



Steering Group: Commission on the Future of Public Education in Vermont

December 16, 2024, 10:00 a.m.- 11:00 a.m.

Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting
Call In: 1-802-552-8456
Conference ID: 902 628 388#

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Steering Group (SG) members: Ann Cummings, Senator Washington District; Peter Conlon, Representative Addison-2 District; Zoie Saunders, Secretary of Education; Jennifer Deck Samuelson, State Board of Education; Nicole Mace, Vermont School Boards Association (VSBA); Craig Bolio, Tax Commissioner.

Commission Member: Meagan Roy, Chair

AOE: Jill Briggs-Campbell; Roseanne Neddo; Maureen Gaidys; Suzanne Sprague

Others: Sharon Henry; Joel Atlas; Bridget Burkhardt David S; Elizabeth Burrows; M. Kendrick; Cal Hale; Jake Feldman; Ken Fredette; Elain Bellavance; Cheryl Charles; Jay Nichols, Mike Lechlitter; John Clifford; Allen Gilbert, Alison Novak; Margaret MacLean; Elizabeth St. James; Chester Telegraph; Mary Gannon; Bill Edgerton; Jeff Francis; Oliver Olsen; Jeanne Albert

Welcome/Introductions and Roll Call/Amendments to the Agenda

Chair Roy called the meeting to order at 10:16 a.m. Mace made a motion to include a discussion to finalize the full Commission's preliminary report to the General Assembly (GA); Conlon seconded. There was no discussion. The motion carried. The Steering Group members introduced themselves: Mace, Bolio, Deck Samuelson, Saunders and Conlon.

Approval of November 14, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Deck Samuelson moved to approve the [November 14, 2024 Meeting Minutes](#); Bolio seconded. There was no discussion. The motion carried.

Public to be Heard

None

Discussion of the Final Draft Preliminary Report

Chair Roy began discussion on reviewing the Commission's final draft of the preliminary report to the GA. She summarized changes requested by the full Commission to include more [detailed overview of preliminary findings](#) by Secretary Saunders, [link the Education](#)

[Finance Subcommittee's brainstorm document](#), and to retain some version of the sentence regarding the role of the Commission. Discussion followed requesting the Chair to review the document for general readability, clarification on Education Fund expenditures for long-term Average Daily Membership (LTADM) from small districts, wordsmithing the document, correlation between spending and need, substantive changes to include clarifying the responsibilities of local budgets to include state mandates, neither the state nor local district has total control over education finance, expenditures from the Education Fund supported by property taxes and other sources, including "focusing" to provide clarity, the timing of implementation of Act 127 does not allow for the Commission to review specific data, the intent is to review data when available, adding that a brainstorm process was conducted separately by both the Education Finance Subcommittee and the full Commission to surface a large number of ideas, adding a sentence regarding additional ideas surfaced during public comment will be taken into consideration, adding a mention of the short timeframe, the report does not include policy recommendations, adding a disclaimer to the report and the Education Finance Subcommittee's brainstorm document and noting data inaccuracies in the disclaimer.

Further wordsmithing and discussion followed regarding inaccuracies of some of the assumptions upon which certain recommendations are based, challenges with exploring some of the policy recommendations, working documents, updating the document with changes, correcting the document and the record with accurate information, legislature will use the current brainstorm document and updating it for the GA may be challenging, dating the working document each time it is updated, concern with placing the brainstorm document in its current form on the Commission's web page, and adding it to the Commission's web page once the list is vetted and reviewed.

Commission Workplan

Chair Roy said the next Steering Group meeting needs to focus on work plan development. Discussion followed regarding reaffirming the Education Finance Committee, prioritization of tasks, an AOE presentation on foundation formulas, robust discussion on how the Commission will be used as an effective tool, possibility that the Commission is being made or perceived as irrelevant, and educating the Commission on various issues.

Agenda Planning (including discussion on Public Input Session) for January 6, 2025, Meeting

Chair Roy suggested that the January 6 agenda include a presentation on foundation formulas and prioritization of the ideas on the Education Finance Subcommittee's brainstorm document. Discussion followed regarding achieving alignment across the subcommittees, appropriately sharing knowledge, subcommittee reports, Steering Group's recommendation should be informed by a discussion of the full Commission, affirm charge for the Education Finance Subcommittee and the charge for the Communication and Engagement Subcommittee, presentation by the consultant when the contract is finalized, start to look at the data and comparing cost savers, consultant's contract will not be final by January 6, defining the role of the Agency of Education and a presentation of the findings from the Listen and Learn tour that are helping to inform its strategic plan.

Chair Roy reviewed the January 6 agenda topics as discussed. She asked the Steering Group if that was substantive enough for a full meeting or if the meeting should be postponed until after the GA has read its report and that might help to inform the full Commission's work. There was agreement to hold a virtual full Commission meeting on January 6 from 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. with the 3 agenda items discussed and delaying public engagement until the consultant's contract is finalized for the February agenda.

The next Steering Group meeting will be on January 13, 2024, from 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. The next Education Finance Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for January 13, 2024, from 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Public to be Heard

None

Adjourn

Chair Roy adjourned the meeting at 11:27 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Suzanne Sprague