

April 2, 2020 Session Highlights
Session Held via Zoom Video Conference

- New Hampshire Education Commissioner Frank Edelblut requested a letter of interest for support from the Department of Education's building aid fund. Kyle crafted a draft of the letter and circulated it to a small group for editing; it was submitted the first week of March, as suggested by the Commissioner. Copies of it are available from Kyle, if interested.
- The Tillotson Fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation awarded the requested \$85,500 to the Exploratory Committee (us). These funds are to be received immediately and will support project financial modeling, session facilitation, project management, and legal guidance. If it proves necessary, funds will also be utilized for a transportation study. The award requires a 10% match from local sources, which was approved at the time of application by the involved school boards.

The Committee directed the superintendents to create a single school staffing model for use in the financial analysis. This is a priority. Secondly, the Committee encourages the superintendents to continue to work together on a short-term (next school year) A/B schedule – a cooperative model already partially underway that accommodates the traveling of teachers who are willing between schools. The goal is to utilize existing talent, fill gaps, reduce cannibalizing of staff between the schools and reduce unnecessary overall hiring.
- After considerable discussion, the Committee reached consensus on the number and type of financial models it would like created at this time. Three models will be created:
 - High school and CTE at the Colebrook existing school site (requiring an addition)
 - High school and CTE at the Canaan existing site
 - High School and CTE in Stewartstown or thereabouts (site requirements being reviewed) – a new building
 - And, as financial analysis funds allow, a k-12 new building estimate

The rationale for investing in this array of financial analysis is to be able to appropriately satisfy public need for an informed decision. Without understanding the cost of a newly built school, we cannot adequately assess the tradeoffs of one site over another. This acknowledges the very real preoccupation of some community members that there will be winners and losers if one community ends up with the school in their existing location.

 - Enrollment trends – past and future – will be part of the baseline information that informs all modeling.
 - Running Start programming will also be a factor.
 - The reality that New Hampshire has building aid and Vermont does not is also a factor. Next Steps:
 - Kyle and Karen will serve as the liaisons to the consultants who perform the financial analysis. They will work with volunteers Sharon, Brian, Laurent, Phil, Sally, David and Mike to ensure the analysis is robust and accurate. As superintendents, Karen and Bruce will ensure access to necessary financials in order to complete the analysis.
- The governance, terms of agreement, transportation study-related work will follow once there is an understanding of the timeline and cost of the financial analysis.