

Commission to Study School Funding (RSA 193-E:2-e)

Meeting Minutes

March 2 10am LOB 210-211

Commission Attendance: Val Zanchuck, Susan Huard, Mary Heath, Iris Estabrook, Dick Ames, Chris Dwyer, Jon Morgan, Mel Myler, Jay Kahn, Rick Ladd, Corinne Cascadden, Barbara Tremblay, Jane Bergeron-Beaulieu, David Ryan; Absent: Bill Ardinger, John Beardmore, David Luneau

Call to order:

Rep. Luneau was unable to attend this week's meeting. Senator Kahn welcomed everyone in attendance and opened the meeting. The commission discussed how meetings would be recorded, and there was general agreement that audio recordings and the video recording in the LOB would be sufficient given the high costs of transcription. Members were reminded to speak audibly as possible into their microphones.

Approval of minutes:

The minutes were approved by the Commission without any changes.

Calendar (upcoming meetings and agenda items):

Dr. Mallory reminded the commission to be mindful of the group agreements we have all agreed to. The commission was also reminded that the meeting on March 9 will take place at the New Hampshire Department of Business and Economic Affairs (BEA), located at 100 Main St, Suite 100, in Concord. The Education Commission of the States will present. Meetings on March 16 (Reaching Higher NH and the NH School Funding Fairness Project), March 23 (DoE and DHHS youth behavioral health), and March 30 (early childhood and pre-k programming from the perspective of DoE and DHHS) also have speakers tentatively scheduled.

The current contract situation was discussed – once the Commission and Carsey sign the overall contract, the RFP between the Commission and research vendors can be released. The Commission will have the opportunity to view and approve the contracts before final signing/approval/release.

Presentation:

DRA Commissioner Lindsey Stepp and Director James Gerry presented on the Statewide Education Tax, more commonly referred to as the Statewide Education Property Tax (SWEPT). Their presentation included an overview of DRA, how school district appropriations are funded,

tax rates, collection, and the history of SWEPT. Follow up questions covered the commission's charge around A/B/C properties, trends of assessed value over time, and equalization. The commissioner advised all commission members to take a look at the DRA Annual Report, which can be found at <https://www.revenue.nh.gov/publications/reports/index.htm>.

Discussion:

The discussion period began with Dr. Mallory providing an overview of commission member's responses to their homework that asked them to reflect on the problem we are trying to solve, which he had divided into five broad issue categories: equity and disparity, revenue, funding formula and distribution, definitions of adequacy, and student outcome issues. The discussion period was structured with the intent of having the commission hone in on how to prioritize the multitude of questions we are grappling with. Key pieces of the discussion included asking how to define adequacy (from the school's perspective, the student's, the business community, others), how adequacy has evolved since 2008, how to consider the links/overlap between adequacy and outcomes, how to use adequacy as a starting point, the need for thoughtful review and consideration of 193-e, the steps the commission should take, inputs vs outputs, where NH should set goals along various metrics, a whole view of education beyond pre-k through 12th grade, ways to focus aid for needy communities, the nature of the commission's charge, the need to hear from practitioners, and the "guardrails" and assumptions that should guide the commission's work.

Public Comment:

Doug Hall commented on the historic statewide property tax in New Hampshire, auditing excess SWEPT dollars, advised the commission to be mindful that total valuation of property statewide does not equal the change in valuation by town, that A/B/C properties allow the commission to be flexible in looking at various funding options, and that defining an adequate education should be the commission's first and most important step.

Next meeting – March 9, 2020, 2pm-4pm at NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs, 100 Main St, Suite 100

Items moved to the next meeting:

- Lessons from the 2008 Joint Legislative Oversight Committee
- Commission working structure – subcommittees? Ad hoc working groups?

Documents:

- Agenda 3/2

- Meeting Minutes 2/21
- Design Thinking Commission Homework – Understanding the Problem
- DRA Presentation Slide Sheets