

Updated on May 24, 2021

Public Comment from Qualtrics Form

December 17, 2020

Michael R. Royce, Concord

I would like your E-mail address because what I have to say is presented much better in .DOC or .PDF format.

February 17, 2021

Ellen Vermokowitz, no community entered

No comment left

March 1, 2021

Maria Sillari, Portsmouth

Until our Governor and legislators are willing to take a look at ALL forms of revenue, INCLUDING income tax, school funding and many other services the state SHOULD pay for but doesn't, will continue to be inequitably and inadequately supported.

March 2, 2021

Michael R. Royce, Concord

I would like an E-mail address that I could submit a document that would look better than this text box.

March 3, 2021

Michael R. Royce, Concord

I would like an E-mail address that I could send my comments to that would look better than a "text box" entry.

March 7, 2021

Michael R. Royce, Concord

I would like an E-mail address that I could send a document to that would look better than a text box.

March 25, 2021

Roy Schweiker, Concord

The Commission to Study School Funding has created an entirely new definition of "adequate education" which is impossible to obtain regardless of the amount of state funding provided. Their report makes unrealistic assumptions about school district behavior, partially ignores the Supreme Court decisions, misuses a regression analysis, and disclaims any obligation to try to reduce costs.

At present the state's obligation to provide an "adequate education" has been considered to ensure that each district obtains certain measurable outcomes, which presumably can be adjusted over time. The Commission instead insists that each district be provided funds to obtain "average" outcomes [p.11] and that low-performing districts may require more spending per-pupil to achieve this. [p.7] New Hampshire is not Lake Wobegon and it is impossible for all districts to be above average. Lower-performing districts will take the state money and try to become "average" but many school districts in the state pride themselves on being above average and will spend what it takes to do so. That will increase the average the state will have to pay for next year, which will be a never-ending spiral of expense. There is no reason to believe that the outcome gap will ever close since the state will pay the increasing cost of the lower bound, so the ambitious districts will only pay a fixed amount for the differential and there is every reason to believe they will continue to do so. For some reason the report insists that above-average districts will not try to continue to be better. [p.39]

Professional sports leagues that try to equalize outcomes through competitive balance often have a salary cap to reduce spending differentials between teams, but the Commission specifically insists that districts be allowed to spend as much as they wish. [p.62] Many states larger than New Hampshire have statewide teacher salary scales to improve equity, but the report never mentions this.

One of the most visible differences between districts is in buildings and other physical facilities which are not considered part of the current adequacy formula although they are required by state standards. The present school building aid often goes to build palaces for wealthy districts, while poor districts which can't afford the required match continue with substandard ones. Peculiarly the report states that communities will have to pay part of the facility cost [p.46], which is directly contrary to the Supreme Court decision that the state must pay the full cost of an "adequate education". [p.53] Equalizing facilities will be a breath-taking expense particularly if the notion that lower-performing districts require better is extended to facilities, and the equalization must be done over a short period of time.

The report includes a regression model of the purported necessary education spending based on a number of factors including student characteristics, grade level, and district size. [p.11] Mathematicians stress that such models are imprecise and should be used to guide decisions rather than being the absolute truth. For example, one part of the model is that students in middle grades receive 142% of the per-pupil spending while those in high school receive only 42%. No educator would claim that middle school students cost three times as much as high school students to educate so these numbers are hiding some other factor, but nevertheless the report insists that all spending be done according to the model [p.12] since outputs are to be the basis of spending rather than inputs.

According to the regression model, larger districts have per-pupil costs of 43% or 24% those of smaller districts but the report specifically disclaims any consideration of ways to reduce costs. [p.41] The report notes that overall New Hampshire spends the 8th most of any state on public education, but fails to

note that four states in the Mountain West region spend less than half as much. [p.48] No attempt is made to investigate how Idaho or Utah can accomplish this, rather New Hampshire is only compared to nearby high-cost states.

Lastly, the report insists that districts be required to expend the state funds in accordance with the Education Cost Model on the students with the most need. [p.81] It is not clear how this can be done since the report disavows the use of inputs as a measure of quality. And does this require the district to spend three times as much on the middle school as the high school?

While the Commission has acquired some interesting data, they have failed to make good use of it and the report is a disappointment.