

Adequacy/Distribution Workgroup

Commission to Study School Funding

Notes – August 17, 2020

Attendees: Jay Kahn, Mel Myler, Barbara Tremblay, Bill Ardinger, Val Zanchuk, Jane Bergeron, Rick Ladd, Dick Ames, Dave Luneau. Also in attendance: Jordan Hensley, Bruce Mallory, Drew Atchison, Jenn Foor, Matora Fiorey, Nicole Heimark. 6 public attendees.

At just after 3pm, Jay Kahn called this meeting to order.

The initial presentation in the adequacy work group meeting was Matora Fiorey, Board President, Alliance for Public Charter Schools, who presented an overview of charter school funding. The presentation slides and video can be found on the Carsey-Commission website.

Jay – on slide 5, that number leaves out transportation. Want to clarify that the average being spent by the state in FY21 – it's \$2300 more on average/pupil using disparity aid. Doesn't carry forward. We've been benchmarking a lot of the costs schools experience – is there any benchmarking for charters looking at average costs at charters nationally. How does NH differ from other charter funding models? Matora – haven't looked at numbers recently but in past, NH has been one of the lowest if not the lowest for funding charter schools. Can get that information and send to the Commission.

Jay – we're concerned about how special education funding works between charters and traditional public schools.

Jane – Is NH collecting any data to inform us about average costs per pupil for students with disabilities attending charter schools? Matora – don't know if DOE is collecting that information and what that looks like. It's a really complicated question with a difficult answer to find because each school district and student is a bit different. In Surrey they tuition their students to Keene, but charter schools don't do it that way, so no fixed tuition costs.

Jane – so it's local taxpayers and districts paying for those with disabilities in charter schools? Matora – correct.

Bruce – Do you have data about the number of special education students who receive “catastrophic aid” who are attending charters? Matora – don't have that data, catastrophic aid stays with districts.

Jane – When a charter school student goes in and gets scholarship money, does that money go above and beyond aid to charter? Matora – don't know anything about the scholarship fund, don't have that information.

Mel – is it true that as a result of charters being able to do different kinds of things that part of the charter is to provide outside money? Matora – Charters do it and their charter does it, but not necessarily expectation that we would raise the majority of funds to operate the school. Plays a part. Don't know if it's in the law or just an option where charter schools are allowed? Mel – Believe it is in the law.

Bill – So many costs of the traditional public school system are capital in nature and not immediately variable. How would you recommend to the Commission the proper protections be put in place so any funding mechanisms protects traditional public schools with money for fixed costs even if a particular students moves? How would you protect public schools who get the stranded costs from transitions to charters? Matora – always surprised that the adequacy aid has not had a natural way to increase as the

costs of healthcare and staff and modifications to buildings increases. Bill – there should be mechanisms to protect schools from unexpected stranded costs. Matora – in past there was a three year delay in payments, and some paying forward, but have not kept up with that.

Iris – originally when charter schools was conceived there would be extra accountability for extra flexibility, but understand that accountability has not materialized substantially. Given that only one of thirty is chartered at the state level, would like to understand the ways in which charter schools are more accountable – how are they held accountable? Matora – we are accountable to our school board, have public meetings and minutes monthly, provide financial statements quarterly and yearly audit to DOE, provide accountability similarly to traditional publics in terms of titles, have an accountability report submitted to DOE every year, have a 5 year renewal process.

Jane – could you walk us through that 5 year renewal? Matora – there is a process where you submit a 5 year renewal document that talks about what has been done and an on site process where you go through a binder including documentation of board minutes and facilities, inspections, feedback from parents, board members, staff, and community members, and student accountability from test scores/assessments. In person review and observation in classrooms, reporting back to DOE. Jane – is there any conversation around special education and charter school accountability? Matora – have not experienced that with responsibility lying with the district.

Jay – we have three outcomes that we are using to assess performance of schools (grad rates, absentee rates, and test scores). Do you report all those outcomes to the state board? Matora – we are k-8 but do report out advancement into 9th grade, absentee, and test scores.

Some further discussion was had about title funding in charter schools.

Next, Nicole Heimark, Director of the NH Alliance for College and Career Readiness and Steve Rothenberg, CTE Director, Concord Regional Technical Center, presented about Career and College Readiness. The presentation slides and video can be found on the Carsey-Commission website.

Val – when we talk about adequacy, I think, adequate to what purpose? To me, college and career readiness is the purpose of adequacy. This is the true measure of adequacy – are people leaving HS in a position to be in a pathway to a productive role as a citizen of our country and state. Thinking about algebra – you see overall rigor at a school going up simply because algebra was required. Rigorous programs have effects on students who aren't even taking the course. Ripple effects that help raise level of all students – not sure if it is only algebra, but shows some key courses can raise performance of entire school.

Dave – on the 65 by 25 – is helping to reach 65 by 25 something this Commission wants to embrace? If not directly maybe tangentially. Are there policies this Commission should consider when putting together recommendations that includes things like having a FAFSA day in the HS's, or something like that? Nicole – I wasn't involved in the beginning but NH Charitable Foundation is loosely guiding the project. Going through a rebranding process because 65 by 25 is not totally resonating. That work is being paused. Impression is – stopping to consider what things look like due to pandemic, do strategies need to change due to the pandemic? Two recommendations come to mind – first, NH needs a systemic data system to measure college

and career indicators. Prior to designing that, there is also an important values conversation. What we measure communicates a value, and historically we focus on college enrollment, persistence, and completion. Many have done a marvelous job of elevating awareness of the need for these indicators because there is not necessarily a dichotomy between career and college. What contributes to the growth and evolution of our state and what supports our students in being viable, civically minded contributors. Steve – pitched for a grant in DC. Every one of the states that won the grant had developed a data-driven system about how these metrics have indicators on how the outcomes led to career/employment. Ohio in particular has a good program. It's not 2 year school or 4 year schools for electricians or plumbers – how do you create a system that fits? 65 by 25 – hovering at 52%. It's about credentials and readiness to get out there. Link employment and school data. Widen the number of students who can be successful and meaningful success/career.

Rick – several years back we required 4 years of math, one of which might be applied/done in a CTE center. In terms of working towards skill areas, are we able to do the same concepts in other kinds of courses? Where does that stand? Steve – we are not especially good in that area. What we know is that students learn better in an all-encompassing environment. Right now not a strong suit of the state. In MA, even, they don't embed English. General agreement between Steve and Rick that that kind of integration and pathway should be developed.

Iris – A couple of people have mentioned something about a productive citizenry, civically minded citizenry. Similar language in the NH constitution. Would it be possible to measure civic engagement of our graduates? Steve – first you're making the assumption that we have good data on graduates, which gets to my earlier point – we need better data on our students. It's hard for me to address your specific question but the spirit of it is that we need to know what is happening to graduates 5, 10, and 20 years out and then backtrack to education. What we know from national data is that adults with good jobs are more civically-minded. Iris – that's an indirect measure. Has anyone been able to directly measure? Bruce noted that many of those indicators are captured in Civic Health Index.

Val – 65 by 25 project came out of research from Georgetown to see what kind of workforce would be needed to provide for the future economy. They couldn't find anyone in NH government to help do that work so CC system started, but went to BIA. Spent time trying to work on that. On track to be about 58%, a lack of 50,000 workers. Most felt comfortable that charitable foundation should lead the work (started last year). NH is one of the few states without an effort from governor's office working on this. Important to keep businesses here, companies will go places where people are trained for the available jobs. It's a near term issue for businesses. If schools aren't producing them, businesses will move.

(EDIT 8/19 – Clarification from Val on 65 x 25: after the CCSNH embraced 65 x 25, Georgetown approached the NH Coalition for Business and Education to take on shepherding 65 x 25 in the state. Out of the NHCBE work came the jointly supported collaboration between the BIA and the Charitable Foundation; Workforce Accelerator 2025. Workforce Accelerator worked to bring businesses and schools together on career pathways and work based learning opportunities. It also acted as a convener of all workforce development activities and groups

throughout the state to foster collaboration and cooperation. By the end of the three year life of the Accelerator came a recognition from groups around the state that the NHCF would be the next logical convening and coordination entity for 65 x 25. Also, many local Chambers of Commerce took on the responsibility of coordinating local businesses and schools once the Workforce Accelerator established the introductions.)

Jay – thank you. The middle school slide was really important. Need to think about enrollment in the future, not just in the past. Thank you for teeing that up for us, a problem for us to noodle on.

The final discussion started with from Drew Atchison of AIR, who discussed out of district simulated costs, ADM weightings, and clarified preschool accounting in costing data.

Drew – incorporated small tweaks into the simulator. For the most part weight changes very minor and similar to what was presented last week. As we continue to make small changes they should not create major changes in the results, which is encouraging.

Jay – a couple questions out there, one for out of district which was corrected. Drew – changed to not double count tuition that is flowing from one NH district to another that is then being re-spent by another district. Getting total revenues very close to those reported by DOE, which is another indicator numbers are in the ballpark of where they should be.

Jay – preschool spending question included in some districts but not others? Drew – When our models are district-level models and our assumption that the DOE 25 data includes data on preK students in those districts. When we include district level spending that includes preK and per pupil side – so both in spending and ADM preK is captured where it exists. At the town level ADM, preK students are not included for adequacy aid, because dollars are allocated on a per pupil basis.

Bruce – Much work is in progress, and folks following along with the Commission should know that. AIR is giving us data to work with. We sometimes ask AIR for policy implications, and they share their insights with us, but AIR is not making policy recommendations. That is the Commission's job, to work with data from AIR, DOE, DRA, and via our engagement work.