

NH COMMISSION TO STUDY SCHOOL FUNDING

Design Thinking Process

Understand the Problem (phase one – now through March 2020)

What is the problem we are trying to address?

Commission members defined the problem along five overall dimensions, as follows:

Equity and disparity issues

- a) What is the State's financial responsibility in assuring that all students have **access to comparable educational opportunities?**
- b) Need to **reduce the gap in educational opportunities and outcomes** between more "needy" districts and better-resourced districts that are already offering very positive educational opportunities and outcomes
- c) Need to **equalize educational opportunity**
- d) Need to provide **incentives to equalize outcomes.**
- e) **Communities with small student populations** are especially challenged since they have no "economy of scale" advantage and the state provides no incentives to consolidate/share services;
- f) School districts with greatest needs have least resource/pp and legislature has amended SB539 in ways that **weaken the state's adopted '07 response** to the problem

Revenue issues

- a) Need to change the current **mix of revenue types**
- b) Local property taxpayers are (or are widely thought to be) **unconstitutionally burdened**
- c) Tax burden in **property poor communities**
- d) We need to determine if we can devise a **sustainable financing method** that encompasses the boundary conditions that exist in New Hampshire – a declining school population, the means and restrictions of tax revenue generation, the cultural imperative of some amount of local control, the role and reach of the DOE, and the influence of the educator community
- e) There is **no political support** for significantly increased state funding, especially to wealthy districts.

Funding formula and distribution issues

- a) Need to revise the allocation of state aid so that more **needy districts receive much greater amounts** than better-resourced districts.
- b) Need to change the **current ratio** of state vs. local aid.
- c) Need to determine the portion of education adequacy and opportunity **costs that should be borne by the state**
- d) **Concentrated student poverty** is not recognized in the current formula as a "double burden" that requires additional resources.

Definitions of adequacy

- a) What does **adequacy mean**? What does “**cherish**” mean from the NH Constitution? What are the fiscal responsibilities to achieve that?
- b) Need to determine the **components of an adequate education**—both classroom and classroom supports
- c) The State’s existing provision for public school education fails (or is widely thought to fail) to match the state’s constitutionally-derived duty to provide support to the public schools **sufficient to meet the right of each New Hampshire child** to have access to a State-funded adequate education.

Student outcome issues

- a) Need to determine **what influences higher achievement** and does that require differentiated aid
- b) What do we want **NH graduates** to look like?
- c) Need a school funding formula that reflects a true cost of **educating a student in the 21st Century**

What stands out for you?

Pick the 3 most important issues you want the Commission to address from the above list.

1.

2.

3.