



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

November 14, 2024, 8:30-9:30 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; Zoie Saunders, Interim 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

Others: 802-272-6395; 802-318-7353; Jeanne Albert; Allen Gilbert; Beth Pearce; Cassandra Townshend; Chester Telegraph; Clare Buckley; Mike Leichter; David S.; Elizabeth St. James; Heather Bushey; Jay Nichols; Jess DeCarolis; John Castle; John Clifford; Julia Richter; Erica Loomis; M. Kendrick; Marcy Harding; Matthew DeGroot; Sharon Henry; Sue Ceglowski; Stacey Peters; Tucker

Welcome/ Roll Call/Amendments to the Agenda/[Approval of September 16, 2024 Meeting Minutes](#)

Chair Roy called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m. Steering Group members introduced themselves: Bolio, Mace, Deck Samuelson, Saunders, Cummings. Deck Samuelson moved to approve the [September 16, 2024 Meeting Minutes](#); Bolio seconded. There was no discussion. The minutes were approved. There were no amendments to the agenda.

Public to be Heard

Chair Roy asked if there were any members of the public to be heard.

Sharon Henry, Hinesburg, member of the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind Advisory Council, confirmed that members had received [Henry's public comments](#) and the [attached letter from Spenser Wepler](#); she spoke about challenges with accessing data and that it is aggregated for all students in Vermont. She asked how the SG will assess the data that is received and expressed concern about the accuracy of data and its implications on funding decisions.

Discussion: Preliminary Report

Chair Roy said the SG will move forward on the preliminary report; she will be sending it to the full Commission, after she has the support of the SG members for how it is organized. There will be three related conversations: 1) to re-examine the data framework and affirm the notes taken regarding the update on data; 2) discuss the structure/organization of the report, and 3) have the SG discuss how to give some direction to the Education Finance Subcommittee on the work that they have organized. Chair Roy offered to have edits and comments sent directly to her.

Chair Roy spoke about focusing on what data will be reasonable to have in time for writing the report. Saunders walked SG members through [AOE's Listen and Learn Tour webpage](#) (click on "Reporting") and noted what will be included in the re-release of the State Profile Report, which will be released by November 22, 2024. She provided additional context, data refinements, and additional analyses.

There was discussion on the identification of federal versus state funds, and the difference between the Listen and Learn and Commission data sets.

Saunders then provided an update on the Agency's response to data requests received from the Commission and its subcommittees. She shared a spreadsheet that detailed the request, source, status and notes and oriented the group to its contents. She explained that the AOE is in the process of formatting the Excel file to ensure accessibility, at which point it will be posted to the AOE website. The spreadsheet details each data request received (about 21), the Agency's brief description including the data source, an update on the status of the Agency's response, and any relevant notes regarding data collection, data availability, and pending questions. Saunders added where data have been provided, the AOE referenced the specific report and presentation (including date). She noted a commitment to additional analysis for the Education Finance Subcommittee on November 22, 2024. Some of the data requested were included in the State Profile Report and will be updated in the rereleased version of the report.

She explained that there will be some suppression around data and disaggregation per the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and said there are limits to what can be reported. Saunders asked if this spreadsheet listed all that was requested. Mace requested more information on cost drivers.

There was discussion on duplication of some requests, timeline for a revised/updated spreadsheet, not wanting to issue a report with statements that are not grounded in data, making the report broad about what has been completed/requested, importance of gaining credibility as a Commission and can do so by having recommendations supported by data, bandwidth considerations for the report, providing summary findings/high level trends, including back-up documentation and source data whenever possible, identifying what is trying to be understood from the data and what it might inform, presenting the information that is available to supports factors underlying the options being considered, acknowledgement of AOE's work in getting this data that has not been available for years,

still needing to understand pressure points, acknowledging in the report that this data has not been available for years, needing good data in which to ground conversations, pitching the December 15 report as a solid starting point for future work, needing to be clear about the complexity, Commission's job is to inform the General Assembly, needing to be transparent about all issues/options that have been raised, detailing cost drivers, and a report from New Solutions K12 (AOE Consultant) that uses plain language to explain the Vermont education finance system and how it compares to other states – this will be a resource for the Commission.

Chair Roy asked if SG members agreed for her to share her draft report with the full Commission and for comments to come back to her for compilation. There was discussion on reference to the three policy considerations (education finance system, delivery model and governance) and alignment with Act 183, the section on preliminary data findings being updated with information received today, and inclusion of the chart detailing data requests.

Upcoming Agenda Items/Confirm Next Meeting

Chair Roy said the Education Finance Subcommittee should vet the [Education Finance Brainstorm Document](#) list through the [Guiding Principles of the Commission](#) as this will assist the full Commission.

Mace suggested that Chair Roy should communicate with Kornheiser about the goal being to capture a list of feasible options versus solid recommendations and qualify that the Commission is not in a position to make formal recommendations due to the tight timelines. There was agreement on this suggestion. There was discussion on not having one specific option, needing to keep options open, doing what we can to help inform the legislative discussion, and not having enough time to digest the data prior to the report deadline.

Chair Roy said she will make changes, and she anticipates having a draft report out by November 15, 2024.

The Education Finance Subcommittee will meet November 18 and November 25, 2024. The next meeting of the full Commission is December 2, 2024. The next meeting of the SG is scheduled for December 16, 2024 and that is after the report is due. There was discussion on the SG meeting prior to December 15, 2024, having a communication consultant by then, having the support of a consultant for framing for public consumption on board, and timing of consultant following review of bidders.

The SG will not meet on December 16, but will instead meet on Wednesday, December 11, 2024, from 8:30-10:00 a.m.

Public to be Heard

John Clifford: addressed the Steering Group on increased student mental health needs and what it costs and difficulties in getting specific information to understand this associated cost as a taxpayer; and that AOE might want to examine this factor.

Sue Ceglowski: requested that upcoming Commission, SG and Commission subcommittee meetings, times and dates be posted in advance on the website so that interested parties can plan accordingly.

Sharon Henry: emphasized that this data was not available until recently and that it would make sense to address the data validation and that information on data analytics should also be included to pre-empt any issues that could arise; she suggested using primary and secondary analyses.

Chair Roy acknowledged that meeting locations are not yet fully secured, and the intent is to have a list of locations posted soon. She reviewed the Commission's meeting cadence:

- Full Commission: 1st Monday of the month
- Subcommittees: typically the 3rd third Monday of each month

Adjourn

Chair Roy adjourned the meeting at 9:42 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Maureen Gaidys.