

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

Ad Hoc Committee on Education Cost Sharing and Choice Funding

Minutes

**Monday, September 27, 2010
9:30 a.m.
165 Capitol Avenue, Room 307A
Hartford, Connecticut**

Committee members present: Vincent Candelora, Joseph Cirasuolo, George Coleman, James Finley, Kathy Guay, Alex Johnston, Mark McQuillan, Diana Palmer (representing Deborah Heinrich), Patrice McCarthy, Allan Taylor

Committee members absent: Joseph Brennan, Sherri DiNello, Douglas McCrory, Fred McKinney, Sharon Palmer, Dudley Williams, John Yrchik

I. Call to Order, Welcome, Greetings

Commissioner McQuillan called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m., and all those in attendance introduced themselves, including Regional Educational Service Center (RESC) Alliance Members Paula Colen, Bruce Douglas, Craig Edmondson, Evan Pitkoff, Virginia Seccombe, Danuta Thibodeau and Don Walsh.

II. Approval of Minutes of September 13, 2010, Committee Meeting

Commissioner McQuillan moved, Ms. Guay seconded, to approve the minutes of the September 13, 2010, meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

III. Regional Cost Savings Recommendations

Craig Edmondson, Chair of the RESC Alliance, spoke briefly about the Alliance's objectives and the framework for greater RESC involvement in school transportation and cooperative purchasing. He then turned the discussion over to Bruce Douglas and Don Walsh who commented that transportation was the service that superintendents would most like to see regionalized. Other considerations were cooperative services, food services, IT services and cooperative purchasing.

Dr. Douglas and Mr. Walsh suggested that to achieve efficient regional transportation, a common calendar and coordinated start times would be needed within a region. They stated that coordinating the transportation itself isn't difficult, but the calendar and start times are bigger problems.

There was discussion regarding transportation issues. Comments included:

Districts need to be assured that they can keep any savings and be able to reallocate that savings back into the school classroom. It was also suggested that the savings should be in dollars – not in professional services.

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An impediment is the relationship districts have with local vendors or if they own and maintain their own fleet. Collective bargaining agreements will also play a significant role in any transportation collaborative.

Another change that would need to be factored in is the amount of student pickups. Right now CREC, for instance, is providing door-to-door service. Cluster pickups would need to be implemented for fewer stops.

A common calendar could be a huge problem for parents (e.g., day care, work schedules). It seems a significant factor between school districts is the length of the February vacation.

Start times are also an issue. Even within the same district start times may not be consistent because of the number of busses available. Therefore, in some cases it is not feasible that all start times be the same.

A suggestion was made that the technical high school transportation should be school-based rather than town-based. Schools would take care of their own transportation rather than the towns. Implementing this could be a cost savings.

It was noted that the RESC Alliance would first do a transportation cost assessment. At this point, estimated savings may be up to 10 percent. However, the biggest roadblock is contractual obligations. It was reminded that this will not happen in the next fiscal year. Transportation will reflect more of a savings, but implementation will take a few years.

If the transportation grant stands alone, it will be easier to show savings, but the Committee will need to look at categorical grants and understand how they're currently allocated to districts.

Given the potential complexities with transportation, it was suggested to look at a regional approach that will generate immediate savings and generate support from all parties.

Commissioner McQuillan thanked the RESC Alliance members for their work thus far.

IV. Continuation of Discussion of Core Values

After a short break, Laura Downs, Facilitator, continued with the Core Values discussion. Ms. Downs reviewed the proposed revisions as discussed at the September 13 meeting:

1. Highly effective inter and intra-district public school choice, in addition to highly functioning traditional schools, are an effective part of a strong, diverse statewide public school system that has the potential to improve student outcomes, reduce racial and economic isolation, foster regionalism and contain system costs including transportation.

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After a brief discussion, members approved the following edited value statement: "In addition to highly functioning traditional schools, effective inter and intra-district public school choice is an effective part of a strong, diverse statewide public school system that has the potential to improve student outcomes, reduce racial and economic isolation, foster regionalism and contain system costs including transportation."

2. State public school funding decisions should focus on individual students and their learning needs not communities or individual school systems.

After a brief discussion, members approved the following edited value statement: "State public school funding decisions should primarily focus on individual students and their learning needs not communities or individual school systems."

The Committee now has six agreed-upon value statements. The five statements listed under "Deferred" will be discussed after the Committee's discussion on money following the child.

V. Other Such Matters, Discussion

It was noted that the Governor's Commission on Educational Achievement is due to release its report on or about October 20. It is hoped that the report is issued prior to the October 18 Committee meeting.

Mr. Taylor noted that Theresa Hopkins-Staten is unable to attend these meetings due to standing appointments, and she has stepped down from this Ad Hoc Committee.

VI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned 11:00 a.m.