

**COMMISSION TO STUDY SCHOOL FUNDING  
ENGAGEMENT WORKGROUP  
MINUTES 10/13/2020**

**Members**

Present: Mel Myler, Corinne Cascadden, Susan Huard, Dave Luneau, Jay Kahn, Dick Ames, Mary Heath. Absent: Jon Morgan, David Ryan. Public Attendees = 6.

**Call to Order**

Mel Myler called the meeting to order. Took roll call. Each individual introduced themselves and location.

**Discussion**

Mel noted that the Granite State Poll results were in, and that representatives from the UNH Survey Center will join the engagement work group next week. Some questions around the survey included response rate, special education, and how well respondents understand school funding in NH. It was determined that more conversation would be had on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Carrie reviewed last week's youth voice public comment session, noting that many students from Manchester participated via both written and verbal statements. Carrie let the Commission know that she will be preparing a summary of that focus group.

Mel noted that something that stood out to him in the Granite State poll is that only 20% of respondents had kids in school. Corrine – All of the input from so many stakeholder groups changes the view about it only being about property wealth. People of all ages are concerned about local property taxes and it does impact where you want to live. The survey and focus groups have brought forward input from lots of different kinds of people of all ages across the state – it's a broad spectrum of people in the state who are concerned about the issue.

Jay – I'm moving towards Article 2, section 83 in the constitution. Heard in the outcomes that the purpose of education—there is some alignment with the state constitution. The notion of an education that links to workforce needs, that is the economic propulsion for the state...I think that there is a way to say that schools fulfill a social and economic need and a constitutional responsibility.

Some discussion was had about fairness and differences between various schools and districts and how students saw disparities between opportunities available in different schools. Discussion was had about the current ongoings between Manchester, Hooksett, and Pinkerton Academy, as well as the current state of schools in the area and student movement there over time.

Bruce – during this morning's meeting, reference was made to teacher compensation and the relationship between teacher retention and student success. In the student voice session last week, students spoke highly of their teachers. Granite State Poll responses also referenced teacher quality as an important piece of educational quality overall. Outcomes reflect student experiences with teachers and stability and consistency students have. We are not throwing input variables out, but know that students in less funded districts perform at a lower rate than those that are not.

Mel – Class size came up this morning as well, and the notion that class sizes can be somewhat larger if resources are available and teacher quality is high. Students last week praised teachers and valued support systems available to them.

Carrie – educator survey findings also highlighted teacher quality, salaries, and staffing as supports for student success.

Mel – continuity of school leadership also important, found that in house education committee.

Bruce – reaching higher is currently engaged in research in a number of districts across the state looking at the relationship between teacher salaries and student outcomes.

Liz Canada (listening in, brought over) – published teacher salary briefs in July and are available. Have an analysis on teacher salary schedules vs what teachers are currently being paid. Would be happy to come back and share more/send the briefs directly.

Jay – I think that a takeaway and challenge for our group is to recognize that outputs and inputs are related. We need to explain that the kind of inputs that are needed in property poor and student needy communities are different and greater than what there is today. Talking about outcomes not as concrete as the experiences people remember about the good teachers they have had. Have to speak about how those connections aren't as beneficial in less wealthy districts, because of turnover, because of lack of funding, etc. Need a pithy way of describing how the outcome model will lead to funding of inputs that will make students more successful. Some further discussion was had about access and school buildings and the relative importance of proper school buildings even though it is not foremost in the minds of the public.

Carrie then reviewed the summary documents she put together around senior resident and taxpayer focus groups. Those documents can be found on the [Carsey-Commission website](#).

Jay – to the extent you can take some of the themes from these groups and hone in on some particular items is good, because you're getting at real questions. Would be good for the engagement portion of the report to reflect how the findings relate to public input. For example, if we had a circuit breaker would property taxes be the best way of funding? Findings hopefully can define the questions in subsequent focus groups.

Carrie then brought up the reprise of the municipal/school leader focus groups that are upcoming. Want to build out more knowledge. October 27 will be the date of the municipal and school leader focus groups. Following this, hoping to do a legislative learning exchange in November. Carrie shared the discussion guide with the group and asked them to provide feedback on the document and potential questions for the group.

Dave – on the second question, the answer to that isn't so much about the total but rather the distribution in costs based on the unique characteristics of students and the districts in which they reside as far as comparable goes.

Susan – the first question is loaded/dense with information. Would like to find a way to do much like what was done with the second question. Have already had a few comments along the lines of equitable vs equity.

Corinne – There are a lot of words there. School-aged young people could be public school-aged children or could break into multiple questions. Or could have an introduction providing information before the question.

Further conversation was had on the questions and time was spent wordsmithing them to make questions clear and concise as possible, as well as covering the most appropriate topics and questions.

Discussion was also had about the groups the engagement process has brought in and whether or not it is representative of Granite Staters.

Minutes from the 9/29 engagement meeting were approved by all engagement members present.