

First a little background on who I am. I'm Sawyer Rogers a student at UNH and a recent graduate from Exeter High School. I attended schools in the SAU16 district. I'm from a modest family, we've always had enough but not a whole lot extra. I also did look through the Whole Picture of Public Education website and some of the reports before putting this together.

I'd categorize myself as someone who has benefited quite a bit because of public education. When I attended Main Street Elementary School I was an anxious, shy, and nervous student. I've stayed in contact with a teacher from that time and she is always telling me how she never would have predicted me to become the person I am today. When my family moved to Kensington, I attended Kensington Elementary School, the much smaller community there helped me and my confidence grew but I was still fairly reserved. The Cooperative Middle School was where things started turning around, 8th grade, especially. I decided to run to be my class president. Looking back, I have no clue how I decided to do that. But I ended up winning and that event is something that changed my life forever.

This because my peers had entrusted me to represent and work for them. That gave me the drive to work hard. And I did, I put together numerous events for my class and community and my class broke records. I had a passion for this and it allowed for me to develop my skills and improve myself.

So when it comes to public education I think a key aspect for it being successful is to give students ways to find a passion, and then allow them to work on that passion. There are two factors I can think of that lead to this happening. Resources of the student and resources of the school. The school has to be able to offer opportunities for all students while the student has to be able to take advantage of them. A student may not be able to take part in opportunities if there are other things in their life preventing them from doing so. This is where funding comes in, there needs to be funding for both opportunities and helping students take part in them.

In NH funding varies by your community. I know this as I've seen and heard it, working with students from other districts at my place of work, going to student government conferences across the state, having attended St Paul School's Summer Program which consists of only NH students, and I'm on the NH 2021 TOY committee and have read the stories of teachers from across the state. From these experiences I've learned that I was very fortunate to be from the community I am from. I am from a community that financially supports its schools. Of course, my community isn't perfect, but it is better off in many ways than others. As there are many communities where those funds or support just aren't there. And that leads to less individuals becoming successful members of communities.

In my last words I urge this committee to reach out to recent graduates that wouldn't have made comments here today as they are the ones you really need to hear from. And to make sure you are talking to those that are taking all different types of paths with their future. I'm a college student who was successful because of public education, but in no way do all recent graduates match that.