

**COMMISSION TO STUDY SCHOOL FUNDING  
ENGAGEMENT WORKGROUP  
MEETING MINUTES  
6/15/2020**

**MEMBERS**

Mel Myler (chair), Jon Morgan, Susan Huard, Corinne Cascadden, and David Ryan

**ATTENDANCE**

Sub-committee members: Mel Myler, Jon Morgan, Susan Huard, David Ryan; Other Commission Members: Dave Luneau, Dick Ames, Jay Kahn, and Rick Ladd; Carsey School Staff: Carrie Portrie, Michele Holt-Shannon, Jordan Hensley, and Bruce Mallory; Absent: Corinne Cascadden

**CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mel Myler called the meeting to order and reviewed meeting rules, notes about technology, group agreements, and took roll call. David Ryan moved to approve the minutes from June 1, 2020, and Susan Huard seconded. Roll Call: Myler, Huard, Ryan (aye), Morgan (abstained). Mel announced approval of minutes.

**CALENDAR UPDATES**

Mel reviewed the upcoming meetings, noting that the full commission meeting will focus primarily on the Statewide Property Tax (SWEPT).

- June 22, 2020 2:00 – 4:00 Commission Meeting
- June 29, 2020 1:00 – 3:00 Engagement workgroup

**STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUP UPDATES**

Michele Holt Shannon, Director of New Hampshire gave an update about the focus groups. As of June 15, 2020, NH Listens staff conducted 6 out of 12 focus groups with 8-10 school and municipal leaders from across the state. The other 6 focus groups will take place during the last weeks of June 2020. The discussions span 60-90 minutes. The results of all focus group discussions will inform the Commission as it shapes its recommendations in the coming months. The conversations have been rich with stakeholders (e.g., district budget, school board, town council) discussing their thoughts about school funding across districts that are different from their own. Michele noted an additional question regarding what has changed in education over the past 20 years. Fifty people registered across the 6 focus groups held so far, and NH Listens hopes to increase the numbers for the next 6 groups. Most people who have joined are part of the target groups and NH Listens is tracking which communities have participated, and will determine where additional invites are needed in order to have a robust representation across the state – resending invitations and writing no-shows to re-invite.

Michele Holt-Shannon provided a few sample points from the focus groups so far (these are not overarching themes):

- Including new positions or renamed position (behavioral specialists and social workers)
- Teacher turnover – among schools who get first- and second-year teachers who then leave for higher salary districts
- Differences in property taxes is not working for taxpayers
- More weight given to special education in new funding formula
- Need stability to do some long-term planning, relying on grants makes for less stability
- Systematic unfairness that creates winners and losers in the state – last minute changes impact budget and cause ebbs and flows in districts
- Social emotional learning and science behind learning and development
- Adequacy – take the long view and track graduates after graduation
- Don't try to be perfect in this process, just get us somewhere
- Numbers of students IEPs increasing, teacher turnover, needing more attention to the social and emotional learning of students

### **Questions and Discussion:**

- Any “a-ha” moments from the focus groups conducted thus far?
  - Physical plant of buildings that is another area with vast differences.
  - Importance of CTE programs – regional – is there something more for discussion around collaboration
- Discussion about CTE programs
  - Two conversations about CTE programs and regional nature of the program, they are critical pipelines. The facilities matter (ex. automotive).
  - Some offerings could be done regionally to help distribute costs across districts
  - Geographic impacts of transportation and access to resources like CTE.
    - How many hours a day a people spending on the bus?
    - How do you manage the time on the bus – lost time for student learning and additional cost of transportation (ex. 3 kids on a big bus)
- Suggestions for additional groups to engage in the process
  - Including specialists and nurses in the conversations as a focus group – mixed conversations by role
  - Recent graduates from NH Schools
  - Need to talk more about adding and adjusting engagement strategy based on the ability to meet in person or online
- Need for empirical data on teacher and leadership turnover that compliments statistical findings from AIR – is this an area that we need to hire someone like Reaching Higher NH to provide more information?

### **Next Steps**

Continue with focus groups in the next week and aiming to bring a summary to the June 29 workgroup meeting and full summary to Commission in early July.

## DISCUSSION – SCHOOL STAFF SURVEY CONTENT, FORMAT, AND DISTRIBUTION

### Timeline

- August better timing on for post-secondary
- K-12 in June 2020

### Survey Questions

Discussion about NH DOE survey sent to families and educators, Carsey Team will review regarding the length and regarding the number of surveys educators are potentially receiving or have received during this time. Sub-committee and Carsey Team will work together to relate questions to the charge of the Commission.

### *What is most important to know? What factors and content do we need to include?*

- Clarification that the survey will be for anyone who works in education
- Participants who can speak to fiscal differences among communities
- Thinking about ratios of who is represented in sample
  - Teachers who have worked in more than one school
  - Custodial staff
  - Food service staff
  - Administrative assistants
  - Paraprofessionals
  - Nursing staff
  - Support staff
  - Specialists
  - Teaching Staff
- Formats
  - Draft of the survey should be shared with the NEA, AFT, NHSAA, NHSP to get input on what might be survey items.
  - Use care in length - Need to be clear and “tight” in what we are asking – aligns with what the Commission needs to make decisions (e.g., Fiscal, Adequacy).
  - Clarify the demographics (SAU, position, school)
  - District employees may say “we are lucky because we have the resources to do what we need to do.” They may often live outside the communities they work in because of costs. They may also say “I wish my town had what the school district I work in have. I can’t afford to live there.”
  - Question Brainstorm
    - What do you consider an adequate education?
    - What is funded in the district you work in compared to the one you live in and/or where your child(ren) go to school?
    - How does it work in the classroom with kids?
    - How does school funding affect me
    - As a user of tax dollars, as a user of school finance?
    - How does it affect me in a contributor?
    - User and receiver perspectives
    - Differences in resources perceived by the user and receiver.
    - What provides instability and stability?

- Align with fiscal inputs?
  - Align with adequacy question for educators?
  - Inputs and outputs – regarding funding
  - Where do people place their value on certain inputs rather than others?
- Refer to other workgroup topics
- Two perspectives that respondents may hold
  - As an employee
  - As a parent or taxpayer
- Distribution end of June (ideally)
  - Send to lists for distribution to educators and staff
    - Superintendents, Asst. Superintendents, curriculum coordinators and Special Education Directors
    - NH School Administrators Association (Carl Ladd and Jerry Frew)
    - NH Association of School Principals
  - Include an email that appeals to staff's position and their voice as contributors to policy making and change.
  - New Hampshire Listens will draft a survey and letter that districts can make their own and work with David Ryan to help communicate with district leadership.