

September 30 Public Comment Period Notes Commission to Study School Funding

Attendees: Mel Myler, Dave Luneau, Corinne Cascadden, Bill Ardinger, Val Zanchuk, Jay Kahn. UNH Carsey School: Jordan Hensley, Bruce Mallory, Carrie Portrie, 11 public attendees.

Welcome: Dave Luneau welcomed everyone to the extended public comment period and then conducted roll call. Dave confirmed that public comments are sent to all the Commission members for review. Jordan Hensley provided an overview of the process for commenting.

Review entire comments here: https://youtu.be/QJz_qR3tgqs

Phil Winslow thanked the Commission for all their work and hours. He is the chair of the Selectman of Rye. The median age in Rye is 55 years old, an older population base than other towns, retired and fixed incomes. Equally important to fund an education for children as it is for seniors to afford their homes. If we need to use the property tax based then we need to change the formula. Could include a 25% surcharge for non-residents. We cannot add additional tax burden on residents, especially for seniors on fixed incomes who have lived in the community for years.

Kat Sofranzo (Sp?) thanked the Commission for public comment. First year math teacher at a Manchester High School. Not her first-time teaching in the district and has taught courses to underserved youth in Manchester and Bedford and clinical training at Access Academy. Kat noted the differences in technology between the disparities in schools. Access had less than Bedford. There are some students in Manchester who still do not have chromebooks to do their work. Teachers have to buy document cameras to support instruction. Students do not always have access to internet. Access Academy has students who are underserved and offers a longer and engaging program for students who ask for more time in school. Only a small number of students can participate in Access which allows them thrive.

Liz Kirwan is a Manchester English Language teacher and member of Manchester Proud. Liz thanked the Commission for its work and is thankful the Commission has offered youth-focused public commenting period. Liz moved to Manchester from Nashua two years ago to be involved and invested in the community she serves. As a property tax payer, she noticed that a comparative house in Nashua would be \$1200 more than her house in Manchester. She noted Manchester has a tax cap, and would like the state to review this to better support students. Liz asserted students are important; Manchester is a refugee resettlement site. She has a global classroom with many languages spoken. The diversity makes the community stronger but requires additional funding so students can attain outcomes in the face of the systemic barriers and inequities they face. Equitable funding in Manchester is different than other communities in the state. Students know and feel they are treated differently than others. Funding should not be determined by zip code. Youth from Liz's class will share their thoughts next week at the youth public commenting session. Liz noted students' goals of engaging in STEM careers and business careers and talked about the cuts to science and business courses. Another student wants to be a lawyer and only has access to a one semester course. Liz is learning from her students through the process, and hopes the Commission will as well.

Angelina Gillispie who attends grad school at UNH Manchester, a resident of Manchester, and is student teaching in Manchester. Angelina grew up in Derry and attended Pinkerton academy. Angelina explained that Pinkerton did not lack in resources. Angelina remembered being one of the few students of color and a student on free and reduced lunch. Angelina, during one of her internships at Exeter High School. Angelina learned about ESOL programs and students as she finished her bachelor's degree. She then sought an ESOL teacher pathway. Angelina knew Manchester was a place she wanted to work, and turned down the option to work in a well-funded school in a wealthy community to working in Manchester which has less funding and less wealth. She knows she will have to fight for her students' education that empowers instead of disempowers. Angelina concluded that EL students in Manchester are preserving through many struggles including war and poverty. They may have unsafe homes and need to work. They may travel in unsafe neighborhoods. Manchester needs safe schools. Liz Kirwan and Angelina are working with their students who will be presenting during the youth voice session next week on October 7th. Angelina thanked the Commission for the space.

Jane Ferrini wanted to follow up on comments from Rye and focus on seniors. They have forwarded the opportunity to a number of local and state organizations. Jane noted that other outreach for seniors maybe needed other than the Zoom focus group due to access, but understood the change because of COVID. Jane noted that Chris Dwyer spoke to their group in Portsmouth and clarified that it was a model and wanted to raise the consideration that there may be some misunderstanding elsewhere – knowing the Commission has not made a recommendation yet. Jane thanked the Commission for its efforts.

Future Public Commenting Sessions and Means to Provide Feedback

- The public can access additional public comment periods here: <https://carsey.unh.edu/school-funding/calendar>
- Also public members can provide comments via this form: https://unh.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_e4gwYUyg0FHQNxP or email the Commission at SchoolFunding.Commission@unh.edu.

October 2020 Focus Groups

The following focus groups are occurring in October 2020 with specific participants in mind. Participants who meet the criteria listed do not need any expertise in school funding other than their own experiences, beliefs, and perspectives. All voices welcome. Email Carrie Portrie for more details at Carrie.Portrie@unh.edu.

Taxpayer Association Focus Group on October 1st

- 5:30pm to 7:00pm – Register here: <https://unh.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJwoduGvqD4sE9NCI4u8m0BAVuXn43njgmZ7>

Senior Residents 65+ on October 6th

- 8:00am to 9:30am – Register here: https://unh.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJcsde-przsJE9QUDM1qv8DI30g_hPC6FCXw

- 4:00pm to 5:30pm - Register here: <https://unh.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJlOf-GuqDwrE9ERlZcV7gjO7i4QsX3ByhNW>

Youth Voices on October 7th, October 13th, and October 14th

- October 7th public commenting session link here: <https://carsey.unh.edu/school-funding/calendar> - tips from Reaching Higher NH here: <https://reachinghighernh.org/2020/09/21/school-funding-commission-welcomes-youth-input-sept-23-and-oct-7/>
- October 13th 6:00 to 7:30pm – Register here: <https://unh.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJctce2oqTsvHdApZjqXNc0StR3AMA2Hc17u>
- October 14th 4 to 5:30pm – Register here: <https://unh.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUpduuuqD0uG9Nbk4b2PdLBVsAOWSi-R7pk>

Municipal and School Leader Reprise on October 27th, 2020

- 4:00pm to 5:30 pm - Register here: <https://unh.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJlrf-2srT4pEtQAR94IftxAtxuAxK7t2Scj>