

TO: Task Force on the Implementation of the Pupil Weighting Factors Report

FROM: Edey Graning, Mount Mansfield School District, Board Chair

RE: Pupil Weighting Factors

DATE: November 10, 2021

Thank you for your incredibly thoughtful and thorough investigation of funding student learning in Vermont. Recently the VSBA passed a resolution to support the findings of the Pupil Weighting Factors Report dated December, 24, 2019. I am here to share that as a member of the VSBA our district does not share that point of view. We support this committee's work in understanding that report within the broader system of school funding.

Our concerns, however, are related to the unintended consequences of making changes to school funding. This school year is the first that a poverty weighting has taken effect. Next school year Act 173 block grant funding for special education takes effect. School districts and the Agency of Education have been impacted by Covid-19, which among the many negative effects has added administrative duties and disrupted student learning. ESSER funds have been distributed with a vast differential district to district. The lack of stability, the ever changing landscape, makes it difficult for all of us to plan for the future.

We are asking that modeling be done before implementing any changes. That the modeling includes all funding that the district receives, not simply funding from the State of Vermont. That there is clear understanding as to which districts will have increased and decreased funding and by what percentages. We also want to ensure that funding goes to student learning and opportunities.

The Mount Mansfield School District strongly supports equity in education. We believe that in creating an equitable system everyone benefits. Our concern as we look at reweighting student funding is that the total amount of funding does not change, which clearly creates winners and losers. Because of this, while the goal is to improve opportunities for some students, this can only be done by decreasing opportunities for others. This again brings me back to what are the unintended consequences of implementing any plan that changes funding for education.

We are hopeful that any changes will be done thoughtfully and in a way that causes the least amount of negative impact to school districts and student learning.

Thank you again for your time today and dedication to ensuring student funding is equitable in Vermont.