

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Legislation and Bylaws Committee

Workshop
January 27, 2010
9:00 a.m.
State Office Building
Hartford, CT

MINUTES
Approved February 3, 2010

Members Present

Theresa Hopkins-Staten, Janet Finneran, John Voss, and Kathleen O'Connor. Also present was Allan B. Taylor (9:35 a.m. arrival)

Staff Present

Mark McQuillan, George Coleman, Brian Mahoney, Mark Linabury, Daniel Murphy and Jennifer Widness

Call to Order

Chairperson Hopkins-Staten called the meeting order at 9:06 a.m.

Public Comment

1. Sharon Palmer, President, AFT-CT, spoke against money following the child, as it would result in resources being taken away from public school children in local districts.
2. Dacia Toll, CEO, Achievement First, spoke in favor of money following the child and asserted that charter schools are an integral component of a comprehensive school reform plan.
3. Mark Waxenberg, Director of Government Relations, Connecticut Education Association, indicated concern about unfunded mandates, particularly in a difficult economic climate, opposed money following the child and supported continuation of the existing funding model for charter schools.
4. Dr. Joseph Cirsuolo, Executive Director, Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents, indicated opposition to money following the child. He expressed support of efforts to allow local school districts to open charters, and noted that state charters require reasonable support. However, Dr. Cirsuolo noted, he did not support the "money follows the child" proposal, as local school districts do not save the per pupil cost for each student who opts to go to a charter. Dr. Cirsuolo invited the Board to join CAPSS and others in reviewing funding for choice programs as a whole.
5. Roch Girard, Connecticut Federation of School Administrators, spoke against money following the child.

6. Patrice McCarthy, Deputy Director and General Counsel, Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, indicated a concern among CABA members that money following the child results in harm to the local school district, particularly when small numbers of students leave a district. CABA urges a comprehensive approach to funding choice programs.
7. Alex Johnston, Chief Executive Officer, ConnCAN, spoke in support of money following the child as a funding model for state charter schools. Under the model supported by ConnCAN, over the next four years, charter school funding would be phased in. When a child leaves a public school to attend a charter school, the State would deduct the student's proportionate share of ECS funding from the local district and forward such funds directly to the charter school.
8. Danielle Smith, State Director, CT Black Alliance for Educational Options, supported money following the child and stated that all children need to be afforded the same opportunities.
9. Rep. Douglas McCrory spoke in favor of money following the child and indicated that current funding methods cannot be maintained.

Discussion Regarding Legislative Proposals relating to Revisions to Charter School Statutes

Jennifer Widness and Mark Linabury made a PowerPoint presentation which described the existing charter school funding model, the ConnCAN proposal for money follows the child model, and the Massachusetts model for money follows the child, upon which the ConnCAN model was based.

Brian Mahoney explained several handouts which illustrated the level of per pupil funding that state charter schools currently receive in Connecticut as compared to the eleven districts which send 90% of the students currently enrolled in the state charter schools. The average adjusted net current expenditure per pupil for these 11 districts is \$11,774, when all revenue sources are considered. The average per pupil expenditure by the 12 state charter schools that the students from those 11 districts are enrolled is \$12,134.

The Committee reached consensus to support the Board's legislative proposal to increase funding for charter schools from \$9,300 per pupil to a comparable statewide average and not to pursue the money follows the child model for charter schools at this time. In addition, the Committee expressed interest in reviewing comprehensive funding options for charter and magnet schools in the future and agreed to make a recommendation to establish a committee of stakeholders to look into this issue further.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.