



SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT #19

The New Hampshire Education Freedom Accounts Program

A Review of Program Evolution and District-Level Participation in Goffstown and New Boston

Executive Summary

This paper provides an analysis of the New Hampshire Education Freedom Accounts (EFA) program, focusing on its historical development, recent legislative changes, and district-level participation and impacts in Goffstown and New Boston. The purpose is to inform education policymakers, school administrators, and other stakeholders about the program's trajectory, policy implications, and the trends in student qualification rates in the Goffstown and New Boston School Districts. Key findings include a summary of program milestones, insights into statewide and local impacts, and strategic recommendations for future consideration.

Introduction

The Education Freedom Accounts (EFA) program was established in 2021 by NH RSA 194-F <https://gc.nh.gov/rsa/html/XV/194-F/194-F-mrg.htm> in New Hampshire to provide families with greater choice in education by providing eligible students with state-funded accounts to pay for approved educational expenses outside the traditional public school system. Since its inception, the program has become a focal point of education policy discussions, given its potential to reshape educational access and resource allocation across New Hampshire school districts.

Historical Development of the Education Freedom Accounts Program

Timeline and Evolution

- 2021: The EFA program was enacted as part of the state budget, with the first accounts available for the 2021-2022 school year. The program allowed qualifying families to use state funds for private school tuition, homeschooling expenses, online learning, and other educational services.
- 2022–2023: Early implementation saw rapid enrollment growth, driven by increased public awareness and ongoing debates about educational equity and school choice.

- 2024: The program underwent several legislative updates to clarify eligibility criteria, accountability standards, and funding mechanisms.
- 2025: With legislation that eliminated income thresholds, participation in the EFA program grew to the statutory “cap” of 10,000 participants statewide. (Please note that in 2026, the statutory cap will rise to 12,500 participants.)

The EFA program was modeled after similar initiatives in other states but tailored to New Hampshire’s legislative environment and educational landscape. Its introduction and current statutory landscape have both support and criticism, reflecting broader national trends in school choice policy, and concerns regarding the funding of public education in New Hampshire.

Recent Changes to the Program

Legislative Updates and Policy Shifts

- **Eligibility Expansion:** Recent amendments have expanded eligibility to include more families by eliminating income thresholds, and clarifying qualifying circumstances, such as students with special needs or those attending underperforming schools.
- **Accountability and Oversight:** The state legislature has implemented reporting requirements and oversight mechanisms to ensure funds are used appropriately and to increase transparency for taxpayers and stakeholders. ([Annual Report for HB 2, Chapter 91:431, Laws of 2021](#))
- While there have been recently released financial audits of the entity that oversees the EFA program [NH Children's Scholarship Fund](#) some have raised concerns that the EFA program has not been adequately regulated from a programmatic standpoint.
- **Funding Adjustments:** Policy changes have modified the formula for calculating state contributions to EFAs, aiming to balance program sustainability with the financial health and the required state funding of public schools.
- **Implementation Details:** The Department of Education has rolled out new guidelines for participating families, education service providers, and school districts to streamline application processes and reporting protocols.

These changes reflect ongoing efforts to address concerns from various stakeholders, including public school advocates, taxpayer groups, and education reform organizations.

Impact Assessment: Statewide Overview

Since its launch, the EFA program has had measurable effects on students, families, and schools across New Hampshire. Participating families report increased satisfaction with educational choices, particularly those seeking alternatives to traditional public schools. However, there have been concerns about the potential fiscal impact on public school budgets and the challenges of ensuring equitable access for all eligible students. Furthermore, there are questions as to the effectiveness of educational outcomes using EFA funding as there is very limited testing data of

EFA students. The current law also allows for the use of educational portfolios as a means to demonstrate academic achievement, which is also limited for data purposes.

Statewide data indicates a steady increase in program participation, with enrollment numbers exceeding initial projections. The program’s design has facilitated a diverse range of educational pathways but has also prompted calls for further study regarding its long-term implications on student achievement and public education funding.

District Analysis: Goffstown and New Boston

Historical Participation in Education Freedom Accounts

<https://www.education.nh.gov/pathways-education/education-freedom-accounts/efa-grants>

A focused analysis of the Goffstown and New Boston school districts reveals notable trends in EFA qualification and participation rates since the program’s inception.

Comparative analysis shows that, while Goffstown consistently had more students qualifying for EFAs in absolute terms, New Boston experienced more pronounced growth relative to its size. Both districts followed the statewide trend of increasing participation, influenced by legislative changes and enhanced program outreach.

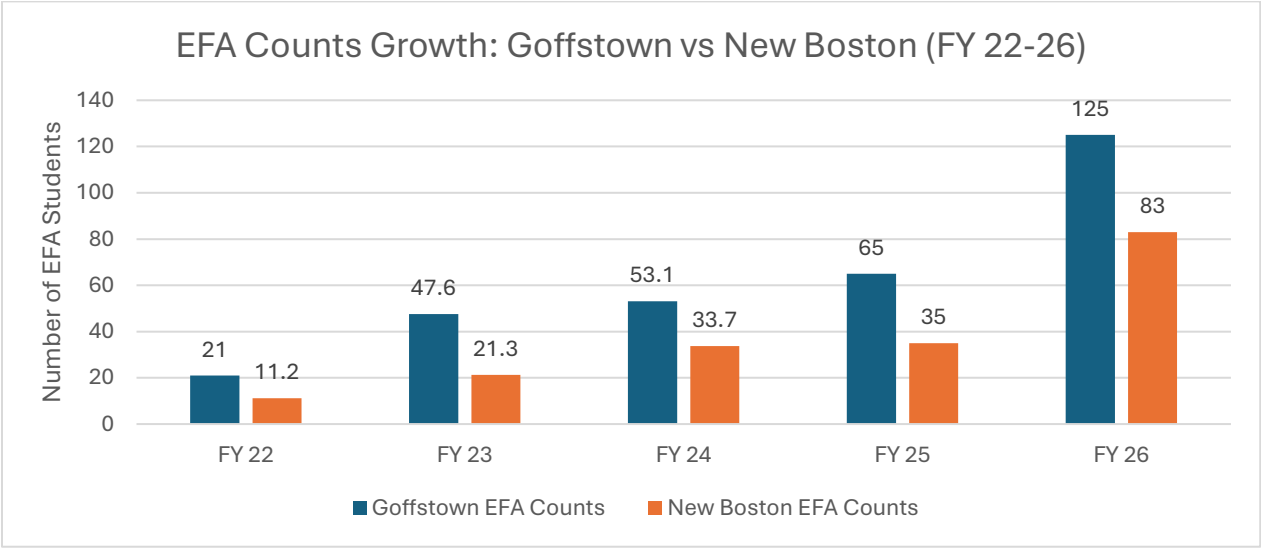


Chart 1: EFA Counts Growth Comparison

- Compares Goffstown vs New Boston EFA student counts from FY22-FY26
- Shows dramatic growth in both towns. **Combined enrollment grew 546%** over 5 years (from 32 students in FY22 to 208 in FY26)
- FY26 saw dramatic acceleration: Goffstown +92%, New Boston +137%

- In FY 26, the State removed the income cap on EFAs. This resulted in a doubling of EFA participation in that year.

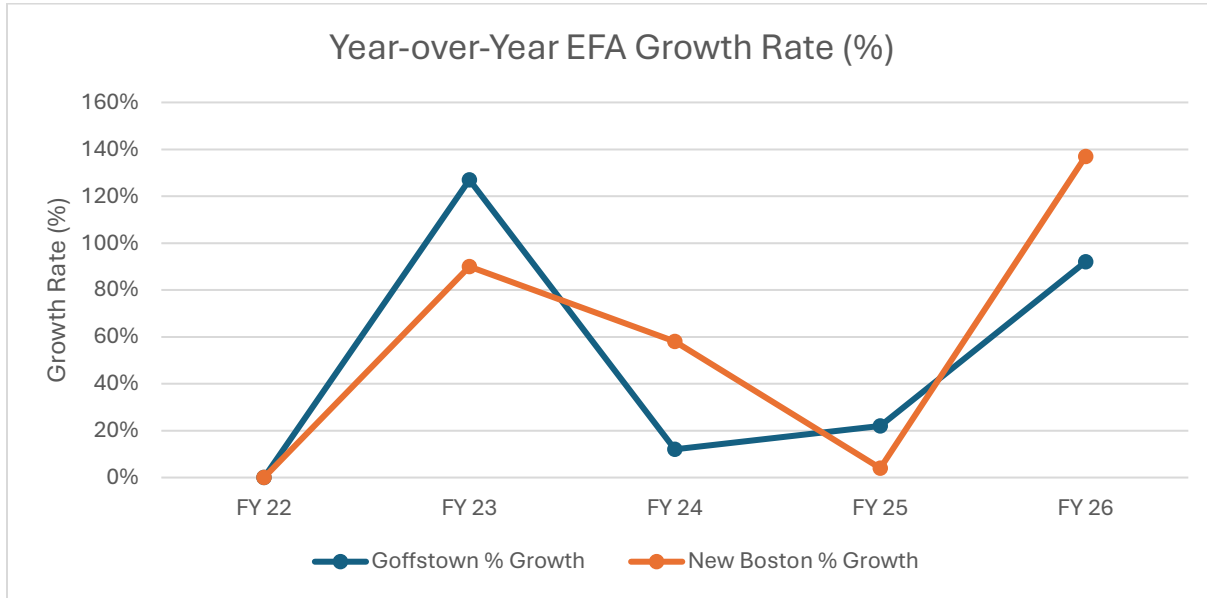


Chart 2: Year-over-Year Growth Rate

- Tracks percentage growth rates for both towns
- Highlights the explosive growth in FY23 and FY26
- Between FY 25 and FY 26, income limits for the EFA program were removed. In its place, a cap of 10,000 EFA students exists for FY 26 and 12,500 students for FY 27

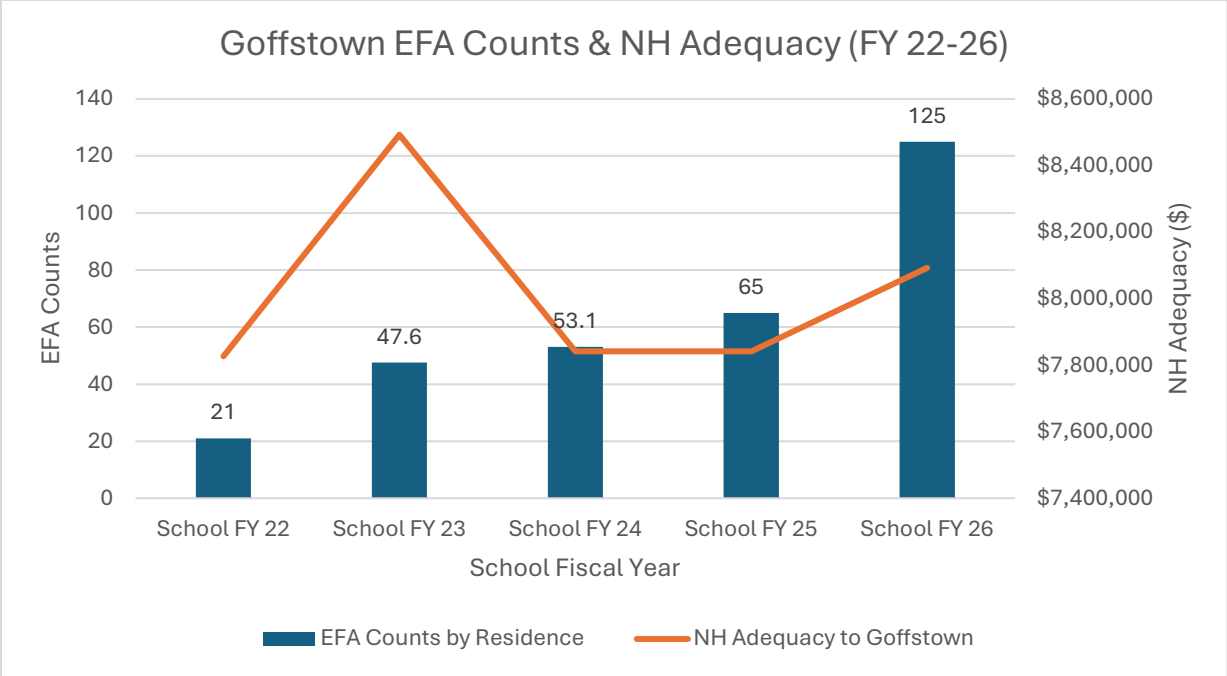


Chart 3 – Goffstown EFA Counts and NH Adequacy Funding

- **EFA Counts** grew significantly from **21** (FY22) to **125** (FY26) - nearly 6x growth
- **NH Adequacy** funding fluctuated between ~\$7.8M and ~\$8.5M over the same period
- **Overall, NH Adequacy funding has been relatively flat.** In FY 23 the State provided additional adequacy to provide a one-time reduction in the SWEPT tax. The following year, NH Adequacy levels resumed to typical levels.

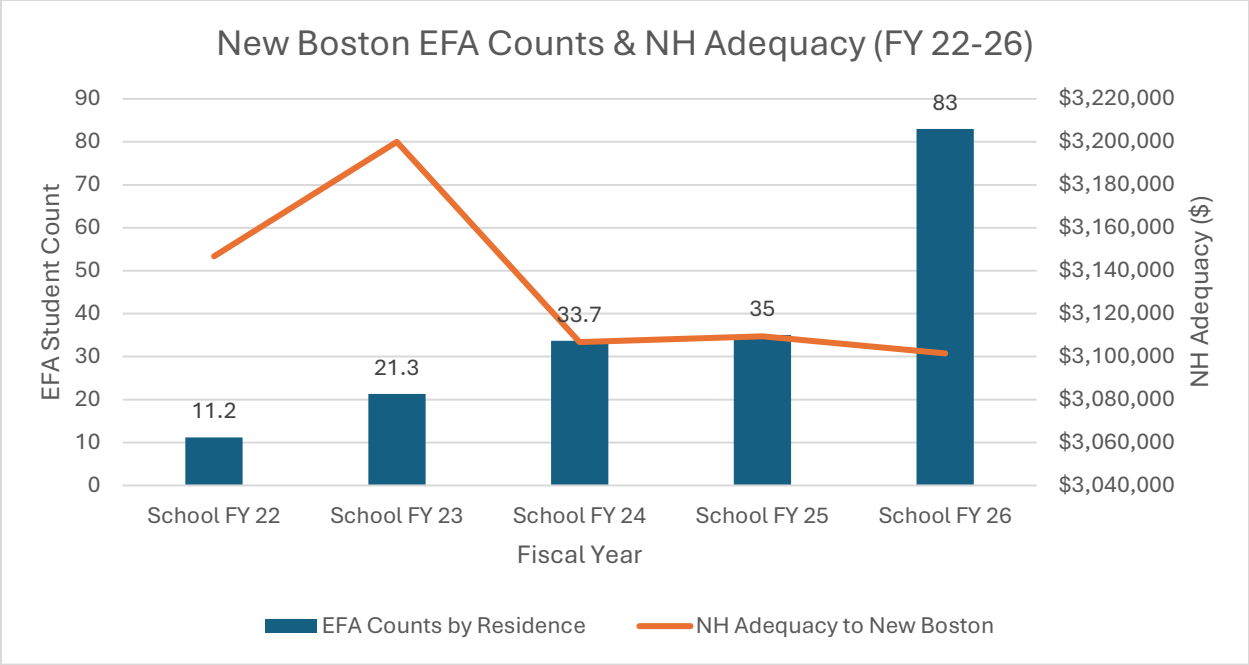
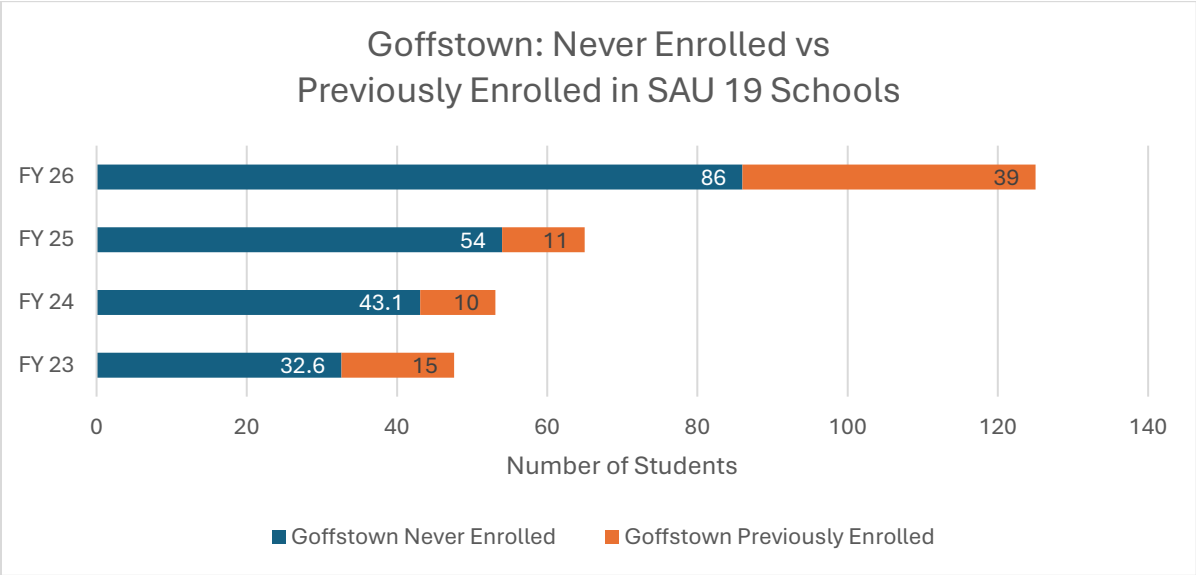


Chart 4 – New Boston EFA Counts and NH Adequacy Funding

- **EFA counts surged 641%** from 11.2 (FY22) to 83 (FY26)
- **FY26 explosion:** EFA counts jumped 137% in a single year (35 → 83)
- **NH Adequacy funding remained relatively flat (~\$3.1M)** despite the dramatic increase in EFA students
- **Overall, NH Adequacy funding has been relatively flat.** In FY 23 the State provided additional adequacy to provide a one-time reduction in the SWEPT tax. The following year, NH Adequacy levels resumed to typical levels.



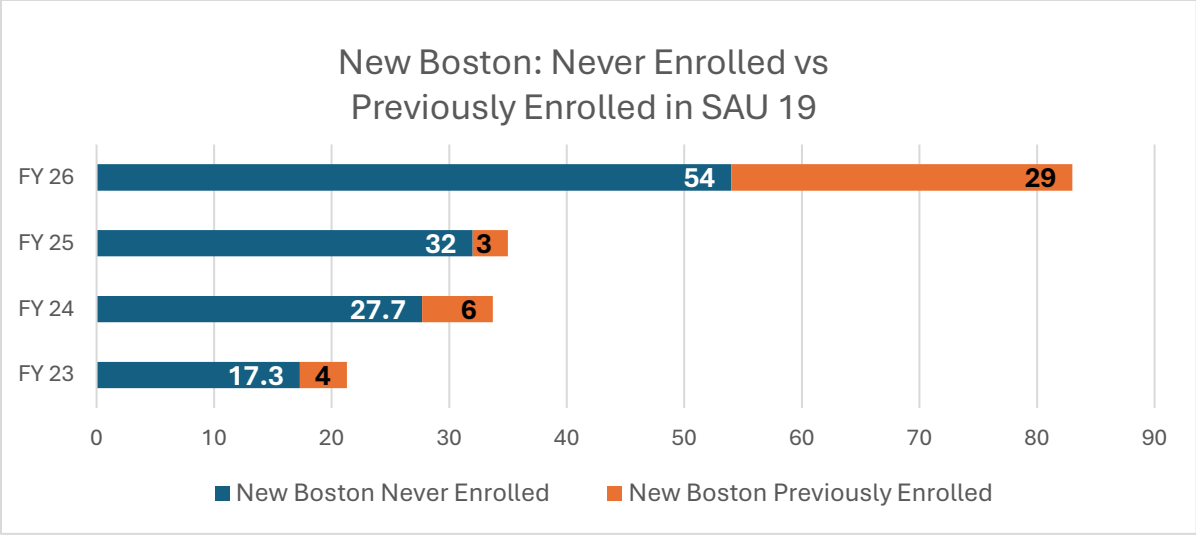
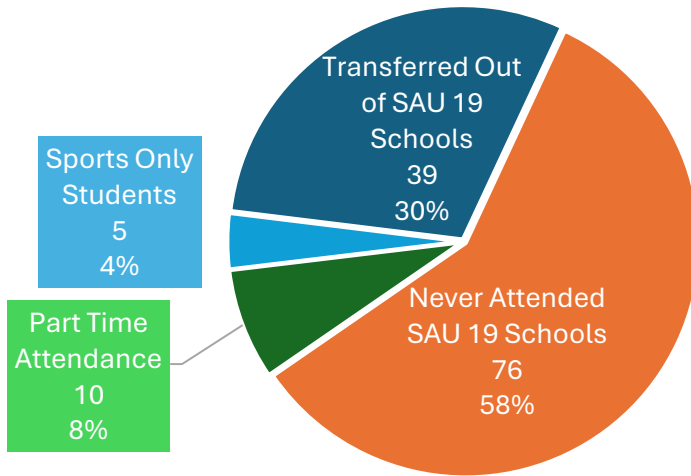


Chart 5 and 6 – EFA Counts- Never Enrolled in SAU 19 Schools vs Previously Enrolled SAU 19 Students

- **60-80%+ of EFA students never attended SAU 19 schools** in any given year
- In FY26: 69% of Goffstown EFA students and 65% of New Boston EFA students never enrolled in public schools
- Only 30-35% are students who transferred out of the district
- Goffstown has a small number of EFA students who either attend classes part time and/or participate in athletics
- Infrastructure Costs Remain: Schools still maintain buildings, staff, and programs regardless of EFA enrollment

Goffstown FY 26 EFA Counts by Category



New Boston FY 26 EFA Students by Category

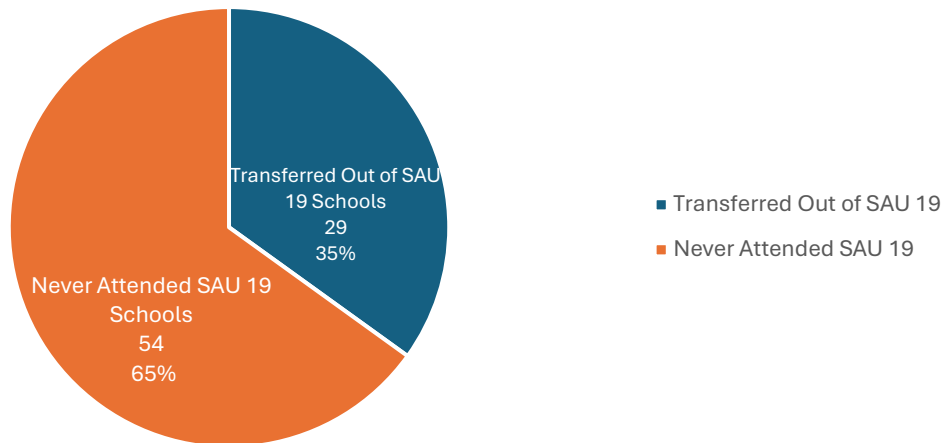


Chart 7 and 8 – EFA Students by Category:

- The data suggests that EFAs are primarily being used by families who are already not using public schools (homeschool students, private school families) rather than primarily drawing students away from public education.

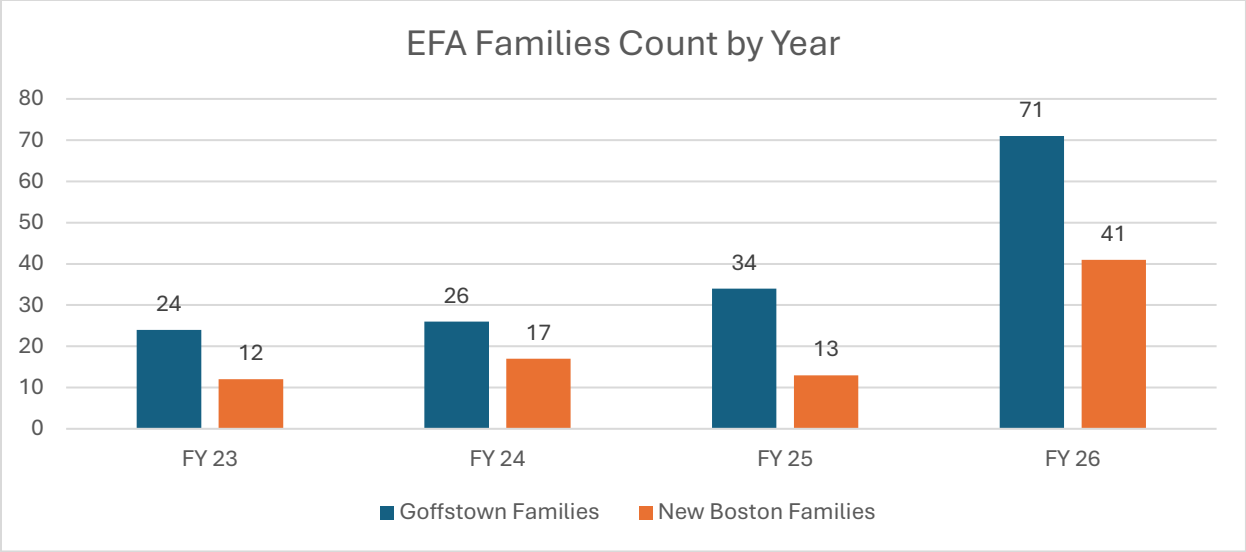


Chart 9 – EFA Family Count by Year

- **Goffstown families: 24 → 71** (196% increase, FY23-FY26)
- **New Boston families: 12 → 41** (242% increase, FY23-FY26)
- **Combined: 36 → 112 families** (211% growth)

Total Estimated EFA Families are based on counts using the last name of the student. The NH Education Dept. does not provide student addresses for privacy reasons. This may result in a variance of +/- 5%.

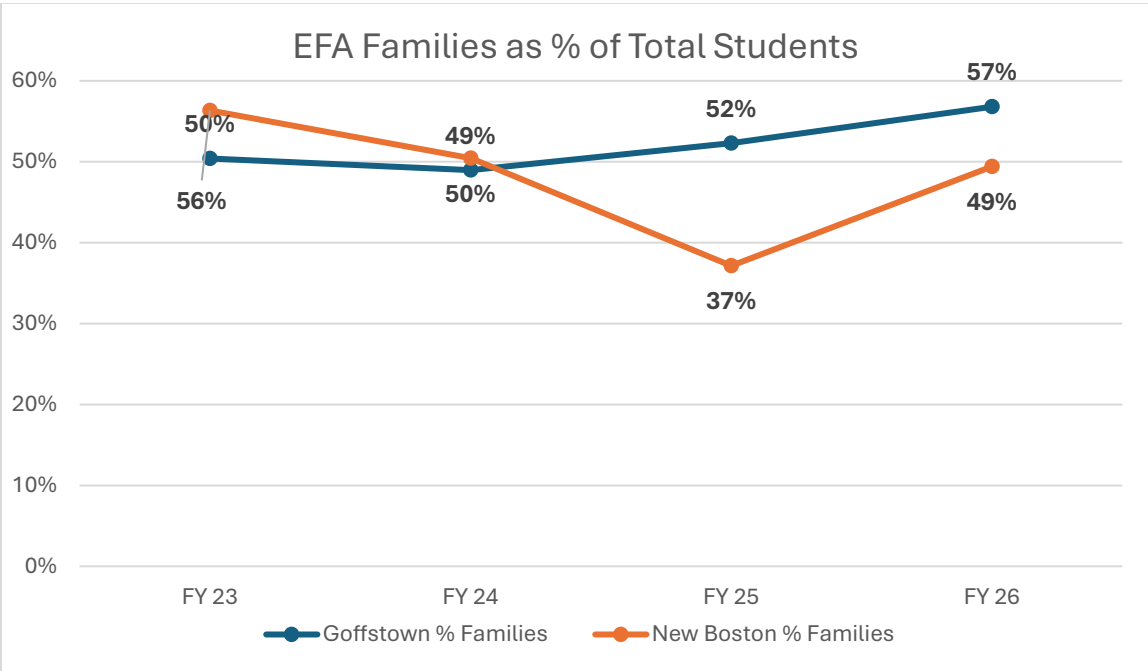


Chart 10 – EFA Families as a % of Total EFA Students

- Ranges from **37-57%** across both towns
- This means approximately **half of EFA students come from multi-child households**
- The average number of school-age children per household with children enrolled in public schools is approximately **1.8 nationally** and **1.7 in New Hampshire** (based on the **U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) 2021-2023** data on school enrollment and household composition census).
- EFA households appear to have more students than typical public-school households:
 - Goffstown EFA: 1.92 students/household (7% above US avg, 13% above NH avg)
 - New Boston EFA: 2.12 students/household (18% above US avg, 25% above NH avg)
- The trend in Goffstown shows the average students per household decreasing (from 2.0 to 1.8), suggesting more single-child families are now joining the EFA program as it becomes more mainstream.

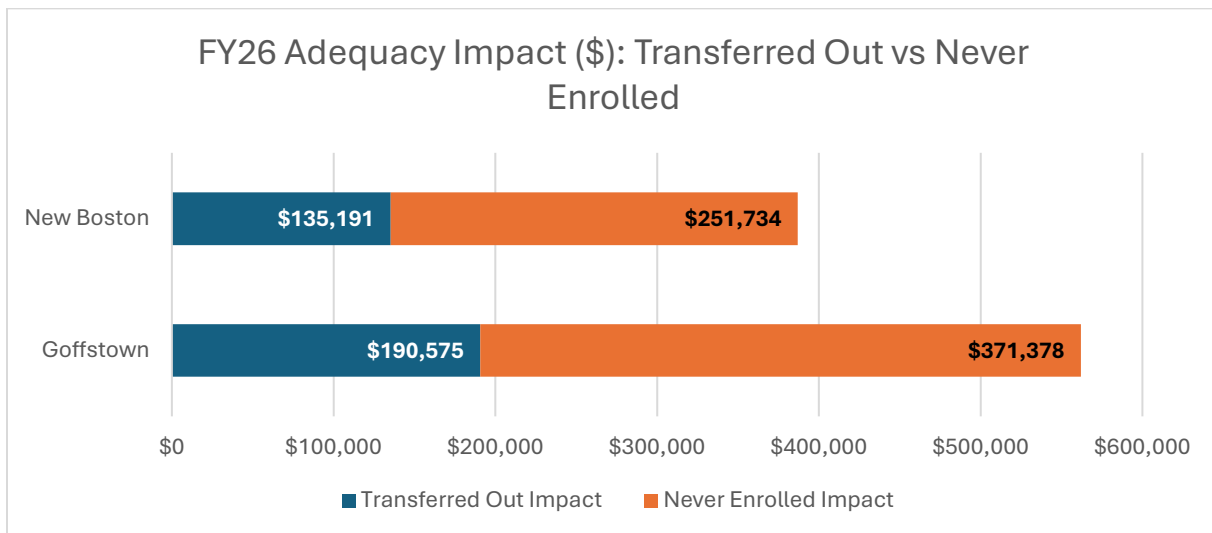


Chart 11 – Adequacy Impact: Transferred Out vs Never Enrolled

- **Transferred Out (Lost Revenue)** - These are students who attended SAU 19 schools and then left. The district had real costs for these students and now loses both the student AND the funding.

Goffstown: 39 students = \$190,575 (34% of impact)

New Boston: 29 students = \$135,191 (35% of impact)

- **Never Enrolled (No Prior Revenue)** - These students NEVER attended SAU 19 schools (homeschool students, private school students). The district never served these students and never had costs for them.

Goffstown: 76 students = \$371,378 (66% of impact)

New Boston: 54 students = \$251,734 (65% of impact)

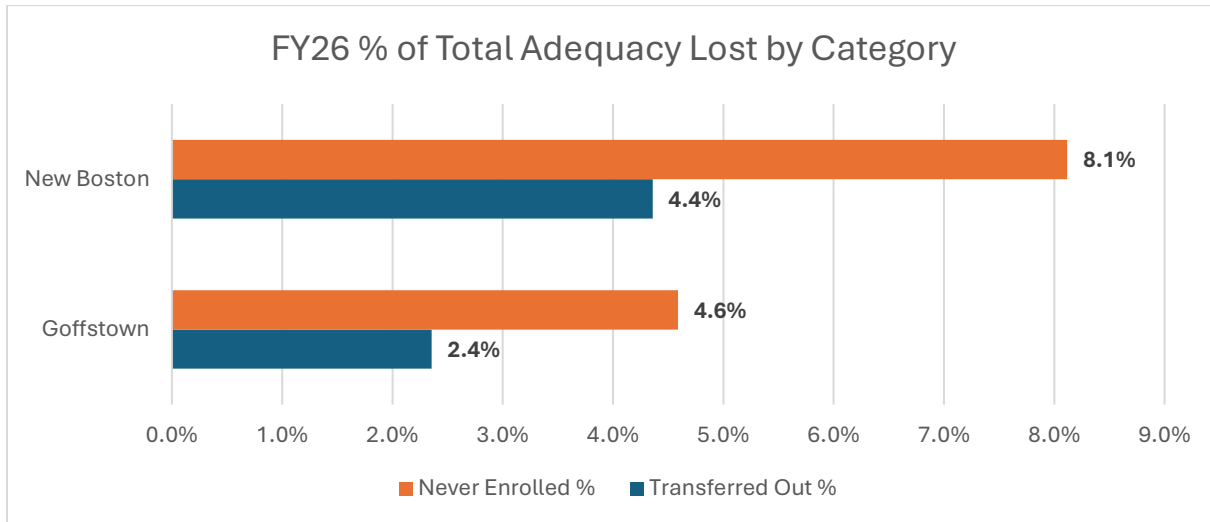


Chart 12 – Percentage (%) Adequacy Impact: Transferred Out vs Never Enrolled

- Loss of adequacy based on students who were previously enrolled in SAU 19 schools as a percentage of FY 26 NH Adequacy grant for each district.
 - New Boston’s loss of adequacy was 4.4% vs. Goffstown at 2.4%
- The loss of adequacy from previously enrolled students compared to total adequacy received is under 5% for both school districts.

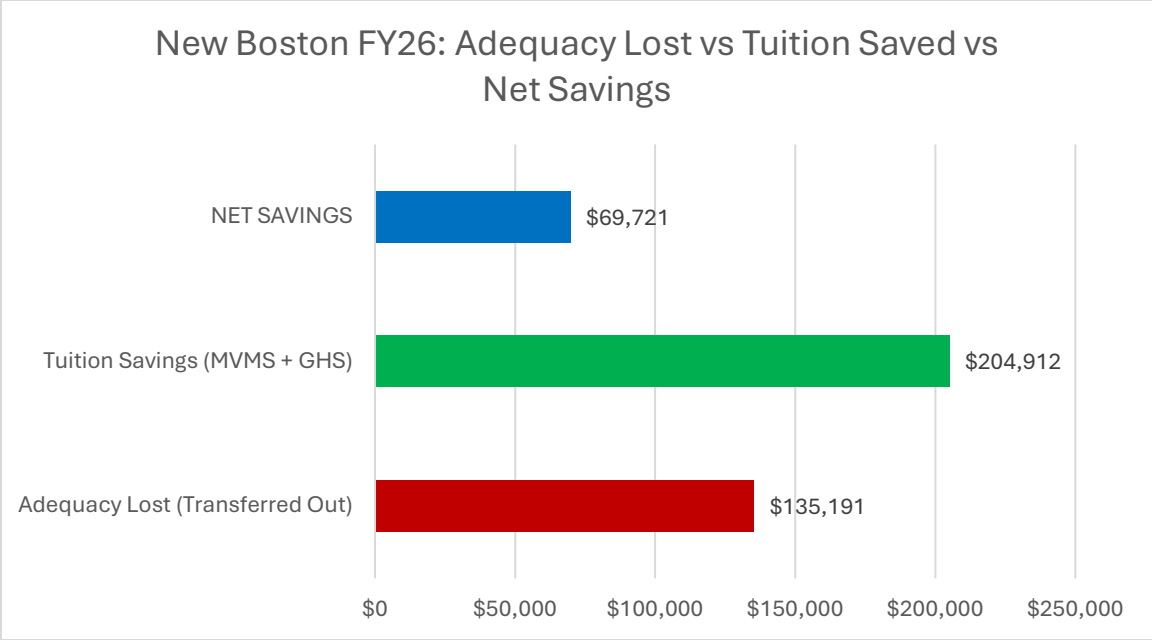
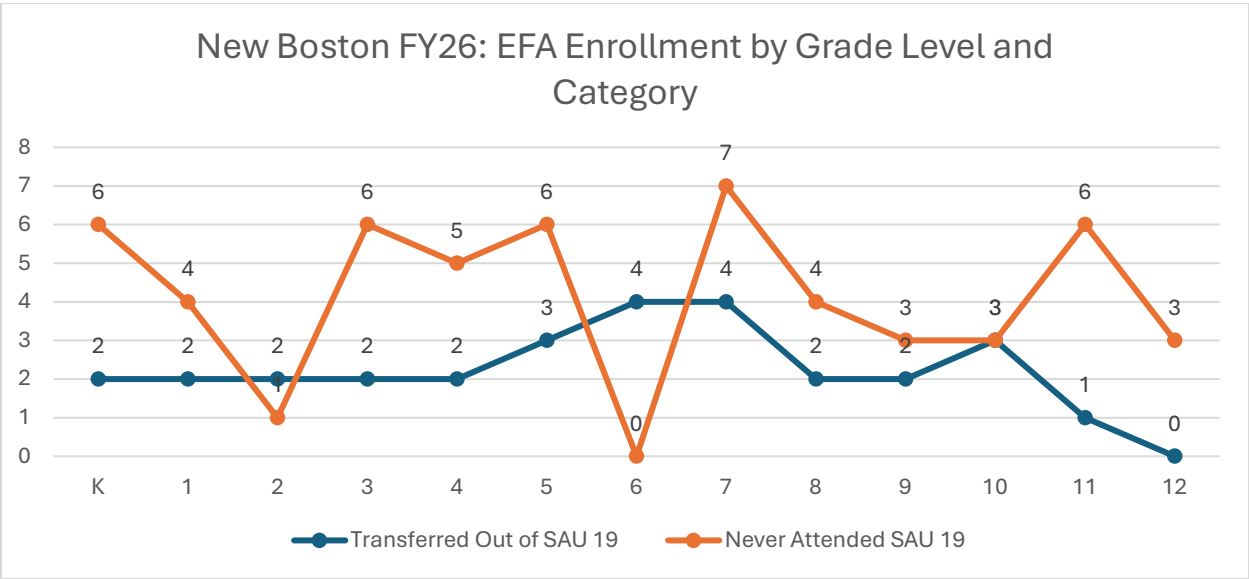
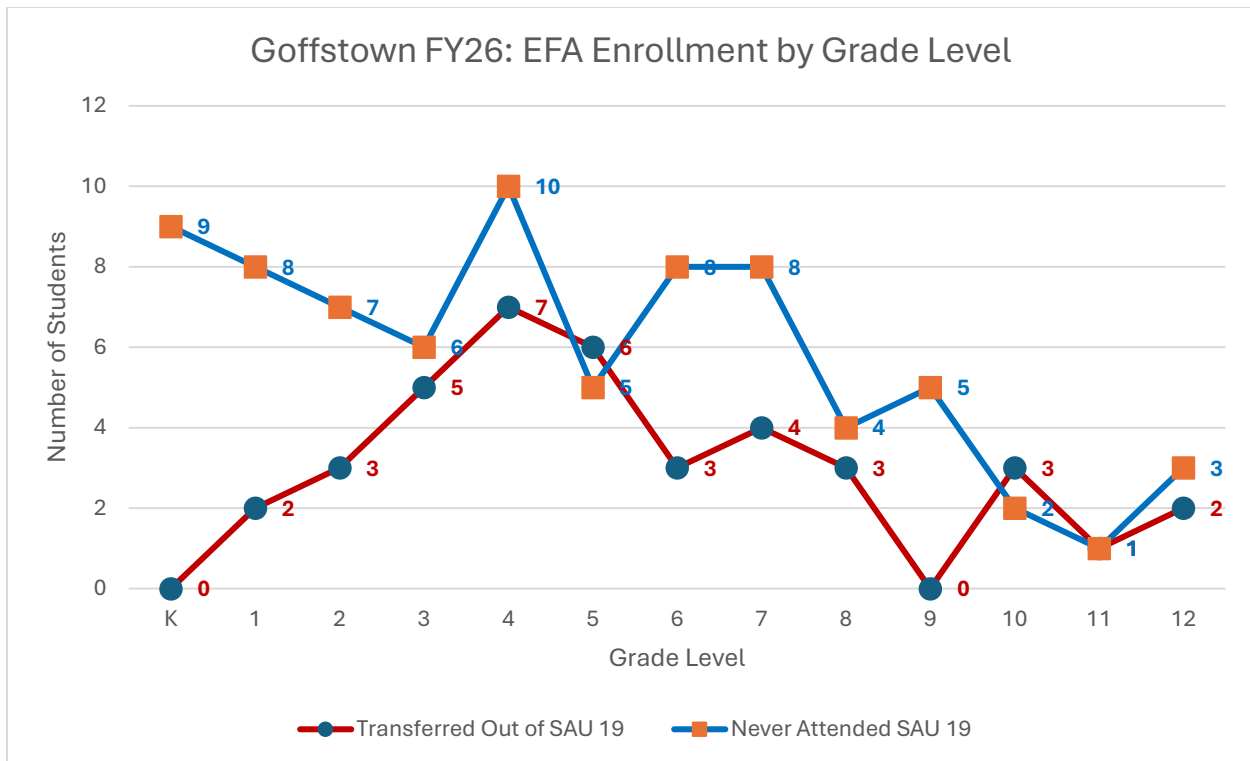


Chart 13 – New Boston Specific- Adequacy Lost vs. Tuition Saved and Net Savings

EFA Students at MVMS/GHS Actually SAVE New Boston Money

- When a previously enrolled student leaves for EFA, New Boston loses ~\$4,662 in adequacy aid
- BUT New Boston saves \$16,667-\$17,485 in tuition costs (MVMS/GHS)
- **Net result: \$69,721 in SAVINGS for transferred out MVMS/GHS students**





In both towns, approximately **two-thirds of EFA students never attended public schools** - they were likely homeschool students or attended private schools before EFA.

Nearly **half of all EFA students are in elementary grades**. This suggests families are choosing EFA early in their children's education, which could indicate a long-term trend of students never entering public schools.

Goffstown

- "Never Attended" peaks at **Grade 4 (10 students)** and **Kindergarten (9 students)**
- "Transferred Out" peaks at **Grade 4 (7 students)** and **Grade 5 (6 students)**
- Notable drop-off in high school grades (only 1-3 students per grade for "Never Attended")
- The number of elementary school-aged students in Goffstown may be slightly alleviating space needs concerns. (Please note that NH Education Dept. reports do not contain student addresses, therefore impacts to Maple Ave. and Bartlett Elementary School enrollments cannot be determined.)

New Boston

- "Never Attended" peaks at Grade 7 (7 students) with a notable gap at Grade 6 (0 students)
- "Transferred Out" is more evenly distributed across grades (2-4 students per grade)

- Surprisingly high "Never Attended" count in Grade 11 (6 students)
- Both towns show elevated EFA enrollment in Grades 4 and 5, particularly for "Transferred Out" students. This suggests:
 - Families may be pulling students out before middle school transition
 - Upper elementary may be when families reassess educational options
 - This is a critical intervention point for districts wanting to retain students
- Both towns show lower EFA enrollment in Grades 9-12 compared to elementary:
 - Students may stay for sports, social connections, or college prep
 - Families who haven't chosen EFA by high school are less likely to switch
 - The "Sports Only" category (5 students in Goffstown) shows some families use a hybrid approach

Challenges and Opportunities

- **Policy Implications:** School Boards will need to review the implications of eligibility changes to the EFA program on their current policies and procedures. More specifically regarding part-time enrollments, participation in co-curricular activities and the consideration of tuition charges.
- **Programmatic and Fiscal Compliance:** Ongoing auditing to ensure public funds are being spent in compliance with state laws. School districts need to ensure that EFA families are not enrolled beyond part-time status so as to preclude EFA eligibility.
- **Fiscal Impact:** The potential for public school budget pressures as funds are reallocated to EFAs necessitates ongoing monitoring and transparent reporting.
- **Program Sustainability:** Balancing program expansion with the financial stability of public education requires careful policy calibration and stakeholder engagement.
- **Data Collection:** Improved data tracking at the district level, especially in Goffstown and New Boston, which is important for the following reasons:
 - Accurate enrollment information and reporting to the State will ensure appropriate revenues are collected to offset district expenditures and thus reduce local school tax effort.
 - It will enable more accurate assessment of program outcomes and inform future policy decisions.
- **Future Outlook:** Ongoing legislative review and stakeholder feedback are likely to shape the next phase of the EFA program, with opportunities for refinement and innovation in educational choice policy.

Conclusion

The New Hampshire Education Freedom Accounts program represents a significant shift in the state's approach to educational funding and school choice. Its evolution reflects the dynamic interplay of policy innovation, stakeholder advocacy, and local implementation challenges. District-level analysis in Goffstown and New Boston underscores the importance of tailored outreach and robust data collection to ensure equitable access and informed decision-making. Continued vigilance, transparency, and adaptability will be essential as the program matures and its impact becomes more fully realized.

References

- New Hampshire Department of Education. (2021–2024). Education Freedom Accounts Program Reports.
- State of New Hampshire, Legislative Bill Texts and Summaries (2021–2024).
- School district enrollment and financial reports for Goffstown and New Boston (2021–2026).
- NH RSA 194-F

Methodology

- EFA grant financial information provided by the NH Dept. of Education: <https://www.education.nh.gov/pathways-education/education-freedom-accounts/efa-grants>
- EFA Counts data provided by the NH Dept. of Education of students participating in the EFA program. This data included whether the EFA student was an existing recipient of an EFA grant through the Children's Scholarship Fund or was enrolled in another educational institution such as an SAU 19 school, charter school or was home-schooled.
- The SAU 19 Student Data team captured the EFA counts from the years FY 23-26, with data being most reliable in FY 26.
- EFA Counts and the number of EFA Families are based on counts using the last name of the student. The NH Education Dept. does not provide student addresses for privacy reasons. This may result in a variance of +/- 5%.

Acknowledgements

- Jamar Starks and Betsy Myrdek – Data Team for SAU 19

More Information:

- Contact Scott Gross, Operations Manager SAU #19

11 School Street, Goffstown, NH 03045

scott.gross@sau19.org

603-660-5754

Appendix A

Education Freedom Account Data for School Fiscal Years 2021-22 Through 2025-2026

Source: NH Department of Education: <https://www.education.nh.gov/pathways-education/education-freedom-accounts/efa-grants>

Year	EFA Base Aid	F&R Aid	SPED Aid	ELL Aid	3d Grade Reading	Base Aid Increase
School FY 22	\$ 3,786.66	\$ 1,893.32	\$ 2,037.11	\$ 740.87	\$ 740.87	N/A
School FY 23	\$ 3,786.66	\$ 1,893.32	\$ 2,037.11	\$ 740.87	\$ 740.87	0%
School FY 24	\$ 4,100.00	\$ 2,300.00	\$ 2,100.00	\$ 800.00	\$ -	8%
School FY 25	\$ 4,182.00	\$ 2,346.00	\$ 2,142.00	\$ 816.00	\$ -	2%
School FY 26	\$ 4,265.64	\$ 2,392.92	\$ 2,184.84	\$ 832.32	\$ -	2%

Please note that NH Education Dept. data uses the month of December for EFA counts. This data set used EFA data from the month of October, as this is the customary month for most student enrollment data reports required by the NH Education Department.

Town	Year	EFA Counts by Residence	% Increase from Prior Year	Base EFA Aid	F&R Count	F&R Aid	SPED Counts	SPED Aid	ELL Count	ELL Aid	3rd Grade Reading Count	3rd Grade Reading Aid	Total EFA	Average EFA Aid Per EFA Student
Goffstown	School FY 22	21	0	\$ 79,520	10.6	\$ 20,069	1.3	\$ 2,648	0	\$ -	0	\$ -	\$ 102,237	\$ 4,868.44
Goffstown	School FY 23	47.6	127%	\$ 180,245	24	\$ 45,440	8.6		1	\$ 741	0	\$ -	\$ 243,945	\$ 5,124.89
Goffstown	School FY 24	53.1	12%	\$ 217,710	22.2	\$ 51,060	9.2	\$ 17,519	0	\$ -	0	\$ -	\$ 300,900	\$ 5,666.67
Goffstown	School FY 25	65	22%	\$ 271,830	28	\$ 65,688	15	\$ 32,130	0	\$ -	0	\$ -	\$ 369,648	\$ 5,686.89
Goffstown	School FY 26	125	92%	\$ 533,205	16	\$ 38,287	18	\$ 39,327	0	\$ -	0	\$ -	\$ 610,819	\$ 4,886.55

Town	Year	EFA Counts by Residence	% Increase from Prior Year	Base EFA Aid	F&R Count	F&R Aid	SPED Counts	SPED Aid	ELL Count	ELL Aid	3rd Grade Reading Count	3rd Grade Reading Aid	Total EFA	Average EFA Aid Per EFA Student
New Boston	School FY 22	11.2	0	\$ 42,411	1.6	\$ 3,029	1	\$ 2,037	0	\$ -	0	\$ -	\$ 47,477	\$ 4,239.02
New Boston	School FY 23	21.3	90%	\$ 80,656	3.4	\$ 6,437	1	\$ 2,037	0	\$ -	0	\$ -	\$ 89,130	\$ 4,184.52
New Boston	School FY 24	33.7	58%	\$ 138,170	10.8	\$ 24,840	2.2	\$ 4,620	0	\$ -	0	\$ -	\$ 167,630	\$ 4,974.18
New Boston	School FY 25	35	4%	\$ 146,370	8	\$ 18,768	2	\$ 4,284	0	\$ -	0	\$ -	\$ 169,422	\$ 4,840.63
New Boston	School FY 26	83	137%	\$ 354,048	11	\$ 26,322	3	\$ 6,555	0	\$ -	0	\$ -	\$ 386,925	\$ 4,661.74

Appendix B

EFA Counts - Never Previously Enrolled, Previously Enrolled and EFA Family Counts

Town	Year	EFA Counts by Residence	% Increase from Prior Year	EFA Counts <u>Never</u> Previously Enrolled in SAU 19 Schools	% of EFA Counts <u>Never</u> Previously Enrolled in SAU 19 Schools	EFA Counts Previously Enrolled in SAU 19 Schools	% of EFA Counts Previously Enrolled in SAU 19 Schools	Total ESTIMATED EFA Families	% of Total ESTIMATED EFA Families to Total # of EFA Students	Average ESTIMATED EFA Students per Household	Average EFA Aid Per EFA Student
Goffstown	School FY 22	21	0	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	\$ 4,868.44
Goffstown	School FY 23	47.6	127%	32.6	68%	15	32%	24	50%	1.98	\$ 5,124.89
Goffstown	School FY 24	53.1	12%	43.1	81%	10	19%	26	49%	2.04	\$ 5,666.67
Goffstown	School FY 25	65	22%	54	83%	11	17%	34	52%	1.91	\$ 5,686.89
Goffstown	School FY 26	125	92%	86	69%	39	31%	71	57%	1.76	\$ 4,886.55

Town	Year	EFA Counts by Residence	% Increase from Prior Year	EFA Counts <u>Never</u> Previously Enrolled in SAU 19 Schools	% of EFA Counts <u>Never</u> Previously Enrolled in SAU 19 Schools	EFA Counts Previously Enrolled in SAU 19 Schools	% of EFA Counts Previously Enrolled in SAU 19 Schools	Total ESTIMATED EFA Families	% of Total ESTIMATED EFA Families to Total # of EFA Students	Average ESTIMATED EFA Students per Household	Average EFA Aid Per EFA Student
New Boston	School FY 22	11.2	0	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	\$ 4,239.02
New Boston	School FY 23	21.3	90%	17.3	81%	4	19%	12	56%	1.78	\$ 4,184.52
New Boston	School FY 24	33.7	58%	27.7	82%	6	18%	17	50%	1.98	\$ 4,974.18
New Boston	School FY 25	35	4%	32	91%	3	9%	13	37%	2.69	\$ 4,840.63
New Boston	School FY 26	83	137%	54	65%	29	35%	41	49%	2.02	\$ 4,661.74

Please note that NH Education Dept. data uses the month of December for EFA counts. This particular data set uses EFA data from the **month of October**, as this is the customary month for most student enrollment data reports required by the NH Education Department.

*Total Estimated EFA Families is based on counts using the last name of the student. The NH Education Dept. does not provide student addresses for privacy reasons. This may result in a variance of +/- 5%

Appendix C

Adequacy Implications and EFA Grade Level Distributions

Town	Year	EFA Counts by Residence	% Increase from Prior Year	EFA Counts Never Previously Enrolled in SAU 19 Schools	Average EFA Aid (Includes all subcategories)	NH Adequacy to Goffstown
Goffstown	Goffstown FY 22	21	0	No data	\$4,868	\$ 7,826,722
Goffstown	Goffstown FY 23	47.6	127%	15	\$5,125	\$ 8,492,369
Goffstown	Goffstown FY 24	53.1	12%	10	\$5,667	\$ 7,841,022
Goffstown	Goffstown FY 25	65	22%	11	\$5,687	\$ 7,841,022
Goffstown	Goffstown FY 26	125	92%	39	\$4,887	\$ 8,092,169

Please note that NH State Data uses the month of December for EFA counts. This data set used EFA data from the month of October, as this is the customary month for most student enrollment data reports required by the NH Education Department.

Goffstown	School FY 26	EFA Count	EFA %	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total	Adequacy Impact	% Potential Revenue Lost
	NH State Count	125																	
	Transferred Out of SAU 19 Schools	39	30.0%	0	2	3	5	7	6	3	4	3	0	3	1	2	39	\$ 190,575	2.4%
	Never Attended SAU 19 Schools	76	58.5%	9	8	7	6	10	5	8	8	4	5	2	1	3	76	\$ 371,378	4.6%
	Part Time Attendance	10	7.7%	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	2	1	1	2	0	1	10	\$ 48,866	0.6%
	Sports Only Students	5	3.8%	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	5	\$ 24,433	0.3%
	Goffstown Total	130		9	11	10	11	17	14	11	15	9	7	8	2	6	130		

Town	Year	EFA Counts by Residence	% Increase from Prior Year	EFA Counts Never Previously Enrolled in SAU 19 Schools	Average EFA Aid (Includes all subcategories)	NH Adequacy to New Boston
New Boston	New Boston FY 22	11.2	0	No data	\$4,239	\$ 3,146,637
New Boston	New Boston FY 23	21.3	90%	4	\$4,185	\$ 3,199,993
New Boston	New Boston FY 24	33.7	58%	6	\$4,974	\$ 3,106,816
New Boston	New Boston FY 25	35	4%	3	\$4,841	\$ 3,109,430
New Boston	New Boston FY 26	83	137%	29	\$4,662	\$ 3,101,491

Please note that NH State Data uses the month of December for EFA counts. This data set used EFA data from the month of October, as this is the customary month for most student enrollment data reports required by the NH Education Department.

New Boston	School FY 26	EFA Count	EFA %	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total	Adequacy Impact	% Revenue Lost
	NH State Count	83	92%																
	Transferred Out of SAU 19 Schools	29		2	2	2	2	2	3	4	4	2	2	3	1	0	29	\$135,191	4.4%
	Never Attended SAU 19 Schools	54		6	4	1	6	5	6	0	7	4	3	3	6	3	54	\$251,734	8.1%
	New Boston Total	83		8	6	3	8	7	9	4	11	6	5	6	7	3	83	\$386,925	12.5%

FY 26 MVMS Tuition	\$ 16,667
FY 26 GHS Tuition	\$ 17,485

Middle	4	2						6	-\$100,002
High			2	3	1	0	6	-\$104,910	