
COMMISSION TO STUDY SCHOOL FUNDING

YOUTH FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE, OCTOBER 2020

Facilitated and Designed by New Hampshire Listens on behalf of the Commission Engagement Workgroup

Note: The Engagement Workgroup can weigh in on the questions and additional clarifying terms that may need to be added to explanations. Edits welcome via track changes.

OVERVIEW OF TECH AND PURPOSE

To be added.

OVERVIEW OF THE COMMISSION AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The Commission to Study School Funding is charged with developing school funding policies that comply with court decisions calling for uniform sources of funding and the Constitutional requirement for a state-funded adequate education for all PreK to grade 12 students. The Commission consists of 16 members appointed by the Speaker of the House, the President of the Senate, the Governor, and the Commission chair. Six are public members not currently serving as legislators. The Commission partnered with the University of New Hampshire Carsey School of Public Policy and its public engagement program New Hampshire Listens to hear from local stakeholder, like you, the students who attend public schools in New Hampshire. Your voice matters in this process, and today provides the Commission a chance to hear what you are thinking during large and small group dialogues over the next hour or so.

BACKGROUND ON SCHOOL FUNDING IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

We hope to add a link to a video that Reaching Higher NH is constructing that accessibly explains school funding for participants including the meaning of adequate education and how funds are raised and distributed.

GROUP AGREEMENTS

(Facilitators will leave time to clarify terms and answer questions as needed, making sure the group follows the learning agreements)

- Be fully present
- Lean into discomfort
- Be open-minded
- Share airtime so everyone gets a chance to be heard
- Be respectful and use respectful language
- If you disagree, consider asking a question rather than arguing to prove your point.
- Bring your authentic self to the conversation
- Stories stay here, learning leaves here
- Listen, listen, listen to each other



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (~45MIN)

ROUND ONE: GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER (~15 MIN)

(Each participant takes 1 minute to answer these questions)

- Where do live and what school do you attend?
- When you think about your education in school, what components are/were most important to you?
- If you could name one thing that needs more funding in your school, what would it be?

ROUND TWO: EXPLORING THE TOPIC – SCHOOL FUNDING (~30 MIN)

(Take ~2 minutes each to answer a question below without interruption or crosstalk. Once everyone has answered, the group may take a few minutes for any clarifying or follow up questions/responses.)

Students who attend publicly funded schools across New Hampshire have different educational experiences. These different experiences are often referred to as disparities. This means, what students have access to in their educational experiences (ex. technology, subjects taught in school, materials, class size, teacher qualifications) and the outcomes of a student's education (ex. college or career paths after graduation) differ depending on where you live and what school you attend. Thinking about the video we watched...

- What are the most important components of education that should be considered by the New Hampshire Legislature – Components that all students should have access to regardless of where they live in the state.
- What barriers do you see that prevent an equal opportunity to an adequate education in New Hampshire?
- Students take tests that help decision makers measure how well students are doing in school. What should school leaders measure to know whether students have received a comparable education no matter what community they live in?
- In your opinion, what is working and what are the problems in the way school is funded in New Hampshire?

LARGE GROUP CLOSING (~10MIN)

- What questions do you have for the commission about public school funding?

