

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

Ad Hoc Committee on Education Cost Sharing and Choice Funding

Minutes

Monday, June 7, 2010

9:30 a.m.

**165 Capitol Avenue, Room 307A
Hartford, Connecticut**

Committee members present: Joseph Brennan, Vincent Candelora, Carol Clifford (designee representing Sharon Palmer), Sherri DiNello, James Finley, Kathy Guay, Deborah Heinrich, Alex Johnston, Patrice McCarthy, Fred McKinney, Mark McQuillan, Allan Taylor, John Yrchik

Committee members absent: Joseph Cirusuolo, George Coleman, Theresa Hopkins-Staten, Douglas McCrory, Kathleen O'Connor, Dudley Williams

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Taylor called the meeting to order at 9:36 a.m. Mr. Taylor welcomed the committee, and members introduced themselves.

II. Approval of Minutes of May 3, 2010, Committee Meeting

Mr. Taylor moved, Mr. Finley seconded, that the committee approve the May 3, 2010, minutes.

Vote: In favor: 13
Opposed: 0
Abstained: 0

Motion carried unanimously.

III. Review and Discussion of Revised Charge to Committee and Operating Guidelines

Commissioner McQuillan spoke briefly about how the Department of Education has created a series of partnerships to assist with the implementation of the Race to the Top application and to provide administrative support.

The timeline noted in the revised charge was discussed. Of particular concern were items 5 and 6. It was questioned whether the recommendations and final report to the State Board of Education should be submitted earlier due to the upcoming full budget session. It was noted that the budget process begins in late August; agency requests are due September 1; and the Office of Policy and Management presents the budget to the new Governor by November 15.

Though the recommendations to the State Board, Governor, and Legislature may be more legislative in nature than budgetary, the committee agreed to revise the timeline as follows:

5. With the assistance of its consultant, the Committee shall complete by **December 1, 2010**, a report for the State Board of Education, outlining its recommendations for legislative reform in the areas identified.
6. The Committee shall present its report to the State Board of Education at its regularly scheduled meeting in **January 2011**.

IV. Reports on Financing Public Education in Connecticut

a. Overview of Education Cost Sharing Formula

Brian Mahoney presented an overview of the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant. (A copy of which is in the official meeting file.) Mr. Mahoney's overview included: information on the state, local, federal and other expenditures for elementary and secondary education; a history of the ECS grant; and major components of the grant.

Mr. Mahoney stated that Title I poverty is currently used in the ECS calculation. A discussion ensued about the use of free/reduced price meals as an alternative to Title I poverty. It was noted that the Title I data is annually updated by the U.S. Department of Education. While free/reduced data is also updated annually, it is currently not audited. Several committee members felt that the free/reduced data more accurately reflects the true level of student poverty in Connecticut.

Additional conversation took place regarding the ECS formula itself; the previous connection between ECS and the Minimum Expenditure Requirement; whether the formula addresses equity or adequacy; local tax effort; and the State share of Teachers' Retirement contributions.

b. Office of Policy and Management Report (2007)

Kathy Guay gave a brief overview of the 2007 report of Governor Rell's Commission on Education Finance, which may be found at www.ct.gov/opm/lib/opm/budget/educationfinance/edufinancefinalreport.pdf Ms. Guay noted that the 2007 committee felt they recommended an equitable formula that would benefit all districts within the State. Representatives from large cities, small towns, and educational organizations were all involved. However, due to the State's budget crisis, there are no longer enough monetary resources to fund the recommendations.

c. CEA PowerPoint Presentation

John Yrchik provided committee members with a brief outline of his presentation. Mr. Yrchik spoke about a report prepared by Edward Moscovitch in March 2005. (A copy of which is in the official meeting file.)

The overview included information on need students and student poverty levels; the foundation level; Title I versus free/reduced price meals; and test scores. Though the report was completed several years ago, Mr. Yrchik feels many of the objectives are still relevant today.

V. Other

James Finley distributed an Analysis of Education Funding, which will be added to the June 28, 2010, agenda.

Mr. Taylor suggested that the Choice funding programs be reviewed and discussed at the June 28 meeting: Open Choice, Interdistrict Cooperative, Connecticut Technical High Schools, Magnet Schools, Charter Schools, and Agricultural Science.

Commissioner McQuillan asked members for their conclusions on the discussion thus far. Comments included:

Think about modest adjustments to the formula for a better long-term system.

How will the committee align this to the current State budget crisis?

Though recommendations may not be implemented for four years, the committee needs to start with a model.

Hold inner-cities more accountable.

Keep a principal track and recommend changes to the existing formula.

Show a return on the investment in education – make tough policy choices.

Members were also asked to think of recommended candidates to assist the committee.

Throughout the meeting, committee members requested the following data reports: 1) per pupil expenditures by town taking out the State portion; 2) operational school construction costs; 3) average teacher salaries; 4) Office of Policy and Management mill rates by town; 5) an analysis of state/local/federal/other expenditures for the last several years; and 6) what the ECS formula would have allocated over the years versus the actual funding.

VI. Chairman Taylor adjourned the meeting at 11:45 a.m.