

State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

May 14, 2013

Representative Tim Larson
Chair, M.O.R.E. Commission

Representative Mae Flexer
Vice-Chair, M.O.R.E. Commission

Senator Steve Cassano
Vice-Chair, M.O.R.E. Commission

Representative Chris Davis
Ranking Member, M.O.R.E. Commission

Senator Len Fasano
Ranking Member, M.O.R.E. Commission

Re: M.O.R.E. Board of Education Functions Sub-Committee

The Bi-Partisan Board of Education Functions Sub-Committee held eight meetings during the spring 2013 legislative session. Members explored policy concepts with the intention of finding resource economization opportunities in public school education. Consistent with the goals of the Speaker of the House's M.O.R.E. Commission, these policies were conceptualized to help make Connecticut more economically competitive in the short and long term.

The Sub-Committee heard guest testimony and presentations from the State Department of Education, the Regional Education Service Center Alliance, the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents, the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities and the Connecticut School Transportation Association. The Sub-Committee formed four working groups to study the feasibility of certain existing regionalization ideas and devise additional ones. The working groups' foci were on the concepts of school transportation, common calendar, bifurcated tax bills, and minimum budget requirement. These four groups reported their findings back to the Board of Education Functions Sub-Committee.

Recommendations on which there was agreement:

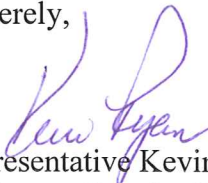
- Convene a working group of public education stakeholders to develop a model school calendar for State Department of Education promulgation. Make such calendar available for voluntary adoption in the 2014-2015 school year, and phase in a mandate for region-by-region adoption.
- Consider developing regional or statewide health insurance pools for school districts or bus companies to enroll drivers in.
- Incentivize purchase of efficient, alternative fuel school buses.
- Require State Department of Education to create model regionalization contracts.

Recommendations that may warrant further review to develop stakeholder consensus:

- Establish regional school districts for the purpose of special education, as a means of cost containment while obliging the Sheff v. O'Neill order.
- Develop a voluntary pilot program for a minimum budget requirement savings agreement. When a board of education can save money, 50% would be rebated to the board in the form of a rolling fund, and 50% would return to the town and reduce the MBR by that amount.
- Consider allowing district performance as a criterion for MBR changes.

On behalf of the Board of Education Functions Sub-Committee, we hope that you find these recommendations from public education stakeholders useful for legislative purposes. The Sub-Committee looks forward to continuing its work beyond the 2013 legislative session; beginning this fall we will reconvene with additional ideas from our members.

Sincerely,



Representative Kevin Ryan
Chairman, Board of Education Functions Sub-Committee

cc. Representative Brendan Sharkey, Speaker of the House
Board of Education Functions Sub-Committee members