

Task Force Public Comment 6/29/21

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

Thank you for recognizing the need to correct the weighting system in order to create equitable educational opportunities for all students in Vermont.

Rutland City Public School has seen student needs increase significantly over the last several years. We saw a spike when children born in the opioid epidemic hit school age. As these children grew, so did the challenges to meeting their needs. One of the biggest challenges is the readiness gap. Children from economically challenged homes have not had the same early developmental learning opportunities and often are not as prepared as their peers. If a child is coming to school hungry, worried about what is going on at home or where they will sleep, there isn't much room for learning. As children age, the gap continues to grow perpetuating a learning gap. RCPS strives to meet children where they are at and provide needed supports to close these gaps.

Over the years RCPS has decreased staffing, reduced enrichment opportunities, and increased class size in order to reallocate resources to provide trauma informed practices and meet the needs of economically disadvantaged students.

If RCPS were able to receive increased resources we could hire more counselors, social workers, para-educators, maintain small class size for differential instruction, retain qualified and experienced teachers, increase student access or expand alternative learning programs and in turn increase student engagement to increase graduation rates.

Thank you for your legislative service and for investing your time and energy serving on this task force.

Respectfully Submitted,
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