

October 7 Youth Voice Comment Period Notes

Commission to Study School Funding

Attendees: Dave Luneau, Mel Myler, Corinne Cascadden, Barbara Tremblay, Jay Kahn. Also Present: Bruce Mallory, Carrie Portrie, Andres Mejia, Angelina Gillispie, Liz Kirwan. 16 public attendees.

Just after 4pm Dave opened the meeting and welcomed attendees. Carrie called the roll and let everyone know how the day would go.

Sawyer Rogers, Kensington: Thanked Ms. Kirwan. I am a student at UNH and recent graduate of Exeter HS. Modest upbringing, enough but not a lot extra. Have benefitted greatly from public education, was shy but have gained confidence as I moved through school districts. I ran for class president, won, and that changed my life forever. Peers entrusted me, and that gave me drive. Developed skills and improved myself. A key aspect for public education is helping students find their passion. Requires resources for students and resources for schools. Needs to be funding for opportunities to students to take part in. Have seen the variation and heard about it in work and life and at St. Paul's summer program, as well as the New Hampshire 2021 teacher of the year committee. I am from a community that supports its schools and very fortunate. I urge this committee to reach out to recent graduates that haven't been heard, need to talk to those who are taking all different kinds of paths. I am a college student but not all graduates match that description.

Fady Habib, Manchester: From Egypt originally. Experience in middle school was not bad and not good. High school experience very bad, little technology, sports and supplies. Not happy with this experience. New high school has activities, computers, and more opportunity for a great education. Need better internet, sports, textbooks, language opportunities, and food. People in mansions and bigger houses should pay more in taxes to help pay for education.

Ederlin, Manchester: go to high school in Manchester, originally from the Dominican Republic. Coming to a new culture is difficult but teachers help me with everything I need. Like the teachers help, and that students are free to express themselves. Things that need to be changed is better internet, more activities, languages, resources. This school needs the quality that other schools have – we deserve the same resources. Ask the funding commission to provide the funding the school needs.

Following the spoken public comment, written testimony was read aloud from several students. The text of those letters is available on the [meeting documents](#) and [resources pages](#) of the Commission's website.

Mel asked how many languages are spoken at Manchester West, and Liz noted that in a class of 10 students it's likely that you would have 7 different languages. Overall, there are over 60 languages and dialects spoken. Liz noted that for many students English may not be a second

language but a third, fourth, or fifth. Mel also asked about providing more food options for students – Liz said that one of the first things they hear from students is dissatisfaction with food. They have added a salad bar, but otherwise is challenging given cultural and religious backgrounds present with attendant dietary restrictions. Mel also asked about using Google translate. Liz – use it in a pinch, but it is a literal translation and so they prefer not to use it if possible. Have an array of translation services available, and 5 bi/multi-lingual liaisons. Have 2 Spanish liaisons for a large number of students.

Jay – it seems that the in-school internet is not sufficient, and that is confusing for me because I know that there are efforts being made to connect schools with sufficient bandwidth. Asked to clarify. Liz – on Monday there was a bandwidth upgrade, and there is a district plan to upgrade. There are a lot of pulls on the internet available. Still are limits, and the older part of the building will lose internet at times. Mel – asked about attendance. Liz – around 800 students, with almost a quarter speaking a language besides English at home. Similar to other schools in Manchester. A bigger difference among elementary schools in Manchester.