

Loralee Tester
President, Board of Trustees, Lyndon Institute
Director, Northeast Kingdom Chamber of Commerce
11/4/24

Commission on the Future of Public Education

Dear Members of the Commission on the Future of Public Education,

I am writing both as President of the Board at Lyndon Institute and as Director of the Northeast Kingdom Chamber of Commerce. I have deep ties to this community and see firsthand the critical role that independent schools like Lyndon Institute play in educating students in Vermont's most rural and under-resourced areas.

Our independent schools provide a robust education accessible to all students without discrimination. Restricting public funding to an "Average Announced Tuition" (AAT) rate, however, would force our schools to operate without the resources they need to provide our students with an equitable education. It would create barriers for families and limit opportunities for students who already face unique economic and social challenges.

Independent schools in our region are not a luxury; they are one of our few educational assets and help stabilize and strengthen our local economy. By attracting families to the Northeast Kingdom and providing high-quality education that respects Vermont's diversity and values, we contribute to our communities and help reverse population decline.

Our rural students deserve the same opportunities as students in larger districts. The proposed restrictions, however, will create further inequities, depriving these students of the resources and support systems they need to thrive. I ask the Commission to consider the unique challenges and needs of our rural schools and communities before implementing a one-size-fits-all funding limitation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



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