

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

Ad Hoc Committee on Education Cost Sharing and Choice Funding

Minutes

**Monday, December 20, 2010
9:30 a.m.
165 Capitol Avenue, Room 307A
Hartford, Connecticut**

Committee members present: Joseph Brennan, Joseph Cirasuolo, George Coleman, Sherri DiNello, James Finley, Kathy Guay, Deborah Heinrich, Alex Johnston, Patrice McCarthy, Fred McKinney, Mark McQuillan, Allan Taylor, Dudley Williams, John Yrchik

Committee members absent: Vincent Candelora, Douglas McCrory, Sharon Palmer

I. Call to Order, Welcome, Greetings

Commissioner McQuillan called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. He noted that several Committee members were called into a last-minute transition meeting. As such, he explained that all members should be present for the discussion and noted that the Ad Hoc meeting will be truncated and a number of the agenda items will be deferred until the next meeting scheduled for Monday, January 10, 2011.

II. Approval of Minutes of the December 13, 2010, Committee Meeting

Mr. Cirasuolo moved, Ms. McCarthy seconded, to approve the minutes of the December 13, 2010, meeting. Representative Heinrich commented that the minutes did not fully reflect the extensive discussion about using income data from the Department of Revenue Services. Mr. Taylor also noted a grammatical error in the Item V. heading.

Mr. Cirasuolo moved, Ms. McCarthy seconded, to approve the minutes, as amended, of the December 13, 2010, meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

III. Discussion of Short-term Recommendations

This item was deferred until January 10, 2011.

IV. Design Features of a New ECS Formula

This item was deferred until January 10, 2011.

V. Discussion of Poverty Measures

Representative Heinrich stated that she did some background research on the use of poverty measures (documentation will be e-mailed to Committee members). Included in the documentation will be a breakdown of median household income (MHI) for all towns sorted by

zip code. However, Rep. Heinrich said one factor that makes it difficult is that some towns share zip codes. This one drawback could be fixed by adding a “town code” box on tax forms.

A more difficult problem to solve is the fact that some residents are not required to file taxes because they are under the income limit. Rep. Heinrich suggested that a very short form could be devised for that group. It was noted that if a small number of people did not comply by filing the short form, it wouldn't necessarily significantly affect the MHI since those figures are relatively small.

Rep. Heinrich commented that much of the data we rely on is from the 1999 Census. Since that time, income has changed and shifted significantly due to two recessions. Therefore, the 1999 data are not a true and accurate measure of poverty.

The American Community survey was briefly discussed. However, Rep. Heinrich noted that the survey data are voluntary, unauditable, and generally average a 10 percent margin of error.

In closing, Rep. Heinrich stated that the data currently in use are not accurate and not helping the people who need it most. If Department of Revenue Services' data is used, a minor legislative change would be required for adding a town code box on tax forms. She stressed that this data is transparent, solid and auditable. However, though everyone will be asked to file, those who do not will not be criminalized.

While some members thought this proposal should be fully investigated, others are still concerned about the potential under-representation of large cities and rural towns.

VI. Discussion of Future Work of Committee by March 1, 2011

Commissioner McQuillan asked Committee members what can be done realistically in the short term in order to submit recommendations by the end of January. It was discussed that this work is too important to stop now, and it was suggested that discussions continue through the Spring in order to fully explore all issues.

There was concern about the timeline, especially the legislature's deadlines for bills and amendments. It was suggested that during January and February the Committee finalize discussions on consensus items. Other members noted that it may be difficult to come to a consensus on choice funding without having consensus on a full formula.

Several members expressed an interest in preliminary discussions of other agenda items. However, Commissioner McQuillan reiterated the need to have all members present for discussions on the Committee's recommendations.

VII. The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 a.m.