private and religious schools, opposing full-day kindergarten, and allowing parents and guardians to opt their students out of the statewide assessment test. In fact, on his Live Free or Die candidate questionnaire just a few months ago, the only question he skipped was whether he thinks statewide assessment tests should exist or what alternative he would propose.

Additionally, Edelblut voted last spring to force all state-funded facilities to allow guns on their premises, including hospitals, day care centers, drug treatment centers, and halfway houses – would Education Commissioner Edelblut also advocate for even more guns in public schools?

Thank you for hearing me out. Once you have these facts I'm certain you can do nothing else but to vote against Edelblut as our state's Education Commissioner.
Sarah Brown, parent

On Feb 12, 2017, at 7:46 PM, Sally Thursby wrote:

Dear Chairman Raffio,

I am writing to let you know of my opposition to the confirmation of Frank Edelblut as NH Commissioner of Education. I have read about his views and voting record, as well as his opposition to public schools—not to mention his complete lack of experience and education relevant to this position. He holds extreme positions on a number of issues related to education, and I question his ability to think clearly about complex issues affecting thousands of children and families.

As a former special educator in the public school system, I can tell you how demoralizing it is to have unqualified people in positions of leadership. And how inspiring and beneficial it is to schools, children, families, and communities to have leaders with vision, compassion, experience, creativity, positivity.

I ask you to oppose Edelblut's confirmation. Thank you.

Sally Thursby

Sally Thursby

POB 293, Lyme, NH 03768

[603-795-4447](tel:603-795-4447)

From: J LeBlanc

Sent: Wednesday, February 08, 2017 9:56 PM

To: Kincaid, Lori

Subject: Frank Edelblut

Hello,

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

I wish to register my opposition to Frank Edelblut's nomination for Commissioner of Education. I am the parent of a public school elementary student and I find Mr. Edelblut's expressed attitudes toward public school and his lack of experience deeply troubling.

Sincerely,
Jennifer LeBlanc
Lebanon, NH

From: Kate Porter

Date: Sun, Feb 12, 2017 at 6:41 PM

Subject: Ask Governor Sununu to withdraw Commissioner nomination

To: TomRaffio@nedelta.com, hhonorow@barrylawoffice.com, chags@comcast.net, gobuild@together.net, waduncansboe@gmail.com, rousemma@gmail.com, ggroleau@nhbb.com

Good evening,

On Tuesday, Governor Sununu will present his nominee for Commissioner of Education, Frank Edelblut, to the State Board of Education. I am writing to urge you to ask the governor to withdraw Mr. Edelblut from consideration.

According to state law, the Commissioner of Education must be qualified by both education and experience to oversee education in the state. Mr. Edelblut has a great deal of experience and education, but none of it is relevant to our education system. Mr. Edelblut has no formal training in education, has never served on a school board or in any other educational advisory capacity, and has never had children in the public schools. He is not qualified for the position of Commissioner of Education, and he should therefore be withdrawn from consideration.

Managing and overseeing the state's educational system is not something that can or should be learned "on the job". Businesses regularly cite an educated workforce as a key factor in deciding where to locate their headquarters; placing our educational system under the direction of a person with no experience will only harm New Hampshire's economy.

Thank you for your time and attention, and your service to the state.
Dr. Katherine Porter
Concord, NH
maddox22@netscape.net

From: Liz Chipman

Sent: Monday, February 13, 2017 12:39 PM

To: Tom Raffio <traffio@nedelta.com>

Subject: Frank Edelblut

I am strongly opposed to Frank Edelblut for NH Education Commissioner.

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

Liz Chipman
Concord

From: **MARCEY RAWITSCHER**

Date: Mon, Feb 13, 2017 at 2:13 PM

Subject: Mr. Edelblut

To: TomRaffio@nedelta.com, hhonorow@barrylawoffice.com, chags@comcast.net, gobuild@together.net, waduncansboe@gmail.com, rousemma@gmail.com, ggroleau@nhbb.com

Dear NH State School Board:

I am writing to strongly oppose the nomination of Frank Edelblut as Commissioner of Education. Mr. Edelblut is unqualified for the job as he has neither the educational/professional background required by law nor any professional or personal experience with public schools. In addition, the positions that Mr. Edelblut has taken are outside of the mainstream. New Hampshire is at the forefront of public education reform at the movement. Our PACE program has garnered national attention at both the government and non-government levels. It would be a real shame to see the state take a step backward. As a parent and a public school teacher for more than 25 years, I am asking you to reject his nomination.

Mr. Edelblut has no background in education. His educational background is in business and theology, not education. He did not send his kids to public schools and his only experience in public education seems to be in opposing it. He supports vouchers that take taxpayer money and gives it to private and religious schools. He has opposed full-day kindergarten and seems to support the teaching of creationism in public schools, a clear violation of the separation of church and state mandated in the First Amendment.

Mr. Edelblut has been unclear about how he feels about statewide assessments. While I welcome a discussion on the value of statewide tests, his responses on that issue concern me as the state moves towards performance assessments that really show what students know and are able to do. His views on this issue need to be fully explored before he is confirmed.

I am concerned about positions that Mr. Edelblut has taken that are outside the mainstream. He voted against banning gay conversion therapy, and seems to be against providing special needs students with the services they need, as evidenced by his vote against a bill that required the Department of Education to assign a reading specialist to support schools with dyslexia. Clearly Mr. Edelblut does not believe in providing all students with the tools they need to succeed. There are many questions Mr. Edelblut needs to answer before his nomination is considered let alone approved. The ones that matter most to me are:

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

1. Should creationism be taught in public school science classes?
2. Should weapons be allowed on the premises of public schools and day care centers?
3. What protections would he support for LGBTQ students?
4. What are his positions on the inclusions of special needs students? Does he believe in mainstreaming? How does he propose to serve students with special needs?
5. What is his position on statewide assessments and how would he measure student achievement?

Mr. Edelblut is not qualified for this position. The past Commissioners of Education in this state have been highly qualified and experienced. Mr. Edelblut's nomination should be rejected by the State School Board and Executive Council.

Thank you,
Marcey Rawitscher
323 Boston Post Rd
Amherst, NH 03031
mrawitscher_98@comcast.net

From: Tara Pompeo
Date: Mon, Feb 13, 2017 at 2:31 PM
Subject: Governor Sununu should withdraw his nomination of Frank Edelblut for Commissioner of Education.
To: TomRaffio@nedelta.com, hhonorow@barrylawoffice.com, chags@comcast.net, gobuild@together.net, waduncansboe@gmail.com, rousemma@gmail.com, ggroleau@nhbb.com

Dear BoE Members,

Governor Sununu should withdraw his nomination of Frank Edelblut for Commissioner of Education.

As a resident of New Hampshire I ask you to oppose the nomination of Frank Edelblut as Commissioner of Education.

The next Commissioner of Education should be qualified and should be a strong advocate for all New Hampshire children. Frank Edelblut lacks the necessary qualifications to lead the Department of Education. He has no formal background or training in education. He has never once served on a local school board. He home schooled his own seven children but has no experience with public schools, which the majority of our state's children attend. The state law is very clear: the commissioner must be qualified "by reason of education and experience."

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

Edelblut's lack of qualifications is not the only reason he is unfit for the job. As Commissioner of Education, Frank Edelblut would be responsible for the adequate education and safety of all of our school children. That is why it is so concerning that he has sponsored bills that undermine a child's right to an adequate education, disavowed programs that provide a safe, positive learning environment for LGBTQ students, and denied services to students with learning disorders.

Frank Edelblut is the wrong choice for NH Commissioner of Education. I ask you to stand up for strong public schools, and for all students regardless of background, identity, or learning ability, by voting no on his confirmation.

Sincerely,
Tara Pompeo
2 Flint Dr.
Amherst, NH

From: Jeanne Lud
Sent: Monday, February 13, 2017 1:56 PM
To: hhonorow@barrylawoffice.com; Tom Raffio
<traffio@nedelta.com>; chags@comcast.net; gobuild@together.net; waduncansboe@gmail.com; rousemma@gmail.com; ggroleau@nhbb.com
Cc: dwheeler@nh.gov
Subject: Nomination of Edelblut as Commissioner of Education

As a resident of NH and a former school board member, I am extremely concerned about the nomination of Frank Edelblut as our Commissioner of Education. In addition to being unqualified in the same way that Betsy Devos was unqualified, he also has worked against providing adequate funding for public education. He would be the wrong choice to maintain the reputation our state has for excellence in education.

Thank you.

Jeanne Ludt
3 School St.
Amherst, NH 03031

From: **Beth Olshansky**
Date: Mon, Feb 13, 2017 at 2:28 PM
Subject: Commissioner of Education
To: Emma Rous
<rousemma@gmail.com>, gobuild@together.net, hhonorow@barrylawoffice.com, waduncansboe@gmail.com, chags@comcast.net, TomRaffio@nedelta.com, ggroleau@nhbb.com

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

Dear Members of the NH State Board of Education,

I am writing to state my concern about our Governor's appointment for Commissioner of Education.

As an educator, I have spent the last 25 years traveling around the US training teachers. I have had the opportunity to visit schools across the US and Canada. While our schools here in NH could always stand some improvement, I can say that NH has some of the best schools in the country. We have accomplished this through our unqualified support for public education.

I am concerned that Mr. Edelblut has no experience as an educator, thus it defies reason that he should hold the highest appointed office within our state educational system.

Does NH really have to lower the bar to reflect the missteps of our nation?

Furthermore, as a taxpayer, I am happy to contribute my tax dollars so that all students will receive a fair and equal education, one based on the real world, facts, and data. I understand that Mr. Edelblut is a believer in Creationism and a Climate Change denier. I do not want my tax dollars to contribute toward vouchers that can be used for those who live in an alternate reality to indoctrinate their children. Whatever happened to the separation between Church and State?

I urge you to request that Gov. Sununu withdraw with appointment. There are surely many highly qualified educators in the state. Frank Edelblut is not one of them.

Beth Olshansky
University New Hampshire
Huddleston Hall, 73 Main Street
Durham, NH 03824

From: Robin Gregg
Sent: Monday, February 13, 2017 12:16 PM
To: Tom Raffio <traffio@nedelta.com>
Subject: Edelblut nomination

Dear Mr. Raffio, I urge you to do whatever you can to prevent Frank Edelblut from becoming our Commissioner of Education. His lack of experience with and apparent lack of commitment to public schools, along with his extreme views make him a bad choice. We need a Commissioner who understands the crucial role of public education for NH students, families, and our communities.

Sincerely,
Robin Gregg, Hancock, NH

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

From: Marie McCormick <marie.m.mccormick@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, Feb 13, 2017 at 3:59 PM

Subject: comments re: Frank Edelblut

To: TomRaffio@nedelta.com, chags@comcast.net, waduncansboe@gmail.com, ggroleau@nhbb.com, hhonorow@barrylawoffice.com, gobuild@together.net, rousemma@gmail.com

Dear New Hampshire Board of Education Members,

I am a parent in Lebanon, NH, and I would like to express my opposition to the nomination of Frank Edelblut for education commissioner. His nomination, to me, signals that education can and should be run like a business, but really education should be much more than that.

Education, with "public schools as a backbone" (as heard by our own governor this morning) serves many purposes. College and career readiness is one, and in this regard I have heard it argued that Edelblut's business experience puts him in a good position to improve our educational system. But for many children education is the way that they learn to be good citizens, not just good corporate workers. Schools (and I am now talking about public schools) contribute to our society and to education by serving as community centers, as focal points that bring together people of varying backgrounds and abilities. Public schools are also governed by the community - an important aspect of our democracy. What will Edelblut bring to this system? How will he strengthen the public schools and apply the much-talked-about idea of school choice within those schools as well as outside of them? How will he balance the need to improve and be efficient with the need to recognize the humanity of our students, our teachers, and our communities? There is nothing in his background that suggests that he will be able to do this.

A final point that I think you should consider: last week education on a federal level was put in the hands of a woman with no public school experience, little understanding of equitable learning, and no demonstrated level of commitment to standards or to public schools. This is what it is, now - we can't change it. But what we CAN change is to balance that situation with this state-level appointment. To balance the lack of knowledge/experience/commitment on the federal level with a commissioner for the state that IS knowledgeable, committed to public school improvement as well as to school choice, and knowledgeable about the many facets of education.

Please ensure that we do better in New Hampshire. Please demand a more experienced and committed commissioner than Frank Edelblut. Our students, families, and communities will thank you.

Sincerely,
Marie McCormick

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

From: Blithe Reed
Date: Mon, Feb 13, 2017 at 4:27 PM
Subject: Governor's Nominee
To: "waduncansboe@gmail.com" <waduncansboe@gmail.com>

I am emailing you to let you know that as a teacher in NH since 1970 and still teaching high school English, I believe the Governor's nomination to head the NH State Board of Education is a mistake. He does not have the expertise to serve in this capacity. New Hampshire cannot make the same mistake that was made at the national level.

Thank you,
Blithe Reed
Henniker, NH

From: Tom St.Martin <tomstmartin@comcast.net>
Date: Mon, Feb 13, 2017 at 5:04 PM
Subject: Edelblut - opposition
To: TomRaffio@nedelta.com, hhonorow@barrylawoffice.com, chags@comcast.net, gobuild@together.net, waduncansboe@gmail.com, rousemma@gmail.com, ggroleau@nhbb.com

Dear Board Members,

I've been a very active supporter of public education from before my children were enrolled to the present day, long after they graduated from Candia's Moore School and Manchester's Central.

I am dismayed at the nomination of Mr Edelblut. By all accounts, he is personable, intelligent and a capable businessman. However, he also has no experience with public education in his personal, professional or political life. No understanding of what superintendents, principals, teachers and support staff do or need, no experience as a school board member. Yet he has been nominated to head the department charged with overseeing the most important business in which our state is involved.

At this point, I don't know what impact the State Board can have on this nomination. I do hope you use whatever influence you have to oppose it, however. I wish you well, regardless of who is finally approved, in your support of public education in NH.

Thanks for your consideration,
-tom
Tom St.Martin
Candia NH 03034
603.483.2794 (Land)

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

From: Cheryl Smith

Sent: Monday, February 13, 2017 6:13 PM

To: Tom Raffio

[<traffio@nedelta.com>](mailto:traffio@nedelta.com); hhonorow@barrylawoffice.com; chags@comcast.net; gobuild@together.net; waduncansboe@gmail.com; rousemma@gmail.com; ggroleau@nhbb.com

Subject: Frank Edelblut as Commissioner of Education

Dear chairman Raffio and State Board of Education Committee members,

As a resident of New Hampshire I ask you to PLEASE oppose the confirmation of Frank Edelblut as Commissioner of Education.

As a one-term state rep, Frank Edelblut lacks the necessary experience to lead the Department of Education. He has no formal background or training in education and thus lacks the necessary qualifications to lead the Department of Education. He has never once served on a local school board. He has no experience with public schools, which the majority of our state's children attend. The state law is very clear: the commissioner must be qualified "by reason of education and experience."

As a scientist and educator, I am gravely concerned about Edelblut's agenda. Recently, he refused to answer a reporter's question about whether he'd support teaching creationism in science curriculum, stating: "In science, we should study all theories of human origins, all legitimate or substantive theories of human origins ... What I would advocate is for good science, and good science should support all theories of human origins, whatever they might be." Creationism is NOT science.

Edelblut is a danger to our children: His sponsorship of the Parental Rights Amendment would remove community protections for children and potentially interfere with adequate and inclusive education (advocacy groups here in NH and in other state have spoken out against this and similar bills). He has voted in favor of continuing unethical gay conversion therapies, therapies that have been proven in studies to be ineffective and often harmful to the psychological development of children. In addition, Edelblut has voted to force all state-funded facilities to allow guns on their premises...including hospitals and day care centers - can we expect him to further this enforcement to public schools? He also has a 'track record' of speaking out against the LGBTQ community...will his stance result in more teen suicides?

Frank Edelblut is the wrong choice for NH Commissioner of Education. I ask you to stand up for strong public schools, and for all students regardless of background, identity, or learning ability, by voting NO on his confirmation.

Thank You,

Cheryl Smith

Nottingham, NH

From: Sara Persechino

Sent: Monday, February 13, 2017 5:26 PM

To: Tom Raffio

[<traffio@nedelta.com>](mailto:traffio@nedelta.com); hhonorow@barrylawoffice.com; chags@comcast.net; gobuild@together.net; waduncansboe@gmail.com; rousemma@gmail.com; ggroleau@nhbb.com

Subject: Please oppose Edelbut's nomination

Good evening,

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

I'm writing today as a New Hampshire resident, a product of our state's public schools (I attended Washington Elementary School, Hillsboro-Deering Middle School, and graduated from Hopkinton High School in 2006), and mom to two daughters to share my concern about the future of public education in New Hampshire and urge you to encourage Governor Sununu to rescind his nomination of Frank Edelblut as Commissioner of Education.

One of the greatest gifts we can give our children is a quality education. This is a responsibility I take very seriously as a parent, and know you do too as a member of our State Board of Education.

I attended the confirmation hearing for Frank Edelblut with my four-month-old daughter and was disappointed with his lack of experience and frankly terrified of his strong support for "school choice." Edelblut has never taught or held any administrative or support role in a school system. During his confirmation hearing, he admitted he has not even toured a New Hampshire public school since his nomination. This is a shaky platform for the leader of our state's public education system, and I fear his true intent is to funnel taxpayer dollars from our already chronically underfunded public schools to charter schools. I am not opposed to the concept of charter schools, but am opposed to undermining our public schools in this way.

New Hampshire students deserve a highly qualified leader to shape our schools and their futures. My daughters' access to education is in your hands. Please oppose Edelblut's nomination as Commissioner of Education.

Thank you for your time, and for your service to our state.

Best,
Sara Persechino
Contoocook, NH

From: Elizabeth Morgan
Sent: Monday, February 13, 2017 4:58 PM
To: Tom Raffio
<traffio@nedelta.com>; hhonorow@barrylawoffice.com; gobuild@together.net; rousemma@gmail.com
; chags@comcast.net; waduncansboe@gmail.com; gqroleau@nhbb.com
Subject: Vote NO on Frank Edelblut

Dear State Board of Education Member: I am writing to ask you to NOT support Frank Edelblut for Commissioner of Education. Our family has experience in public, private, parochial, and alternative schools, and I believe that Mr Edelblut does not have the experience to represent the children of New Hampshire or to form public policy in regard to education. PLEASE find another candidate for this important position.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Morgan
Amherst, NH

From: Jean Townsend
Sent: Monday, February 13, 2017 5:51 PM
To: Tom Raffio <traffio@nedelta.com>
Subject: No to Edelblut

Please do what you can to block Frank Edelblut from becoming New Hampshire's Commissioner of Education. He has no credentials. He wants to increase the amount of tax money that goes to support religion. He would work to splinter our children into enclosed segregated groups. He would resist requiring "alternative" schools to meet the same standards as our fine public schools. I doubt his intentions would bode well for special needs students.

Jean Clark Townsend

Communications received by BOE re: commissioner nomination

Canaan, NH

Tuesday, February 15, 2017

To the State Board of Education:

The NH Dept of Education is committed to helping students, parents, and educators (including teachers, principals, superintendents, and school communities) meet the educational needs of each student. This department and its divisions address every level of public education from kindergarten, to postsecondary options, and to avenues for adults who are seeking a non-traditional approach to furthering their own education.

Since the late 1960s, when Governor Peterson was elected on to the present day, the commissioners who have led the DOE have been highly educated trained professionals. Indeed, state law requires that the commissioner must be qualified **“by reason of education and experience.”** From Gov. Peterson to Gov. Thomson, Gallen and John Sununu, followed by Governors Gregg and Merrill and then into the 21st century with Shaheen, Benson, Lynch and Hassan All have appointed candidates with the experience and necessary background to manage a statewide department in as sensitive and critical field as the education of our children.

Mr. Edelblut is not the right candidate to become the Commissioner of Education. He is a long-time advocate of home schooling, a school voucher system and is an opponent of Common Core, public schools in general, and does not understand the intricate nature of public schools. We can be sure that if he is confirmed, our public school system will be in jeopardy. This system – as any system – has its ups and downs but works well especially for working families which need two incomes to survive.

Surely one can see that in order to home school a child, at least one parent needs to be home to do so. Training, time, and other resources are not easy to come by for most of the population. Moving away from the public school system as we know it will force many students out of the educational system.

Please vote against confirmation of Frank Edelblut.
State Rep. Carol Roberts, Hillsborough- District 04
31 Curtis Farm Road
Wilton, NH 03086-5122
Phone: (603)654-6922

My name is Marsha Feder and I am a resident of Hollis, NH. I would like to thank the State Board of Education for giving me the opportunity to submit this written public comment.

Recently, I retired from a long career of teaching in the public schools. For the past twenty years, I was a special education teacher at Milford High School. Although I am no longer a teacher and my own children graduated many years ago, I remain passionate about the importance of education. I believe that good public schools are essential for the future of our country.

Therefore, I am disappointed in Governor Sununu's choice for Commissioner of Education. While I am sure the Mr, Edelblut is a good person who is also concerned with education in NH, I do not believe that he is the right person for this position. I am dismayed by his lack of experience with public schools, which the majority of NH children attend.

I am worried that he will divert much needed funds away from public schools, in favor of private and religious schools.

I am concerned that Mr. Edelblut does not support the LGBT students in our state or those with disabilities.

I would urge the council to oppose Mr. Edelblut and find a more qualified candidate whose view are more in line with the majority of NH citizens.

Thank you.

Marsha Feder
Hollis, NH



New Hampshire Executive Council
107 North Main Street
State House, Room 207
Concord, NH 03301
January 31, 2017

Dear Executive Council:

Educating and empowering children to achieve their greatest individual potential is one of the most important tasks of a civil society. Mr. Edelblut is the wrong choice to serve as Commissioner of Education who is tasked with overseeing the education of all of New Hampshire's youth.

Through strategic litigation, public policy advocacy, and education, GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders works in New England and nationally to create a just society free of discrimination based on gender identity and expression, HIV status, and sexual orientation. We have done ground-breaking work in schools, ensuring that LGBTQ children are safe, welcome and included.

LGBTQ youth are among our most vulnerable. According to GLSEN's 2015 School Climate Survey, "schools nationwide are hostile environments for a distressing number of LGBTQ students, the overwhelming majority of whom routinely hear anti-LGBT language and experience victimization and discrimination at school. As a result, many LGBTQ students avoid school activities or miss school entirely." According to this study, 57.6% of LGBTQ students felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation, and 43.3% because of their gender expression. These statistics are unacceptable. New Hampshire needs a Commissioner of Education who is committed to ensuring the safety and inclusion of all children, particularly our most vulnerable.

Mr. Edelblut has taken positions that would actively undermine the well-being of LGBTQ youth. In his short tenure as State Representative, Mr. Edelblut sponsored the so-called Parental Rights bill. Ostensibly, the bill would have provided that parental rights to direct the upbringing and education of their children shall not be infringed. In reality, the bill would have given parents veto power over public education and would have undercut the ability of schools to teach about diversity, equity and inclusion for all, including LGBTQ people. The national organization coordinating the effort to secure Parental Rights Amendments in the states opposes equal marriage and equal rights for LGBTQ persons. Mr. Edelblut also opposed the U.S. Department of Education's efforts to protect transgender students, and he voted against banning conversion therapy for minors. Conversion therapy seeks to change a child's sexual orientation and gender identity, and it has been opposed by the American Psychological Association, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Counseling Association, among many other leading organizations.

Mr. Edelblut's positions are far outside the mainstream, and it would be unconscionable to elevate to Commissioner of Education a proponent these views.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janson Wu". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Janson" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Wu".

Janson Wu
Executive Director
GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders

February 14, 2017

Thank you for this opportunity to speak. My name is Diane St Germain and I live in Center Barnstead. I taught in Barrington, Strafford and Nottingham for thirty-three years as an elementary classroom teacher, reading teacher and special education teacher. My children attended New Hampshire public schools and my daughter is a graduate of UNH.

I have submitted a letter to board members, but after hearing the governor speak yesterday on *The Exchange* I would like to add some comments.

In promoting Mr. Edelblut yesterday, Governor Sununu stated that his nominee wants to allow students to have more choice in the public schools and to allow students to drive their own solutions and define their own pathways. If that's what he truly believes then Mr. Edelblut would *not* be promoting charter schools and vouchers that would siphon funding from public schools. He would be fully supporting public schools in their efforts to do just what he is proposing.

Governor Sununu also said yesterday, that Mr. Edelblut is the most qualified person he knows in the state to lead New Hampshire schools into the 21st century. If this were the case, Mr. Edelblut would know that in the 21st century, the most successful public schools in the world have foundations that are in stark contrast to what he espouses.

The foundation for the world-class education system of Finland for example, has three characteristics that make Finnish schools an international model of success:

1. Systematic focus on teacher and leader professionalism
2. The building of trust between the society and its public schools
3. Investment in educational equity *rather than* competition, choice, and other market-based reforms

(Finnish Lessons 2.0, Pasi Sahlberg, 2012)

So, in contrast to what Governor Sununu said yesterday, his nominee is out of touch with what is needed to lead schools into the 21st century. His policies would undermine the success of our schools by eroding trust between society and our public schools and by constructing barriers to investment in education equity— the foundation of the most successful public schools in the world.

Please insist that Governor Sununu rescind this flawed nomination. Thank you.

Note:

"There are some who argue that since Finland has less socio-economic diversity than, for example, the United States, there's little to learn here. But Finland's success is not a "Nordic thing," since Finland significantly out-achieves its "cultural control group" countries like Norway and Sweden on international benchmarks. And Finland's size, immigration and income levels are roughly similar to those of a number of American states, where the bulk of education policy is implemented."

The Hechinger Report, Covering Innovation & Inequality in Education, *How Finland broke every rule — and created a top school system*, William Doyle February 18, 2016. <http://hechingerreport.org/how-finland-broke-every-rule-and-created-a-top-school-system/>



**Public Comment in Opposition to Frank Edelblut for NH Commissioner of Education
State Board of Education, February 14, 2017**

My name is Zandra Rice Hawkins and I'm the executive director of Granite State Progress, a multi-issue advocacy organization working on issues of immediate state and local concern. I'm here today to testify in opposition to the nomination of Frank Edelblut for NH Education Commissioner. We believe that the candidate is unfit for the job.

To start, Frank Edelblut lacks the necessary qualifications to lead the Department of Education. He has no formal background or training in education. He has never once served on a local school board. He home schooled his own seven children but has no experience with public schools, which the majority of our state's children attend.

The state law is very clear: the commissioner must be qualified "by reason of education and experience." Edelblut fails to pass the test on both counts. His only real experience with public education includes voting to divert taxpayer dollars to private and religious schools, opposing full-day kindergarten, and allowing parents and guardians to opt their students out of the statewide assessment test. (HB1192, Roll Call #129, 3/10/2016; HB1563, Roll Call #42, 2/10/2016; HB 1338, Roll Call #155, 3/23/16)

This last one is curious, because on his Live Free or Die candidate questionnaire just a few months ago, the only question Mr. Edelblut skipped was whether he thinks statewide assessment tests should exist or what alternative he would propose. (LFDA, [Frank Edelblut](#)) Certainly an individual who voted to allow parents to opt-out of the testing and who is now willing to accept a nomination for Education Commissioner should have a well-defined and articulate position on this policy. Mr. Edelblut should be asked whether he believes New Hampshire should have statewide assessment tests, and if not, what alternative he would propose.

However, Mr. Edelblut's lack of qualifications isn't the only reason he is unfit for the job. As Commissioner of Education, Frank Edelblut would be responsible for the adequate education and safety of all of our school children. That's why it's so concerning that:

- **Mr. Edelblut sponsored an ALEC model Parental Rights Amendment that would remove community protections for children.** This bill would have given a parent the final word on their child's health, education and welfare – even if it meant the child was put at risk or danger. Advocacy groups spoke out against this bill here and in other states because of the potential for it to remove community protections for children and/or to interfere with an adequate and inclusive education, including whether to provide any education at all. Mr. Edelblut should be asked whether parents have a responsibility to educate their children, and whether the government has a compelling interest to ensure a minimum level of education for children. ([CACR16, Roll Call #134, 3/10/2016 ALEC Model Legislation: Parental Rights Amendment](#))

- **Mr. Edelblut voted against banning unethical gay conversion therapy seeking to change a child's sexual orientation or gender identity.** In testimony, Edelblut compared this anti-LGBT counseling to counseling to end a smoking, drinking, or drug habit. He also spoke out against the Obama administration's Department of Education guidance on transgender students which sought to ensure transgender students enjoy a supportive and nondiscriminatory school environment. ([HB1661, Roll Call #167, 3/23/2016](#))

When asked about this during the Executive Council public hearing on his nomination, Mr. Edelblut purposely downplayed his position on conversion therapy and LGBTQ rights in general, saying his testimony on gay conversation therapy was for technical purposes only. However, our organization filmed that hearing and last week released the video of Mr. Edelblut testifying for 20 minutes on the topic. He's also spent at least seven years fundraising for a college that considers marriage equality a sin and openly prohibits students from being gay, lesbian, or transgender. The college states very clearly that those connected with it have a responsibility to "integrate a biblical worldview into all aspects of their professional lives." Mr. Edelblut's anti-LGBTQ background and activities raise real concerns about whether he will work to ensure all children have a safe and welcoming learning environment in New Hampshire. He should be asked what he will do to ensure those children have positive school experiences.

- **Mr. Edelblut also voted against requiring the Department of Education to designate a dyslexia specialist to support school districts with dyslexic students.** The bipartisan bill, which became a law despite Edelblut's vote, required the Commissioner of the Department of Education to designate a reading specialist to provide support and resources to school districts for identifying and assisting students with dyslexia and related disorders and their families. The bill originated from a study committee that was tasked with identifying ways to improve outcomes for dyslexic students. Why did he vote against it? ([HB1644, Roll Call #44, 2/10/2016](#))

Furthermore, we have not heard what Mr. Edelblut believes is working for students with special education needs and what he think needs to be improved. Since Mr. Edelblut homeschooled his own children, does he have an understanding of the different educational challenges facing some children in our community, and does he have any experience at all in addressing those challenges? These are real questions to be answered, and the learning curve is steep.

- **Recently Mr. Edelblut refused to answer a reporter's question about whether he'd support teaching creationism in science curriculum**, stating: "In science, we should study all theories of human origins, all legitimate or substantive theories of human origins ... What I would advocate is for good science, and good science should support all theories of human origins, whatever they might be." He again ducked the question when asked by Councilor Volinsky during the Executive Council nomination hearing. Mr. Edelblut needs to answer: Yes or no, does he believe creationism should be taught as a valid scientific theory? ([Union Leader, Former opponent Edelblut tapped by Sununu for top education post, 1.18.17](#))
- **Also on the topic of science, Mr. Edelblut does not believe that man-made climate change is real.** During a WMUR political debate last fall, Mr. Edelblut claimed it is unknown whether climate change is man-made, despite wide-spread scientific consensus it is. There is a real conversation taking place in America's classrooms regarding teaching

children fact-based science around man-made climate change, and even Mr. Edelblut's fiercest supporters brought this up during the Executive Council hearing— albeit in support of Mr. Edelblut and in opposition to the new science standards. Mr. Edelblut told members of the Executive Council that he does not need a background in education because he will rely on the experts, but when it comes to creationism in the science classroom or whether humans contribute to climate change Mr. Edelblut has chosen not to listen to experts.

At the same time, Mr. Edelblut asserts the Education Commissioner has no role in science curriculum, standards, or oversight. We are very concerned about whether Mr. Edelblut fully understands the role of the Education Commissioner since he continues to punt on serious questions. His response on all of the tough questions is to say “it is up to the local school boards” or to defer to the State Board of Education. It does not seem that he believes he has a responsibility or duty to be able to answer any of these questions himself. And that's without even getting into other important things we should know about a potential NH Education Commissioner, such as whether he believes New Hampshire should accept federal funding for education, or what kind of relationship he believes should exist between the homeschooling community and local school districts, including what the responsibility of local school districts and the Department of Education is in these instances.

Its half-way thru the school year, Mr. Edelblut does not have time for on the job training. We need to know right now how he would handle various situations, and how he would represent the NH Department of Education.

It is important that we speak up for a strong public education, and for leaders who will create a positive learning environment for all children regardless of their background, identity, or ability. We strongly urge the State Board of Education to tell Governor Sununu that he should find a candidate better suited to the position.

Zandra Rice Hawkins
Executive Director, Granite State Progress
Phone: 603.225.2471
zandra@granitestateprogress.org

Addendum:

Enclosed are copies of written public comments from concerned organizations and community members.

Good Morning,

My name is Pam Wicks, I'm a mom to 3 boys who attend the public schools here in Concord, NH. I'm here as a public school advocate and to speak out against Governor Sununu's nomination of Mr. Edelblut for the Commissioner of Education for the state of NH.

NH public schools deserve better than this nomination. While I have no reason to doubt that he is the nice man I have read about, that does not mean that he is the right person for this position. We need a leader who understands the struggles of our public schools. Not someone who is going to advocate for more funds to be diverted to charter schools, or shape NH's educational goals to reflect his personal religious views. Not someone who advocates a taxpayer subsidy for wealthy families to send their children to private or parochial schools and not someone who has never spent time in a public school, as a teacher, administrator, PTA volunteer or sat on a school board.

At his nomination hearing he asked why we have seen a rise in Charter schools and his answer to his own question was; that public schools are not offering a product that parents are happy with. The real answer is that they get the advantage of playing by their own rules. They get to cap their class sizes. They can cherry pick the students they want. If they have a child that is difficult, or a child with needs they don't want to support, they can send them back to the public schools. And even at that point, if they don't succeed, they have no requirement to meet any of the standards that our public schools do.

Public schools are there for everyone, no matter what. Our schools teach both our gifted kids, those with special needs and everyone in between. If more kids move into the area, we adjust to make room for them. If they don't have the money to add another class, the classes just have to get bigger. If there is a reason our school can't meet a child's needs, the taxpayer foots the bill to meet their needs elsewhere.

Public Schools are held accountable for how they spend the people's tax dollars. We have a board, we hold public meetings, you are able to see the budget and provide input and in most towns you vote on the budget. If a town decides they don't like the budget, then they vote no and the cuts are made. The schools hands are tied. Public Schools require transparency. You know exactly how your tax dollars are being spent in the public schools. Charter Schools do not have the same accountability and are not held to the same standards. Public schools focus is always on what's best for the students, and they do everything they can to provide the best education to each student that walk into the doors, but when the funds are not there, the programs they are able to offer are limited. Charter Schools do not have those limitations.

We need someone at the helm focusing on making our public schools better, not transitioning handpicked children into better "choices". Over the last few years, the public schools in this state have been pioneering major advances with competency based assessments and the PACE program, something that I can tell from experience with my children, has them excited for tests (my oldest son thought the final science test project was so cool he brought it home and built new ones).

I want to make sure that we have someone that is dedicated to strengthening the public schools not hindering them. I want someone who has been in the trenches with our teachers and administrators and understands their struggles and success. Someone that understands the limitations that our public schools have when we put all the burden onto the taxpayers of our towns. Someone that has actually had a child in a public school. I urge you to please reconsider this nomination and find someone who better understands public education. Every child deserves a chance to succeed, not just the ones a charter school picks.

Thank you for your time and consideration.