

Public Hearing 10/29/21

Task Force on Pupil Weighting Implementation,

I am Alison Notte. I am a member of the Rutland City Board of School Commissioners and a member of the Coalition for Vermont Student Equity.

I had planned to focus on providing the task force with insight on programs that are needed to support students with socioeconomic challenges, however first I would like to address the fact that today is the last planned or announced opportunity for the public to address the committee yet there is no known or shared implementation plan other than striping out ELL weight and replacing it with categorical aid. The task force has focused on carving out a subset of students and tossed around the idea that the other weights are too much, and education does not cost that much. The UVM/Rutgers report model B1 is the best route to equitable educational opportunities. It has national data to support the weights. The task force creating other mechanisms and weights with no empiric evidence will not create equity. Without comparing a complete plan for all weights with full modeling and updated comparison to B1 simulation it is impossible to see the proposed impacts. How can I respond to a proposal that is not publicly available?

I am a clinical pharmacist and have worked with data, study design, and reviews for most of my life. If a medical study came out with incomplete data and a limited (such as 1yr mid pandemic) sample size, chances are it would not be published by any respectable journal. If it were pushed through and published, it would not survive peer review and it would certainly not warrant a change in medical practice. Yet here we are making decisions on education funding with extremely limited data.

As for poverty weighting the task force has discussed significantly dropping the factor. Does a university spend the same per student on a chemistry lecture for 300 students as it does a clinical skills lab of 20? Is it reasonable that to support those 20 students may cost 3 times more than the lecture per student? If the institution did only support the lab with the same resource as a lecture hall setting (ignoring the more specialized needs of the skills lab), Do you think there would be the same outcome in the skills? How would the student perform if compared to the students with supports of a state-of-the-art skills lab?

It is important to consider the impacts of the decisions being made.

Thank you for you service.

Respectfully submitted,  
Alison Notte