

# American Federation of Teachers-NH

## “Union of Professionals”



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### President

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### AFT-NH Locals

Barnstead Educational Support Team  
Campton Educational Support Personnel Association  
Ellis School Support Staff (Fremont)  
Farmington School Custodians  
Henniker Community School Support Staff  
Hillsboro-Deering Federation of Teachers  
Hillsboro-Deering Support Staff  
Hillsborough Town Employees  
Hudson Federation of Teachers  
Hudson Federation of PSRP's  
Hudson School Secretaries  
Keene City Employees  
John Stark Teachers Association  
Keene Police Officers Association  
Keene Police Dept. Supervisors  
Nashua Public Library Employees  
Nashua Teachers' Union  
Newfound Teachers' Union  
Oyster River Paraprofessionals and Support Staff  
Pittsfield Town Employees  
Raymond Educational Support Staff  
Rindge Faculty Federation  
Rochester Federation of Teachers  
Timberlane Support Staff Union  
Timberlane Teachers' Association  
Weare Educational Support Staff

### Staff

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October 31, 2018

TO: Jamie Burnett, Chair, Save Our Summers Commission  
FROM: Douglas Ley, President, American Federation of Teachers-NH

RE: requiring K-12 to start after Labor Day

Chairman Burnett, thank you for the invitation to appear before the Commission and to submit a written statement. Due to prior commitments, I am unable to attend the Commission and testify in person, but hope you can and will accept this brief statement in lieu of my appearance.

I have broached the issue of mandating a post-Labor Day K-12 start to a number of our locals. The responses received back by me have been clear and can be easily summarized.

First, there is a strong preference for local control—i.e., leaving the issue of start-dates in the hands of the locality. Different localities and districts may have different perspectives and AFT-NH strongly endorses leaving this issue in the hands of the local school districts. They are directly responsible to their community and are best positioned to meet the needs and desires of their constituents and to serve the interests of their students.

Second, based on our 2017-2018 school year experience, winters can pose significant challenges, due to the number of weather-related cancellations. Some of the districts where we have contracts held school quite late into June and our members had to work even later in order to fulfill contractual provisions regarding days and/or hours worked. Mandating school years to commence only after Labor Day will quite likely compound this problem and if we combine a late Labor Day with a subsequent severe winter, we could easily see school-years lasting to the end of June and work-years into early July. As a consequence, while trying to solve one problem, we create a new one.

Finally, a State statutory mandate would require renegotiation of virtually all of our public education contracts, which often specify approximate start dates and include calendars for professional development days, etc. While not insurmountable, this will place an additional burden on not just AFT-NH and our member locals but on local school boards, who will need to work on these renegotiations.

Therefore, absent any pressing constituent consensus, AFT-NH supports our long-established NH tradition of local control and local preference in matters of school year scheduling. We believe those closest to the community and to the students are best situated to make appropriate decisions in regards to scheduling. We ask that the Commission respect local control and draw appropriate conclusions in your report due on November 30, 2018.

Sincerely,

Douglas Ley  
AFT-NH, President