



**University of
New Hampshire**

Carsey School of Public Policy

School and District Employee Survey Summary Part II: Open-ended Responses 11-15

Commission to Study School Funding
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NH Listens

Carsey School of Public Policy
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www.nhlistens.org

Questions and Comments?

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Overview and Purpose

- In July 2020, school and district leaders and associations throughout the state helped distribute a survey to New Hampshire public school and district employees.
- The 15-question survey was constructed by New Hampshire Listens in consultation with the Commission's public engagement workgroup. It was active for approximately two weeks.
- 1,768 employees completed the survey across 137 districts, including charter schools.
- This descriptive analysis illustrates patterns in respondents' opinions and perspectives to inform Commission members' thinking and discussions.



Positions of Respondents

	Number of Respondents
Classroom teacher/educator	743
Special educator or student/pupil services	257
Administration or leadership	215
Classroom or student support staff	194
Other not listed	79
Related arts	49
Office staff	42
Guidance	39
Career and technical education	25
Health Services	23
Technology	22
Prefer not to answer	17
Food service	14
Facilities	14
English as a second language	10
Transportation	7
Enrichment or afterschool	5
Athletics	2
Family liaison/parent coordinator	1
Missing (left blank)	10
Total	1,768

Coding Method Questions 11-13

- All responses for questions 11-13 underwent detailed coding by two staff
- Both staff coded the first 50 responses independently. Responses could hold more than one code (or topic area).
- Then they compared codes and generated a list for each question with the acknowledgement that other codes may emerge.
- All responses were attributed an EVPP classification, and analyzed using Stata (a statistical software program) to create frequency counts
- Many codes overlapped by question, which points to clear areas of concern amongst school and district employee respondents.



Description of how school districts were classified by EVPP

Classification of School District	Equalized Property Valuation Per Pupil
Low	<\$800K
Medium	\$800k – \$1.2 million
High	\$1.2 million+
Charter Schools	EVPP not available
Other Districts	Other districts for which EVPP is not available (includes Dresden, Prospect Mountain JMA, Coe-Brown Northwood Academy, and Pinkerton Academy)

Question 11 as it appeared in the survey:

“From your perspective what are the most important factors in providing an adequate education to students across the state of NH?

You can think about factors as what students have access to in their educational experiences at school, and what influences those experiences (curriculum, class size, technology, teacher qualifications or salary, teacher professional development, transportation, maintenance and facilities, special education etc.) AND the outcomes of a student’s education such as how college or career ready students are when they graduate.”



Note: Of the 1,768 total survey respondents 1,393 respondents answered Question 11. 23 codes were generated for this questions

Question 11: Top 10 Codes Across All Respondents

Ranking	Code (Topic)	Number of Respondents Mentioning Each Code	Percentage of Respondents (out of total 1,393)
1	Teacher/staff quality, training, sufficient staffing	714	51.3%
2	Class size	569	40.8%
3	Technology	513	42.4%
4	Sufficient financial resources	459	33.0%
5	Curriculum	452	32.4%
6	Teacher & staff salaries	423	30.4%
7	Equity	298	21.4%
8	Special education	262	18.8%
9	Student performance (outcomes)	257	18.4%
10	Buildings & facilities	225	16.2%

Note: Of the 1,768 total survey respondents 1,393 respondents answered Question 11. Also note that a respondent could mention more than one code (topic).

Question 11: EVPP of the District where Respondents WORK

Ranking	Low EVPP	Medium EVPP	High EVPP
1	Teacher/staff quality, training, sufficient staffing	Teacher/staff quality, training, sufficient staffing	Teacher/staff quality, training, sufficient staffing
2	Technology	Class size	Curriculum
3	Class size	Technology	Class size
4	Sufficient financial resources	Sufficient financial resources	Technology
5	Curriculum	Curriculum	Sufficient financial resources
6	Teacher & staff salaries	Teacher & staff salaries	Teacher & staff salaries
7	Equity	Equity	Equity
8	Buildings & facilities	Special education	Special education
9	Student performance (outcomes)	Student performance (outcomes)	Student performance (outcomes)
10	Special education	Buildings & facilities	Buildings & facilities

Note: Out of the 1,393 respondents of Question 11, 358 respondents work in districts classified as having a “low” equalized property valuation per pupil, 709 respondents work in districts classified as having a “medium” equalized property valuation per pupil, and 248 respondents work in districts classified as having a “high” equalized property valuation per pupil.

Question 11: EVPP of the District where Respondents LIVE

Ranking	Low EVPP	Medium EVPP	High EVPP
1	Teacher/staff quality, training, sufficient staffing	Teacher/staff quality, training, sufficient staffing	Teacher/staff quality, training, sufficient staffing
2	Technology	Class size	Class size
3	Class size	Technology	Technology
4	Curriculum	Sufficient financial resources	Curriculum
5	Sufficient financial resources	Curriculum	Sufficient financial resources
6	Teacher & staff salaries	Teacher & staff salaries	Teacher & staff salaries
7	Equity	Equity	Special education
8	Special education	Student performance (outcomes)	Equity
9	Student performance (outcomes)	Special education	Student performance (outcomes)
10	Buildings & facilities	Buildings & facilities	Buildings & facilities

Note: Out of the 1,393 respondents of Question 11, 358 respondents work in districts classified as having a “low” equalized property valuation per pupil, 709 respondents work in districts classified as having a “medium” equalized property valuation per pupil, and 248 respondents work in districts classified as having a “high” equalized property valuation per pupil.

Selection of Quotations from Question 11

- “We have small class sizes, great technology, highly qualified staff, and most students are prepared for middle school. The upkeep and maintenance of our building is lacking. I don’t believe this is a funding issue” (Brentwood staff and resident, medium EVPP)
- “The most important thing is access to well-trained teachers that have access to ongoing quality professional development. In addition, to class sizes that allow for students to have more access individually to the teacher and that allows the teacher more time to plan engaging lessons. Technology, in these times, is extremely important and most recently, we have learned more about those that HAVE and those that HAVE NOTs” (Derry Cooperative staff, 1 and Manchester resident, medium EVPP)
- “Our population is high in numbers for poor social economics. Those who own homes can hardly afford the property taxes that fund the school. Our pay rate is one of the lowest in NH and can not compete with other states. This makes it extremely difficult to find and keep employees in the district. While we address curriculum, class size, technology, teacher qualifications or salary, teacher professional development, transportation, maintenance and facilities, and special education yearly, we are limited due to funding” (Monadnock regional staff and Keene resident, low EVPP).



Selection of Quotations from Question 11

“Support staff salary is low. this needs a bump! It's difficult to keep support staff because they are over tasked. Public schools should have funds to hire more support staff for instructional purposes, not only for Special Education services. Academic expectations are high yet classroom sizes/dynamics prohibit teaching/reaching of all children due to the many disruptions that occur by at risk learners daily who need either social emotional support or additional support impeding the flow of instruction to support/challenge the avg. to high avg. learners. Guidelines for class sizes need to be revisited. Having the subsidized meal plans is instrumental. Transportation is extremely important given the rural areas of NH. Technology access is key. All the above-mentioned are essential to providing public schools with what students/teachers/staff need but it's obviously a funding issue. Property taxes shouldn't be carrying the burden. We need a state income tax and that's that” (Plymouth staff and resident, medium EVPP)



Selection of Quotations from Question 11

“Teacher retention is an issue in our community due to Raymond's placement on the salary scale compared to surrounding communities. We often hire many young teachers and they leave after a few years. There are limited funds for intervention programs for special education students and the caseload numbers are excessive (the caseload of one grade level is approaching 30 students for one case manager). These seems absurd and an additional case manager should be hired to meet the needs of the special education population. Technology is improving but much of the budget has been dedicated to increasing numbers for the general population, not on improving technology for special education students/teachers” (Raymond staff and resident, medium EVPP)

Selection of Quotations from Question 11

“Students should have equal access to quality teachers, textbooks and instructional resources, teacher time, support staff and technology as well as a broad curriculum and co-curricular experiences in order to be college and career ready. Our current funding mechanism does not provide sufficient funds to allow for equitable resources and opportunities for students throughout the state. Some districts have small class sizes, current textbooks, one-to-one technology and excellent tech instruction and shorter bus rides for students, while other districts do not have the budgets to support these opportunities. Students in lower budget schools, who get up earlier and have longer bus rides arrive at school hungrier and more tired, have larger classes that are harder to focus and learn from, fewer opportunities for enrichment and a long bus ride home that prohibits after school activities. I wish every school had a late bus that would create equal opportunities for students to participate in after school activities and help from teachers.” (Mascoma Valley Regional staff, medium EVPP and Dresden resident, other district with no EVPP available).

Question 11: Whether Respondents Live and Work in the Same District or Not

Ranking	Respondents who live and work in the same district	Respondents who live and work in different districts
1	Teacher/staff quality, training, sufficient staffing	Teacher/staff quality, training, sufficient staffing
2	Class size	Class size
3	Technology	Technology
4	Sufficient financial resources	Sufficient financial resources
5	Curriculum	Curriculum
6	Teacher & staff salaries	Teacher & staff salaries
7	Equity	Equity
8	Special education	Student performance (outcomes)
9	Student performance (outcomes)	Special education
10	Buildings & facilities	Buildings & facilities

Note: Out of the 1,393 respondents of Question 11, 566 respondents live and work in the same district and 733 respondents live and work in different districts.

Question 12 as it appeared in the survey:

“What are the most important components of an “adequate” education that should be considered as part of the base formula for calculating the cost of adequacy?”

Adequate = required to provide, minimally. This term comes from court decisions that have declared that NH students have a fundamental right to an adequate education, to be defined in statutes, not by the courts.”



*Note: Of the 1,768 total survey respondents 1,211 respondents answered Question 12.
19 codes were generated for this question*

Question 12: Top 10 Codes Across All Respondents

Ranking	Code (Topic)	Number of Respondents Mentioning Each Code	Percentage of Respondents (out of total 1,211)
1	Curriculum	408	33.7%
2	Teacher/staff quality, training, sufficient staffing	389	32.1%
3	Technology	333	27.5%
4	Sufficient financial resources	317	26.2%
5	Student performance (outcomes)	293	24.2%
6	Equity (no socioeconomic disparities)	249	20.6%
7	Class size	226	18.7%
8	Materials & supplies	204	16.8%
9	Buildings & facilities	189	15.6%
10	Special education	155	12.8%

Note: Of the 1,768 total survey respondents 1,211 respondents answered Question 12. Also note that a respondent could mention more than one code (topic).

Question 12: EVPP of the District where Respondents WORK

Ranking	Low EVPP	Medium EVPP	High EVPP
1	Curriculum	Curriculum	Teacher/staff quality, training, sufficient staffing
2	Teacher/staff quality, training, sufficient staffing	Teacher/staff quality, training, sufficient staffing	Curriculum
3	Technology	Technology	Student performance (outcomes)
4	Sufficient financial resources	Student performance (outcomes)	Sufficient financial resources
5	Equity	Sufficient financial resources	Technology
6	Student performance (outcomes)	Equity	Class size
7	Class size	Class size	Materials & supplies
8	Buildings & facilities	Materials & supplies	Behavioral & mental health
9	Materials & supplies	Special education	Equity
10	Behavioral & mental health	Buildings & facilities	Buildings & facilities

Note: Out of the 1,211 respondents of Question 12, 302 respondents work in districts classified as having a “low” equalized property valuation per pupil, 619 respondents work in districts classified as having a “medium” equalized property valuation per pupil, and 224 respondents work in districts classified as having a “high” equalized property valuation per pupil.

Question 12: EVPP of the District where Respondents LIVE

Ranking	Low EVPP	Medium EVPP	High EVPP
1	Curriculum	Curriculum	Teacher/staff quality, training, sufficient staffing
2	Teacher/staff quality, training, sufficient staffing	Teacher/staff quality, training, sufficient staffing	Curriculum
3	Technology	Technology	Student performance (outcomes)
4	Sufficient financial resources	Sufficient financial resources	Technology
5	Equity	Student performance (outcomes)	Sufficient financial materials
6	Student performance (outcomes)	Class size	Class size
7	Buildings & facilities	Equity	Equity
8	Class size	Materials & supplies	Materials & supplies
9	Materials & supplies	Buildings & facilities	Behavioral & mental health
10	Teacher & staff salaries	Special education	Buildings & facilities

Note: Out of the 1,211 respondents of Question 12, 291 respondents work in districts classified as having a “low” equalized property valuation per pupil, 638 respondents work in districts classified as having a “medium” equalized property valuation per pupil, and 222 respondents work in districts classified as having a “high” equalized property valuation per pupil.

Selection of Quotations from Question 12

“The most important factors in providing an education include having a building whose structure is safe, where children have access to water bubblers that do not contain heavy metals, such as lead, that have bathrooms on more than one floor of a multi floor building, and that have straws available for students to drink their milk at breakfast and lunch. Important factors to providing an education include teaching science and social studies, every day, from teachers who are actually certified to teach, having appropriate special education tests for identification purposes (CTOPP2), having appropriate tier three special education programs such as LIPS and OG and having special education teachers trained in these programs. Having smaller class sizes and more paraprofessionals would be nice too.” (Manchester staff and Nashua resident, medium EVPP)



Selection of Quotations from Question 12

- “Adequate education would be that school budget decisions would be made not on the dollar burden on a community but on the true needs of the student population. This would include staffing that would support students social and emotional needs , as well as resources to enrich students experiences so they would be more equitable technologically and exposure wise to more financially stable communities.” (Farmington staff and resident, low EVPP)
- “Adequate is the same offering in every school district, whether it be staff, materials, space, class size...or school sports. Not he who lives in the most affluent districts are given better/more opportunities.” (Wakefield staff and resident, high EVPP)



Selection of Quotations from Question 12

“Qualified Teachers & Certifications: in small schools teachers are asked to teach more than their content area like a math teacher teaching social studies. Under current statues this is legal, however, it is not doing right by our students. Technology: we need more money to provide students with access to technology-if students do not have access, we are setting them up to fail when they leave the public schools of NH. Curriculum: we need a well funded & staffed Department of Education at the state level. With the 'greying' of NH, we should also be thinking about how to support small schools and districts to educate their students. Do we need to rethink our SAU structure?” (Oyster River Coop staff, medium EVPP and Rye resident, high EVPP)



Selection of Quotations from Question 12

“An adequate education would prepare students for post-secondary work, technical schools or college. Adequate means students have access to rigorous coursework that promotes creativity, collaboration, and communication. An adequate education includes exposure to upper level math and science courses, challenging history and English classes and inclusion of the arts. An adequate education would be built around a balance of seasoned educators and new hires, with a system in place for mentorship to promote professional development and retention of staff. An adequate education would include systems in place to deal with trauma, poverty, and racial inequities. This is the minimum students need to be successful and the ability to compete in a global marketplace.” (Newport staff and resident, low EVPP)



Selection of Quotations from Question 12

“The current per student "adequacy" aid of approximately \$3700 per pupil is a joke to think a district can provide adequate educ. services with that when the real cost varies between 12,000 to \$17000 per student, as it varies by region and cost for transportation, spec ed needs, etc. The formula used now leaves out so many things that school districts need to provide now, even before COVID 19 crisis- technology needs, school nurses, AP and other advanced classes, extra curricular programs, classroom supplies and the list goes on. First thing, is all this should be part of "adequate". Of course, curriculum standards and resources to deliver the curriculum should be included as well as teacher prof development to keep them up to date to deliver that curriculum as well as physical needs for students which vary by community. I suggest this committee take time to read the Reaching Higher NH website reporting on this issue . Specifically this article and different family scenarios there.

<http://reachinghighernh.org/2020/01/14/what-are-the-major-factors-that-influence-student-learning-in-new-hampshire/> ” (Exeter staff and Sanborn Regional resident, medium EVPP)



Question 12: Whether Respondents Live and Work in the Same District or Not

Ranking	Respondents who live and work in the same district	Respondents who live and work in different districts
1	Teacher/staff quality, training, sufficient staffing	Curriculum
2	Curriculum	Teacher/staff quality, training, sufficient staffing
3	Technology	Technology
4	Sufficient financial resources	Sufficient financial resources
5	Student performance (outcomes)	Student performance (outcomes)
6	Equity	Equity
7	Class size	Class size
8	Buildings & Facilities	Buildings & facilities
9	Special education	Special education
10	Behavioral & mental health	Behavioral & mental health

Note: Out of the 1,211 respondents of Question 12, 499 respondents live and work in the same district and 633 respondents live and work in different districts.

Question 13 as it appeared in the survey:

“Are there barriers you can identify that inhibit an equal opportunity to an adequate education?”



Note: Of the 1,768 total survey respondents 1,307 respondents answered Question 13. 23 codes were generated for this question

Question 13: Top 10 Codes Across All Respondents

Ranking	Code (Topic)	Number of Respondents Mentioning Each Code	Percentage of Respondents (out of total 1,307)
1	Equity & equitable distribution of resources	421	32.2%
2	Insufficient financial resources	316	24.2%
3	Current school funding formula	282	21.6%
4	Teacher/staff quality, training, sufficient staffing	259	19.8%
5	Bureaucratic barriers & leadership	239	18.3%
6	Reliance on property taxes	233	17.8%
7	Technology	232	17.8%
8	Low-income, poverty	197	15.1%
9	Family & parent support	189	14.5%
10	Student performance (outcomes)	151	11.6%

Note: Of the 1,768 total survey respondents 1,307 respondents answered Question 13. Also note that a respondent could mention more than one code (topic).

Question 13: EVPP of the District where Respondents WORK

Ranking	Low EVPP	Medium EVPP	High EVPP
1	Equity	Equity	Equity
2	Insufficient financial resources	Insufficient financial resources	Teacher/staff quality, training, sufficient staffing
3	Reliance on property taxes	Current school funding formula	Current school funding formula
4	Current school funding formula	Teacher/staff quality, training, sufficient staffing	Insufficient financial resources
5	Teacher/staff quality, training, sufficient staffing	Technology	Bureaucratic barriers & leadership
6	Bureaucratic barriers & leadership	Bureaucratic barriers & leadership	Behavioral & mental health
7	Technology, internet access	Low-income, poverty	Technology, internet access
8	Low-income, poverty	Family & parent support	Family & parent support
9	Family & parent support	Reliance on property taxes	Low-income, poverty
10	Community engagement & communication	Student performance (outcomes)	Property tax structure, reliance on property taxes

Note: Out of the 1,307 respondents of Question 13, 338 respondents work in districts classified as having a “low” equalized property valuation per pupil, 664 respondents work in districts classified as having a “medium” equalized property valuation per pupil, and 236 respondents work in districts classified as having a “high” equalized property valuation per pupil.

Question 13: EVPP of the District where Respondents LIVE

Ranking	Low EVPP	Medium EVPP	High EVPP
1	Equity	Equity	Equity
2	Insufficient financial resources	Insufficient financial resources	Current school funding formula
3	Reliance on property taxes	Current school funding formula	Teacher/staff quality, training, sufficient staffing
4	Current school funding formula	Teacher/staff quality, training, sufficient staffing	Bureaucratic barriers & leadership
5	Teacher/staff quality, training, sufficient staffing	Bureaucratic barriers & leadership	Family & parent support
6	Bureaucratic barriers & leadership	Technology, internet access	Technology, internet access
7	Technology, internet access	Low-income, poverty	Insufficient financial resources
8	Low-income, poverty	Reliance on property taxes	Behavioral & mental health
9	Community engagement & communication	Bureaucratic barriers & leadership	Reliance on property taxes
10	Family & parent support	Family & parent support	Low-income, poverty

Note: Out of the 1,307 respondents of Question 13, 331 respondents work in districts classified as having a “low” equalized property valuation per pupil, 675 respondents work in districts classified as having a “medium” equalized property valuation per pupil, and 234 respondents work in districts classified as having a “high” equalized property valuation per pupil.

Selection of Quotations from Question 13

- “The town by town funding system is the biggest barrier. It continues the cycle of poverty because “poorer towns” generally don't want their taxes to go up so they don't fund their schools adequately. “Richer towns” have better schools.” (John Stark Regional staff, 1 and Concord resident, medium EVPP)
- “We have such a large difference between towns. It seems really unfair that the towns that have the highest population of transients, ESL, low SES, etc also often have way fewer resources. In small districts it only takes a couple very involved students to utilize all the resources. Both those students and all the other students deserve to get exactly what they need.” (Contoocook Valley staff and resident, medium EVPP)
- “Yes. Income, location of residence, race or ethnicity. It is a shame this happens in our country, but it does each and every day. If you live in a community with money, you have greater opportunities than those who don't. Simple truth.” (Dunbarton staff, medium EVPP and Merrimack Valley resident, low EVPP)
- “Yes, local control; relying on property taxes, racism, and politics can inhibit equal opportunity to an adequate education. A lack of state and federal viewpoint that all children should get the same educational opportunity is inhibiting equal access as well.” (Henniker staff, medium EVPP and Hopkinton resident, low EVPP)



Selection of Quotations from Question 13

- “MONEY for the schools. Property owners cannot afford their taxes so the vote all school funding down. We end up with emergency band aids when it all falls apart.” (Weare staff, low EVPP and Mont Vernon resident, medium EVPP)
- “The district I work at had a high tax rate yet fewer home-owners. 60% of the kids I serve are poverty level, and we get much less funding than the district I live in.” (Somersworth staff, low EVPP and Hampton resident, high EVPP)
- “The general NH system of Public Education Funding. Teachers (educated to teach others) having to negotiate with School Boards (mostly lay peoples/non-educators) and their Lawyers (highly educated, non cost efficient advocates for only the School Boards) to decide what is or is not an "adequate" pay and benefit package that then the Districts voting, mostly misinformed public decides is acceptable.” (Lincoln-Woodstock Cooperative staff and Holderness resident, high EVPP)
- “The State of NH desperately needs an income tax because the wealthy districts provide a much better education. This includes, # of students in a class. Salaries for all employees, maintenance for the buildings, technology for staff and students, etc.” (Portsmouth staff and resident, high EVPP)



Selection of Quotations from Question 13

- “Districts such as Manchester have a high population of students who require special services. These needs are met, but by sacrificing the needs of the regular education population. Until the burden of high-priced special services (due to language barriers, low socioeconomic status, and special needs) is lifted off the local taxpayer, no student in the city will receive an adequate education when compared to a smaller, less diverse community” (Litchfield staff, low EVPP and Manchester resident, medium EVPP)
- “High-speed internet access, students not being given the same opportunities depending what county they live in, money per student being different according to the county they live in.” (Berlin staff and resident, low EVPP)
- “I work in a 6-town district. Some elementary schools are well-funded and in well-off towns, and send students who are well prepared. Other towns are poorer and their elementary schools lack the necessary resources, and those students are nowhere near ready. In the same school district” (Monadnock Regional staff, low EVPP and Jaffrey-Rindge Cooperative resident, medium EVPP)
- “Lack of funds for each town. Some towns are so cash-strapped and/or have so many students that they cannot possibly afford their own schools or to send students to a nearby school. The state should provide more money to towns.” (Moultonborough staff & Inter-Lakes Cooperative resident, high EVPP)



Selection of Quotations from Question 13

- ““Property-rich” towns, such as lakefront towns, have much lower taxes; and therefore, this inhibits an equal opportunity for an adequate education because residents in those towns would pay less in property taxes than those in poorer (not property-rich) towns. In our small community, there is little revenue coming in from any type of commerce, so the residents have to foot the entire bill for education via property taxes. If there was a more equitable funding solution, everyone could benefit because then “property-poor” towns wouldn't have to pay so much.” (Andover staff and resident, medium EVPP)
- “Absolutely. Schools above the notch are not being supported nearly enough to provide adequate education. NH typically focuses on the larger schools because they have the larger population but schools above the notch still need help and support from the state as well.” (Northumberland staff and resident, low EVPP)
- “Lack of social services in rural NH, no counseling centers, no youth centers, etc. Funding for rural schools is limited (state and federal). We rely a lot on grants to fund opportunities for children. Lack of public transportation. Some of our families do not have cars and kids rely on hour long plus bus rides to school. No after school late buses for PreK-8. Lack of internet (only DLS phone lines available to most) which is very unreliable. Lack of resources for needy families (food, emotional support, no technology at home, limited jobs). Transient families who move frequently so students have no stable homelife or continuity in educational and social/emotional growth.” (Fall Mountain Regional staff and Keene resident, low EVPP)



Question 13: Whether Respondents Live and Work in the Same District or Not

Ranking	Respondents who live and work in the same district	Respondents who live and work in different districts
1	Equity	Equity
2	Insufficient financial resources	Insufficient financial resources
3	Teacher/staff quality, training, sufficient staffing	Current school funding formula
4	Current school funding formula	Technology
5	Bureaucratic barriers & leadership	Bureaucratic barriers & leadership
6	Reliance on property taxes	Teacher/staff quality, training, sufficient staffing
7	Technology	Reliance on property taxes
8	Low-income, poverty	Low-income, poverty
9	Family & parent support	Family & parent support
10	Behavioral & mental health	Student performance (outcomes)

Note: Out of the 1,307 respondents of Question 13, 530 respondents live and work in the same district and 691 respondents live and work in different districts.

Question 14 as it appeared in the survey:

“In your opinion, what is working and what are the problems with the way we raise and distribute funds for public schools in NH?”



Note: Of the 1,768 total survey respondents 1,220 respondents answered Question 14.

Themes from Question 14

- District and school employees saw problems with the way funds are distributed in general and wanted more equity and in some cases suggested more choices for families.
- Smaller and more rural districts accrue extra costs in a variety of ways that may include transportation and professional development.
- The limited tax base in some communities can also limit funding for schools.
- The dependence on property taxes in poorer towns creates inequity that is noticeable among residents and school or district employees.
- People expressed that statewide resources and equitable funding need to be considered to remove cross-town disparities in both rural and urban settings.



Themes from Question 14

- Local control is desirable in some ways, but it has limits when considering the needs of students and equitable opportunities for positive outcomes.
- There is a noticeable increase in mental and behavioral challenges among children that require extra staff and specialists who can provide supports.
- Local knowledge, community engagement, voting and bureaucracy along with unfunded mandates from the legislature or NH DOE can limit decisions and further complicate school funding.
- Choosing how and what to fund in communities remains challenging as more people live on fixed incomes or incomes that do not match the rising costs of living in the state. Distribution of funds in communities can be very challenging when balancing multiple community needs.



Question 15 as it appeared in the survey:

“Provide additional comments here about district resources (what is important to keep, what is missing, etc.) or questions for the Commission.”



Note: Of the 1,768 total survey respondents 708 respondents answered Question 15.

Selection of Questions Posed by Respondents in Question 15

- “Shouldn't all New Hampshire schools have transportation for their elementary and high school students to be transported to school, if they are unable to walk the distance (in this case over 9 mile-15+ miles)? How are they supposed to get to school each day if it is not provided?...Shouldn't an elementary school K-8 have a technology teacher and a foreign language teacher? Should a rural school attending a high school two towns away be charged \$30,000 per student? Rural schools have unique needs that are not being met.” (Winchester staff and resident, low EVPP)
- “Why is apportionment for Coop districts allowed to be based on ADM when no other aspect of school funding or other funding is based on anything other than assessed property values? ADM apportionment is equivalent to tuition-based funding, the antithesis of true public education intended to provide maximum societal benefits without regard for one's specific usage of the service (like fire, police, ambulance, etc.)” (Hollis-Brookline Cooperative staff and resident, medium EVPP)
- “Why do we lock students into a school system based upon their address. Let towns set the tax rate and the state set an adequate funding amount, then let parents' "shop" for the school that best meets their child's needs and their families needs.” (Windham staff, medium EVPP and Weare resident, low EVPP)



Selection of Questions Posed by Respondents in Question 15

- “Funding from the state **MUST** be consistent and **ADEQUATE** to meet the needs of student learning. Why doesn't the state provide a separate line item for textbooks and technology?” (Manchester staff and resident, medium EVPP)
- “How do we keep good teachers in lower-income schools? A quality educator is the most essential component of a positive education outcome.” (Nashua staff and Amherst resident, medium EVPP)
- “Why must towns like Pittsfield suffer high taxes and yet not be able to provide even a 4-year foreign language?” (Epping staff and resident, medium EVPP)
- “How are you going to ensure students living in communities with high levels of senior citizens that there will be funding to maintain and improve their education systems?” (Exeter Region Cooperative staff and Fremont Resident, medium EVPP)



Selection of Questions Posed by Respondents in Question 15

- “How can public schools better address the needs of very young students dealing with trauma and significant emotional and psychological needs? We do not have the funds, training or time to give these students and their families the support and assistance they need for these students to succeed.” (Kearsarge Regional staff and Sunapee resident, high EVPP)
- “The per-pupil amount of adequate education funding is not realistic. Is the Commission updating the formula, or is it considering a different approach? I hope that it is considering some form of statewide financial support for schools that is not based on property tax.” (Grantham staff and resident, high EVPP)
- “How do we put the student at the center of the equation and take the politics out of it? If we recognize that in order to be successful, students need to be a part of the process and they need to have the ability to state what they need to be successful.” (Charter school staff, 4 and Timberlane Regional resident, medium EVPP)



Discussion

This summary offers points for discussion amongst Commission members.

- Based on what we have learned so far, what stands out here?
- What questions can we pose to stakeholders moving forward that will provide useful information?
 - Youth
 - Senior residents (65+)
 - Taxpayer Associations
 - School and Municipal Leaders





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Commission to Study School Funding
September 14, 2020

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Questions and Comments?

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