

Task Force on the Implementation of Pupil Weighting Factors Report,

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee. I am Alison Notte. I live in Rutland City and serve on the School Board and I am also a member of the Vermont Coalition for Student Equity.

The Cost Equity proposal does not truly consider diverse student needs and the cost to attain equitable educational opportunities. Rather than creating a single district-wide funding it assigns single dollar values to individual students. This feels like a very slippery slope leading toward a voucher system where taxpayer dollars could fund private schools and further harm our public education system.

We already have gaps in our current funding that allows non-operational districts and those that tuition students to other schools to send tax dollars to any private school. Rutland City has a couple neighboring towns that tuition students out for high school. When more affluent people are looking to move to the area, they often choose these towns because the town will apply tax dollars towards their children's private education.

I see charts popping up on the task force site, yet they are without any key or context correlating where these numbers come from. It seems like this proposal was put together and designed simply to get the desired outcome. I see this in stark contrast to reading the UVM Pupil Weighting Study's 150-page published document citing national data and sources. I find the task force's proposals lacking clarity and transparency.

It seems that the Task Force has thrown out the UVM/Rutgers report. We have repeatedly asked for comparison of the task force proposals against updated Pupil Weighting Study recommendations. The closest we can come to is comparing the proposals with the FY2020 JFO B1 (which excludes small school weight). Let me give you an idea of the discrepancies and the impact:

Winooski (Actual FY20 1.41) (Total spending, including ELL grant if applicable / Tax Rate)

- Model 4 (with ELL as a grant): \$15,113,791 / \$1.048
- Model 4 (including ELL Weight): \$15,113,791 / \$1.317
- Cost Equity (with ELL as a grant): \$15,113,791 / \$1.21
- JFO 2020 B.1 (not including small schools weight): \$18,333,582 / \$1.00

Mt. Mansfield (Actual FY20 1.462) (Total spending, including ELL grant if applicable / Tax Rate)

- Model 4 (with ELL as a grant): \$39,960,048 / \$1.652
- Model 4 (including ELL Weight): \$39,960,048 / \$1.599
- Cost Equity (with ELL as a grant): \$39,960,048 / \$1.65
- JFO 2020 B.1 (not including small schools weight): \$39,957,376 / \$1.84

Windham Southeast (Brattleboro) (Actual FY20 1.681) (Total spending, including ELL grant if applicable / Tax Rate)

- Model 4 (with ELL as a grant): \$40,623,303 / \$1.618
- Model 4 (including ELL Weight): \$40,623,303 / \$1.678
- Cost Equity (with ELL as a grant): \$40,623,303 / \$1.83
- JFO 2020 B.1 (not including small schools weight): \$40,625,010 / \$1.53

While assigning single dollar amounts per student in each category may feel better as a simplification of the system, it is short sighted and lacking appropriate variables. Categorical Aid and Cost Equity numbers will need to be recalculated by experts annually. While the Empirically derived weights would only need to be remodeled once every 4-5 years.

I am asking you to please compare the task force proposals with updated UVM weighting study B1 recommendations. Without a direct comparison it is impossible for this committee to say they had done their job. There is a simple solution on the floor that is seemingly being ignored, and that is to simply adjust the weights as recommended in the UVM Pupil Weighting report B1 scenario.

Getting rid of weights will undo the equity that was built into Vermont's education funding and this task force has said they are proud of the current funding and the equity that it created. Cost Equity and Categorical aid would be a step, or two, backwards to the previous pre-Brigham foundation formula.

Please look closely at the impacts this could have on educational opportunities for Vermont's most vulnerable children.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alison Notte

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