

## Commission to Study School Funding (RSA 193-E:2-e)

### Meeting Minutes

March 9 2pm NH BEA Conference Room

**Commission Attendance:** Bill Ardinger, John Beardmore, David Luneau, Val Zanchuck, Susan Huard, Mary Heath, Iris Estabrook, Dick Ames, Chris Dwyer, Mel Myler, Jay Kahn, Corinne Cascadden, Barbara Tremblay, Jane Bergeron-Beaulieu; Absent: David Ryan, Jon Morgan, Rick Ladd

**Call to order:**

Rep. Luneau welcomed everyone in attendance and opened the meeting. Rep. Luneau requested that commission members and public attendees give feedback about how well meeting in the conference room of the NH Bureau of Economic Affairs worked for everyone.

**Approval of minutes:**

The minutes were approved by the Commission without any changes.

**Calendar (upcoming meetings and agenda items):**

Dr. Mallory reminded the commission to be mindful of the group agreements we have all agreed to. The commission was also reminded that the meeting on March 16 (Reaching Higher NH and the NH School Funding Fairness Project) will take place at the NH BEA at 2pm, the March 23 (DoE and DHHS youth behavioral health) will take place at NH BEA at 930am, the March 30 (early childhood and pre-k programming from the perspective of DoE and DHHS) meeting will take place at the LOB at 2pm, and the April 6 meeting (career and technical education) will take place at 2pm at the NH BEA. Please note the morning meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Dr. Mallory gave a brief update of the March 5 Key Stakeholder meeting, where information about the commission was shared and input and engagement efforts were solicited from leaders of various relevant groups. Dr. Mallory shared that the Carsey website ([www.carsey.unh.edu/school-funding](http://www.carsey.unh.edu/school-funding)) will go live later in the week, and that there is now a dedicated email address for feedback to the commission – [schoolfunding.commission@unh.edu](mailto:schoolfunding.commission@unh.edu).

The pending contract was discussed – the House COO and UNH administrators are in the process of finalizing their ends of the contract between the Commission and Carsey. Once the Commission and Carsey sign the overall contract, the RFP between the Commission and research vendors can be released.

**Presentation:**

Mary Fulton (Senior Policy Analyst) and Joel Moore (State Relations Strategist) from ECS presented a high-level overview of adequacy and state funding policies across the country, with a focus on NH, VT, MA, and NJ. ECS discussed what their organization does, New Hampshire's education funding allocation structure (and how it compares to other states), policy challenges surrounding school finance, methods other states have used to address school funding, legislative trends, and competency education.

**Discussion:**

Discussion covered the role of the commission, and whether it is purely about education or also should incorporate taxing/finance (and if so, to what degree?). The commission debated how broad their charge is and how to best interpret it, given that revenue is a key component of funding an adequate education and because our upcoming engagement work will certainly bring up revenue issues. Commission members were urged to consider what items were left out of legislation following the recommendations of the 2008 education finance commission. Sen. Estabrook noted that the commission should hear from various viewpoints regarding the legality of differentiations within adequacy. Rep. Heath asked the commission to be mindful of legislation around finance and what bills would need to be written. Mr. Ardinger requested the commission approach their work with a "Rawlsian veil of ignorance", and focus on the "right" answer first. Mr. Beardmore asked the commission to think about the fact that the property tax is the final dollar in almost all instances in NH, but that does not necessarily have to be the case.

The commission also discussed their working structure, with three work groups proposed. After discussion, it was determined that the three working groups should be: defining/costing adequacy and distribution considerations; fiscal policy and revenue sources, and engagement. Dr. Mallory will draft some items for each subcommittee, and the full commission will discuss and decide on roles for each group.

**Public Comment:**

Jane Ferrini of Portsmouth, NH, advised that the NH Supreme Court may consider the constitutionality of SWEPT at a different time (after declining to do so in the current ConVal case).

Next meeting – **March 16, 2020, 2pm-4pm at NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs, 100 Main St, Suite 100**

**Documents:**

- Agenda 3/9
- Meeting Minutes 3/2
- ECS Presentation Slides
- Design Thinking – Problem Definition 3/9