

COMMISSION TO STUDY SCHOOL FUNDING

Design Thinking Process

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

March 9, 2020 -- What is the problem we are trying to address?

Based on our discussion at the March 2 meeting, we are narrowing our focus down to five central concerns, as follows:

1. Definition of adequacy

What does adequacy mean? What does “cherish” mean in the context of the Constitution?
What are the components of an adequate education?

2. Equity and disparity

How can New Hampshire best equalize educational opportunity and reduce gaps in both educational opportunities and outcomes regardless of community size, wealth, and student demographics?

3. Revenue

Given that there is likely no political support for significantly increasing state appropriations for education or implementing new revenue sources, what is the right mix of revenue types to assure sustainable funding without undue burdens on property tax payers, especially those in property poor communities?

4. Funding formula and distribution

How can the education funding formula take into account concentrated student poverty in both urban and small communities? How can funds be directed to assure the most needy districts receive funds necessary to supplement local resources?

5. Student outcomes and achievement

How can the school funding formula reflect the true costs of educating students for the 21st century?

Emerging logic model:

Definition of adequacy → full cost of adequacy → equitable distribution formula → appropriations → accountability

Defining Adequacy

Guiding assumptions

- ✓ Definitions of Adequacy must reflect minimum state standards, funded and unfunded state and federal mandates, and the economic and workforce needs of New Hampshire.
- ✓ An Adequate Education takes into account both inputs (equity of opportunity) and results (equity of outcomes).
- ✓ Adequacy refers to the teaching and learning experienced by students. Funding for the provision of an adequate education is a separate, fiscal matter. Both must be addressed.

The current statutory definitions of Adequacy, RSA 193-E, are as follows:

“It is the policy of the state of New Hampshire that public elementary and secondary education shall provide all students with the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to prepare them for successful participation in the social, economic, scientific, technological, and political systems of a free government, now and in the years to come.”

Skills:

I. Skill in reading, writing, and speaking English to enable them to communicate effectively and think creatively and critically.

II. Skill in mathematics and familiarity with methods of science to enable them to analyze information, solve problems, and make rational decisions.

III. Knowledge of the biological, physical, and earth sciences to enable them to understand and appreciate the world around them.

IV. Knowledge of civics and government, economics, geography, and history to enable them to participate in the democratic process and to make informed choices as responsible citizens.

V. Grounding in the arts, languages, and literature to enable them to appreciate our cultural heritage and develop lifelong interests and involvement in these areas.

VI. Sound wellness and environmental practices to enable them to enhance their own well-being, as well as that of others.

VII. Skills for lifelong learning, including interpersonal and technological skills, to enable them to learn, work, and participate effectively in a changing society.”

Content:

“(a) English/language arts and reading.

(b) Mathematics.

(c) Science.

(d) Social studies.

(e) Arts education.

(f) World languages.

(g) Health education.

- (h) Physical education.
- (i) Engineering and technologies.
- (j) Computer science and digital literacy.”

Is there anything about this statutory language that needs review or modification in 2020?

Is there anything that could be deleted?

What is essential to leave as is?