

# MORE Commission

## Regional Entities Subcommittee

### Education Policy Working Group

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February, 2016

## Introduction

Education is the single largest expense for each of Connecticut's 169 municipalities. In many cases, especially for small to medium sized communities, education can account for up to eighty-percent of a municipalities budget. Our school districts also contain a high level of administrative expertise and capacity that is, with few exceptions, untapped by the general government side of municipal budgets and operations. Opportunities for intra-town collaborations and regional collaborations are significant. These opportunities can result in increased efficiencies, reduced costs and improved educational outcomes.

The Regional Entities Subcommittee of the MORE Commission was "formed to bring together multiple stakeholders to work together to identify ways to better utilize their regional entities and work in a more cohesive manner with their neighboring communities."<sup>1</sup> The Regional Entities Subcommittee established the Education Policy Working Group following its April 28, 2015 meeting to explore opportunities to gain efficiencies and reduce costs related to local education services. The Working Group, in examining ways to gain efficiencies and reduce costs, was asked to explore partnerships with municipal governments, Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs) and Regional Councils of Governments (COGs). The Working Group met through fall 2015 with the intention of producing policy recommendations for the 2016 legislative session. The Working Group discussed demographics, district consolidation, regional school districts, the role of RESCs, transportation and local and regional policies in more detail. Since fifty-nine percent of state's direct expenditures are budgeted for

education, any changes would impact the state's fiscal health, individual town finances, children and families.

Our recommendations include:

- improving the collection, quality and dissemination of data essential to decision making and investments of public resources.
- Adding education as a fundamental element of local, regional and state planning fully integrated into the state's Growth Management Principles.
- Incentivizing local school districts to embrace regional options and opportunities.
- Exploring a new means for the efficient use of funds used for the transportation of students.

The goal of these recommendations is to foster closer relationships and partnerships between local government and school districts and their respective regional partners (RESCs and COGs). The opportunities to gain efficiencies in services, reduce current costs and increase the quality and availability of services lie with the development and expansion of these local/regional partnerships.

On a parallel path, the General Assembly's Program Review and Investigation (PRI) Committee conducted and completed a study titled, "**Regional Cooperation Between Local Boards of Education.**"<sup>2</sup> The stated focus of the PRI study is:

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<sup>1</sup> Regional Entities Subcommittee Page of the MORE Commission, <http://www.housedems.ct.gov/more/RegEnt/index.asp>

<sup>2</sup> Regional Cooperation Staff F&R Full Report.pdf

*Regional cooperation between local boards of education can vary widely, from two school districts developing a cooperative arrangement to provide adult education together, to the creation of a regional school district serving children in grades K-12. This study will examine the prevalence, advantages, and disadvantages of such efforts and identify factors related to implementing, replicating, or expanding potentially beneficial regional cooperative efforts<sup>3</sup>.*

The “Main Staff Findings”<sup>4</sup> of the PRI report are:

*Almost all school districts studied participated in at least one cooperative effort in each of the three instructional areas of general education, special education, and professional development. Also:*

- *more instructional areas than larger school districts; however, there are also many cooperative efforts occurring in middle sized school districts*
- *Depending on the school district’s geographic area, RESCs played a larger or smaller role in certain special education areas.*
- *School districts in more affluent communities are less likely to partner for physical therapy, occupational therapy, or psychological services.*

*With the exception of pupil transportation, there were generally fewer partnerships between educational entities in the operational areas:*

- *Nearly three-quarters of school districts collaborated on special education pupil transportation*
- *School districts are more likely to partner with local municipalities for cooperative purchasing of, such items as heating oil/gas, and health insurance.*
- *School districts are more likely to partner with local municipalities for administrative and back office functions such as snowplowing, grounds maintenance, and auditing.*

*Superintendents identified factors used in deciding whether to form or continue a collaboration including whether effort:*

- ✓ *saves money or contains costs*
- ✓ *results in efficiencies or improves quality of services*

- ✓ *satisfies a need of the school district*
- ✓ *benefits all collaborating parties*
- ✓ *benefits or positively impacts students*
- ✓ *logistics can be worked out*
- ✓ *meets the needs of local control, politics, and good relationships*
- ✓ *to collaborate is known by the school district*

Keeping in mind the focus of the PRI study, the Education Policy Working Group has attempted to examine the broader issue of municipal-school district efficiencies; however, there will no doubt be overlap between the two studies.

The Education Policy Working Group held multiple meetings and heard presentations from the following speakers:

- Michael Howser, Director - University of Connecticut State Data Center
- Thomas M. Danehy, Executive Director - Area Cooperative Educational Services (Aces)
- Orlando Rodriguez, Associate Legislative Analyst - Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission
- Peter M. Prowda, Retired Connecticut State Department of Education Statistician
- Dianna Wentzell, Commissioner - Connecticut State Department of Education
- Janet C. Fairman, Christine Donis-Keller, University of Maine - Improving Educational Opportunity and Equity Through School District Consolidation in Maine (via video conference)
- Jim Rier, Former Maine Education Commissioner - (via voice conference)

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<sup>3</sup> STUDY SCOPE: Regional Cooperation Between Local Boards of Education, Legislative Program and Investigations Committee, 4/22/15, Page 1 <https://www.cga.ct.gov/pri/docs/2015/PRI%20Scope%20for%20Study%20of%20Regional%20Cooperation%20Between%20Local%20Boards%20of%20Education.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Regional Cooperation Staff F&R Full Report.pdf, PRI Staff Findings and Recommendations Highlights

- Dan Syme, First Selectman, Scotland; Allan Cahill, First Selectman, Hampton; and Bill Rose, First Selectman, Chaplin - Rural/Small Town CEO Perspective
- Paula Colen, Executive Director Of Eastconn and Danuta M. Thibodeau, Executive Director Of Education Connection - Regional Education Service Center Perspective
- Richard A. Huot, Director Of Finance And Operations, Hebron Public Schools - Connecticut Association Of School Business Officials, On Shared Services White Paper
- Michael Zuba, Director Of Planning, Milone And Macbroom - School Enrollment Projections
- Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Performance Officer - Connecticut State Department Of Education

The Education Policy Working Group took the information gained from the presenters, various reports and the committee member's individual knowledge to develop a package of recommendations. These recommendations, most of which will require legislative action, are intended to develop opportunities to improve intra-town collaboration and regionalism - resulting in increased efficiencies and cost savings.

## Findings

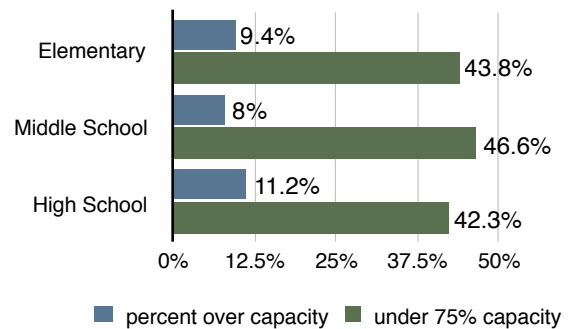
### Demographic Trends and Data:

- The Department of Education is about to launch a robust and dynamic data portal covering a wide range of subjects in a retrievable format. This new system has the capacity to provide school districts and others with information heretofore not readily available.
- Accurate data is essential to school system decision making. Some towns, though not a majority, allocate local resources to gain access to otherwise unavailable district data - including enrollment projections. Currently, neither the State nor its regions has a systematic way of documenting and analyzing the scope of projected changes in district or regional enrollment patterns or to provide resources to towns that face the resulting challenges. The State Department of Education provided this data in the past, but is not currently providing enrollment projections. The Connecticut State Data Center at the University of Connecticut creates population projections for the state, COG regions and towns, but does not address school or district enrollment projections.

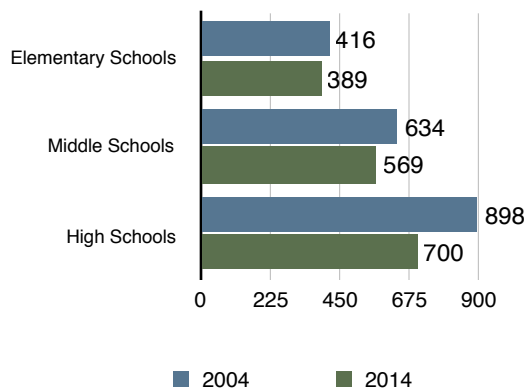
In 2014, there were 202 districts in Connecticut with 542,454 students. The city of New Haven had the largest number of students with 21,640. The Department of Mental Health, with seven students, is the smallest district. Of these districts, 83 had less than 1,000 students, 59 had less than 500

Source: Orlando Rodriguez, Associate Legislative Analyst, Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission

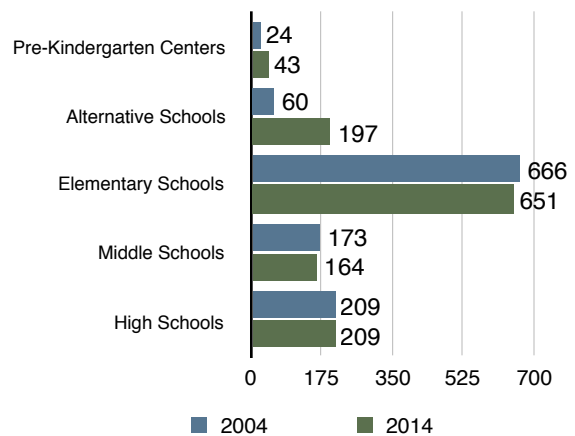
Capacity, 2013



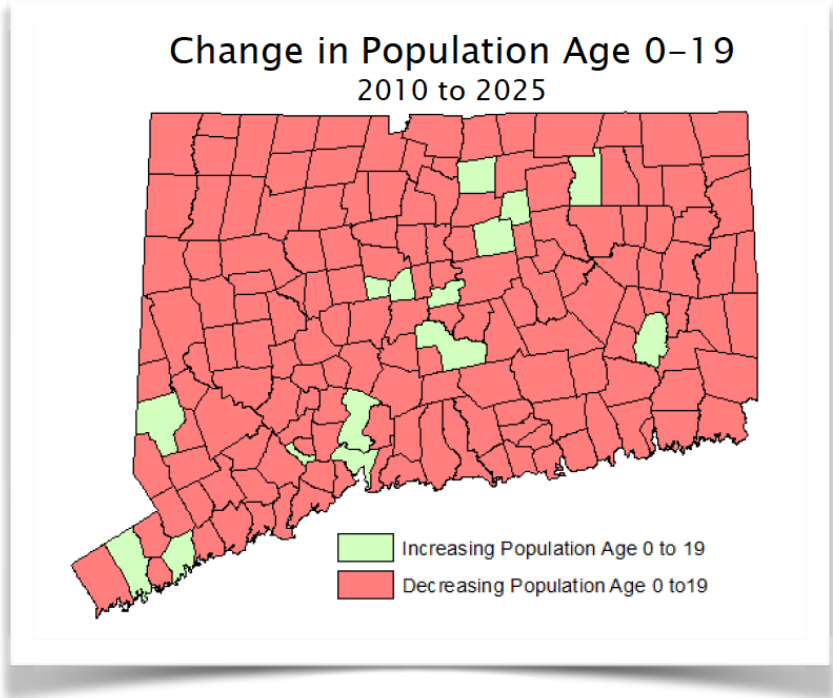
Median Enrollment



Number of Schools



- Connecticut district schools are likely to experience continued declining enrollment due to demographic trends (in outer-ring suburbs and small, rural towns) and competition with school choice offerings (in cities and inner-ring suburbs). Declining enrollment creates fiscal challenges for towns and may threaten the economic competitiveness of the state if not creatively addressed. Districts with declining enrollment may have to cut staff, operate facilities below capacity or consider closing schools. More importantly, declining enrollment will become a strategic issue for the State if it compromises the ability of Connecticut to grow a talented workforce and to attract and retain employers in the future. Population projections should provide a basis for future enrollment projections, but those projections should also take into account the effect of market forces and state initiatives that may impact enrollment - such as school choice, economic development, housing and transportation.
- Declining enrollment can be addressed through the expanded use of existing programs to balance enrollment across districts. The Open Choice program (Conn. Gen. Stat. Sec.



10-266aa) allows enrollment and transportation of students from selected urban districts (currently, Hartford, Bridgeport and New Haven)<sup>5</sup> in neighborhood schools in nearby suburban districts, and vice versa. State grants to compensate the receiving districts increase as the percent of Open Choice students enrolled in the district increases. Evaluations of Open Choice, dating back to the 1960s, conclude that “the number of students in the program should be increased”<sup>6</sup> and “towns should offer the maximum number of seats available for Project Choice students, without waiting for state direction,”<sup>7</sup> although students from low-income

<sup>5</sup> CSDE, Open Choice Program Questions & Answers, at: <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2681&q=335142>

<sup>6</sup> Jacobs, Erin. “Educating Inner-City Children in Suburban Schools: A Randomized Study of Majority-to-Minority Transfer and Achievement in Connecticut”. Senior Honors Thesis, Department of Sociology, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 2003. Available from the Trinity College Digital Repository, Hartford, Connecticut (<http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu>)

<sup>7</sup> Frankenberg, Erica. “Improving and Expanding Hartford’s Project Choice Program.” Poverty & Race Research Action Council, Washington, DC, 2007.

families face greater challenges and “should be provided with more counseling and other forms of support.”<sup>8</sup> As of 2013, 2,635 students participated in Open Choice statewide, an increase of 50% from 2006<sup>9</sup>. Smaller suburban and rural districts have been among the most active at utilizing Open Choice – Bolton, Canton, East Granby and Plainville have the highest rates of Open Choice enrollment as of 2013-14 (between 5 – 6 % of total enrollment). Plainville has used state Open Choice funds to refurbish facilities and to purchase equipment “including a 3D printer, robots and a textile machine.”<sup>10</sup>

- School capacity varies greatly across the state - some schools face closure due to dwindling enrollment while others are realizing over-crowded classrooms. The Department of Administrative Services collects data on school capacity, but it is not reported at the region or district-level. Proposals to consider school closures are reported within individual towns, but often do not circulate beyond those communities. Schools in close proximity are often managed by different entities (i.e. vocational technical and district schools). Better data on capacity and potential closures would aid state and regional entities in planning and help to identify opportunities for inter-municipal cooperation.
- The Connecticut Department of Education and the 202 School Districts are paper-dependent when it comes to record keeping. It is not uncommon for an entire school year to lapse when a student transfers from one school district to another for their records to catch up with them. Data, in a common and easily

“In spite of the face validity of school consolidation as a solution for educational problems, the research on school size indicates that the economic and curricular advantages of large schools are often exaggerated and that a variety of factors influence the relationship between school size and students’ academic achievement. Thus, educational decision-makers need to develop reform plans based upon a balanced consideration of all the important factors related to school size.”

Effects of School Size: A Review of the Literature with  
Recommendations John R. Slate  
University of Missouri, Kansas City - Craig H. Jones  
Arkansas State University

retrievable format, is essential for planning and decision-making.

- The manner in which the State reimburses for school construction grants is broken. Currently, it is based on a eight-year maximum enrollment calculation. The process does not require a true examination of enrollment projections or consideration of available spaces in neighboring towns.

#### **District Consolidation and Cost Efficiencies:**

- Despite continued declining enrollment, there is little movement toward consolidation of school districts. Towns hold strong to a tradition of

<sup>8</sup> Jacobs, Erin. “Educating Inner-City Children in Suburban Schools: A Randomized Study of Majority-to-Minority Transfer and Achievement in Connecticut”. Senior Honors Thesis, Department of Sociology, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 2003.

<sup>9</sup> CSDE data on Public School Enrollment PK-12 by Resident Town, at: [http://sdeportal.ct.gov/Cedar/WEB/ct\\_report/EnrollmentDTVviewer.aspx](http://sdeportal.ct.gov/Cedar/WEB/ct_report/EnrollmentDTVviewer.aspx)

<sup>10</sup> <http://ctmirror.org/2015/11/03/school-desegregation-will-focus-shift-from-magnets-to-suburbs/>

home rule and consider schools to be part-and-parcel to their communities. The potential for improved efficiencies in administration and increased educational opportunities offered through consolidation or regionalization have not caught on in Connecticut. Changing this reality is no easy task; however, the continued decline in enrollment may make such change occur as a matter of necessity.

- Voluntary consolidation has had limited uptake in Connecticut, and would most likely continue to occur in only small, rural districts. There are 18 regional school districts with an average enrollment of 1,500 students, covering 47 towns with an average population of 5,800 per town. Further consolidation in small, rural districts would yield limited cost savings as these districts cover only 5 percent of students. Additionally, regional agreements can be costly to enter and difficult to exit.
- Recent legislation from Vermont and Maine to encourage district mergers has had limited success. Vermont's initiative "is not likely to achieve the results intended by the legislature...only a small number of merger proposals came before voters in the first three years, and only two were approved.." <sup>11</sup> An evaluation from Maine found consolidation below targets and several "reluctant" districts seeking exit from regional partnerships. <sup>12</sup> In both cases, there was mixed feedback whether mandates were necessary or whether voluntary consolidation and incentives would suffice. A review of the Maine law concluded:

*Overall, the ability of communities and school districts to identify mutual interests with other*

**"Because most school districts assign children to schools by neighborhood, racial, ethnic and economic housing segregation contributes to severe disparities in educational outcomes in Connecticut."**

CT Dept. of Housing,  
Analysis of Impediments to  
Fair Housing Choice 2015

*district partners was the most critical factor determining whether districts could successfully partner or not. Leadership from superintendents and other planning members was another significant factor that propelled communities to approve or reject reorganization. Positive and collaborative relationships between some districts facilitated efforts to consolidate.*

*With respect to policy, the overwhelming consensus was that **the approach of a mandate with penalties, short timeframe, and poor articulation all produced a negative reaction against the policy and led to efforts to repeal or revise the law.** The recurring efforts to change the law, together with a general lack of confidence in the state's education leadership, produced a high level of uncertainty about the fate of the policy, reduced motivation to engage in reorganization work, and stalled work in a majority of cases<sup>13</sup>. **(emphasis added)***

- Current law makes it very difficult to dissolve a regional system that no longer provides the needed curriculum diversity or opportunity and the services that are provided are at a disproportionately high cost to towns. Region 11 (covering grades 7-12), serving Chaplin,

<sup>11</sup> Rogers, J.D., Giesner, T.J., & Meyers, H.W. (2014). Early experiences implementing voluntary school district mergers in Vermont. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 29(7),

<sup>12</sup> C, Fairman Janet, and Christine Donis-Keller. "School District Reorganization in Maine; Lessons Learned for Policy and Process." *Maine Policy Review* 21.2 (2012); 24-40, [digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mpr/vol21/iss2](http://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mpr/vol21/iss2)

<sup>13</sup> School District Reorganization in Maine: Lessons Learned for Policy and Process Janet C. Fairman University of Maine, [janet.fairman@maine.edu](mailto:janet.fairman@maine.edu) Christine Donis-Keller, page 37



Hampton and Scotland, now has a total school population below 350 and a per pupil cost over \$26,000. Current law provides that the dissolution of the region requires a unanimous vote of each participating town - rather than a majority of the towns or residents.

### Impact of District and School Size and configuration on vulnerable Students

- Regionalization of schools, and the softening of local control, has had long-term support from advocates for school de-segregation. In *Sheff v. O'Neill*, the State Supreme Court held that "the state's school districting statute was the 'single most important factor' contributing to the current de facto school segregation," in violation of the state Constitution. As recently as 2013, advocates for the *Sheff* case stated that fragmentation is the "the elephant in the room" and "the ultimate answer to *Sheff* is [the] regionalization" of school districts.

Regionalization has the potential to assist in achieving the goals of the *Sheff* case.

Regionalization (as well as consolidation of neighboring school districts) - however justified by the economics and educational value - is hindered by communities' lack of commitment to desegregation.

- "Findings on the impact of school size on service quality are diverse and seem to be heavily influenced by factors that are idiosyncratic to individual localities.<sup>14</sup>" At-risk students are most likely to suffer with larger classrooms and schools, although very small schools can lead to fewer resources for students. Research indicates that "students from disadvantaged backgrounds benefit significantly more from small elementary schools" and that "impoverished students...often benefit from smaller schools and districts,

Connecticut does not have a *metric* that measures the efficiency or efficient use of public funds for *student transportation*

and...can suffer irreversible damage if consolidation occurs." Parent involvement may also suffer in larger school districts.

### Transportation is a Major Cost to both the State and Towns

- According to a recent Office of Legislative Research Report<sup>15</sup>:

*State law requires school districts to provide transportation for all school-age children whenever it is "reasonable and desirable" (CGS § 10-220(a)). In general, this requirement is limited to transportation to public and certain nonprofit, private schools located within the school district. The only out-of-district transportation school districts must provide is for students attending state technical high schools and district designated regional agricultural science and technology centers. Within these requirements, local and regional boards of education retain discretion over district transportation policies, including the number of school buses, bus routes and stops, the students to whom they will provide transportation, and maximum walking distances. The SDE has issued guidelines for district policies (School Accommodations Workshop Package, October 2008, pp. 28-31), but they are not mandatory. The state provides an annual grant to local school districts that reimburses them for part of the cost of providing public school transportation. Reimbursement percentages vary from zero to 60% depending on the relative wealth*

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Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, The Quest for Cost-Efficient Government in New England

<sup>15</sup> Office of Legislative Research Report 2012-R-0085, By: Judith Lohman, Assistant Director, February 6, 2012 "School Transportation Requirements and Funding"



of the town or towns making up the district. The state also provides additional funds for school districts, regional education service centers, and other entities that provide transportation for students attending certain schools outside their home districts.”

- Based on figures compiled by the Connecticut School Transportation Association, “public school transportation cost \$362,082,815”<sup>16</sup> (2006-07 school year). The total number of public school students transported was 456,652. Local schools transported 418,513 students, 17,450 special needs students, 4,111 In-town Vo-Tech students, 6,705 out-of-town vo-tech and vocational agricultural students, 6,621 out-of-town magnet school students, 3,140 out-of-town public high school students and 112 out-of-town charter students. Total public expenditures for private school transportation was \$21,177,896 (2006-07 school year). Total number of private school students transported was 21,166.<sup>17</sup>”
- Based on figures compiled by the Connecticut School Transportation Association, the “percentage of total student population receiving public transportation is 80%. Average per pupil cost for public school transportation \$792.91. Per pupil cost for local schools \$482.82. Per pupil cost for special ed students on special vehicles \$6,546.49. Average per pupil reimbursement for private school transportation \$188.74.<sup>18</sup>”
- The FY 2015 State Budget includes two statutory grants<sup>19</sup> to municipalities specifically for school transportation totaling \$28,480,248:

Public School Transportation Grant - \$24,884,748, Non-Public School Transportation Grant - \$3,595,500. In addition, \$62 million was granted to school districts and RESCS for Magnet School and Open Choice.

- The monies provided to municipalities for student transportation come with no incentives or conditions for cost efficiencies. A recent report from Oregon concluded that transportation “expenditures could be reduced by an estimated 9 percent if inefficient districts adopted the practices of the most cost-efficient districts.<sup>20</sup>” If this were the case in Connecticut, the resulting annual savings would be \$2,563,222 to the State. Based on the ED001 data, school districts spent \$451,735,621 on school transportation in FY14 (this includes the reimbursements that they received from the state, but does not include funds provided to RESCs for Open Choice and magnet transportation.) Based on the 9% savings, the savings would be \$40,656,205 - \$2.56m to the state, the rest to the districts. Of the \$451.7m, \$162.8m is special education transportation.
- Connecticut does not have any metric that measures the use of public funds for student transportation. This lack of information severely limits the state’s ability to create incentives for efficiency. The State of Washington, as one example, has developed and Efficiency Rating System (ERS) for school district efficiency.

*ERS employs a methodology known as the Target Cost approach, which produces **estimates of the best possible performance of each school***

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<sup>16</sup>Connecticut School Transportation Association, <http://ctschoolbus.com/index.php>

<sup>17</sup> IBID

<sup>18</sup> IBID

<sup>19</sup> State Of Connecticut, Fy 2015, Fy 2016 And Fy 2017 - Estimates Of State Formula Aid To Municipalities

<sup>20</sup> Oregon Public School Transportation Funding: An Evaluation of Alternative Methods Prepared for The Oregon Department of Education January 2009

district relative to peer school districts, while taking into account as many school district site characteristics as possible.

**The objective of the ERS is to identify, for each school district, an empirically based and mathematically sound minimum expenditure level and minimum number of buses that allows the school district to transport its students to and from school, while recognizing local site characteristics that influence cost, but are beyond the direct control of school district management.**

*The intent is to be able to identify school districts that, while receiving full funding under the STARS, have room for improving efficiency. It is also useful to employ this tool as a mechanism to identify what the costs should be for a school district that consistently expends more than the formula provides. In this sense, it provides a “target” of what such a school district should aim for in attempting to operate more economically.<sup>21</sup> (emphasis added)*

## Improving District-District and District-Town Cooperation

District-to-district cooperation covers a range of needs and has produced positive results. According to information provided by the Connecticut Association of School Business Officials (CASBO) “94% of responding districts participate in some type of shared services or purchasing with another district, RESC or town. Over 92% participate in at least 3 areas and 76% participate in 5 or more areas of shared services or purchasing.”<sup>22</sup> According to the CASBO White Paper, school district shared services cover, but are not limited to the following areas:

- *Cooperative Purchasing & Consortiums*

...more intentional efforts to share the burdens of administration regionally could lead to increased regional consistency in functions, allowing for opportunities for shared resources and information to be identified and pursued...

Citizens' Efficiency Commission Recommendation:  
Shared Administrative Functions and Automated  
Human Resource and Financial Management

- *Human Resources/Negotiations*
- *Cafeteria Services & Director*
- *Transportation Services*
- *Insurances and Employee Benefits*
- *Maintenance & Operations*
- *Computer Hardware & Software*
- *Finance Office Operations*
- *Safety & Security Operations*

While there are examples of school districts and town governments sharing services (for example, Mansfield, Madison, Plainville and Brooklyn each share financial services with their respective school districts) - the practice is limited. There are few regional or multi-town (five or more) examples of cooperation. The reasons for the limited use of the sharing of services appears to be grounded in the strong sense of the separation of roles or “turf” (town government and board of education) and by home rule.

<sup>21</sup> A Description of the Student Transportation Allocation Reporting System Efficiency Rating Process, State of Washington, <http://www.k12.wa.us/transportation/STARS/EfficiencyRatings/efficiencyssystemdescription.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Connecticut Association of School Business Officials: Shared services White-paper, 2015 - page 3.

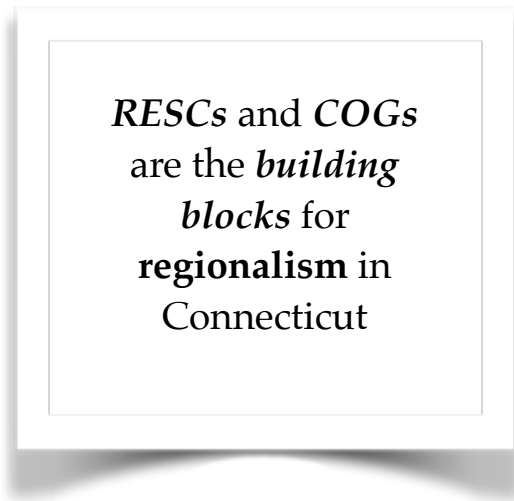
- The six RESCs are well established as regional providers and facilitators of services to their member districts. The expertise developed by the RESCs could be applied to non-educational service sharing expansion areas, such as:

- *Cooperative bid expansion*
- *Facilities management*
- *Food services*
- *Transportation*
- *School safety and security*
- *Technology*
- *Health and wellness*
- *Central purchasing*
- *Electronic document management*
- *Sharing non-educational services between towns and school boards.*

- For the rural areas (especially the northwest and northeast) of the state, with small districts, there must be an alternative to the current system for superintendent administration.

### Fostering Regionalism

- The Intergovernmental Policy Division of the Office of Policy and management (OPM) is the functional facilitator for regionalism in Connecticut. Expanding their role to cover what education and municipalities may do collectively and together to enhance the goals of regionalism.
- RESCs and COGs are the building blocks for regionalism in Connecticut. The RESCs and the COGs share a unique position as regional facilitators for establishing the framework for cooperation, providing support, monitoring, evaluating, and disseminating best practices that can be replicated in other RESC/COG regions. They offer an established model for regional collaboration and innovation. RESC/COG partnerships should be leveraged to promote and support regional collaboration for both



school districts and municipalities. The State can strengthen existing regional infrastructure/capacity, using RESCs and COGs, to support regional initiatives and collaboration to take advantage of the existing regional infrastructure and expertise that the RESCs and COGs can provide. The Intergovernmental Policy Division of OPM can build on their relationship with the COGs to include RESCs to:

- *Partner with RESCs to carry out data collection and analysis, planning and development, implementation support, monitoring, and evaluation functions related to regional cooperation to assist in identifying and implementing regional opportunities.*
- *Advocate for state funding that encourages and supports public policy areas identified as priority regional cooperative efforts. An example of this is sustained funding for CEN and Nutmeg Network, which would place all towns and boards of education on the same network and lay groundwork for significant further cooperation and savings, particularly through shared back office and educational software purchases and management.*
- *Approve RESC and COG bid processes that meet state bid requirements, and clarify implementation through legislation/statute, to allow school districts to purchase products and services at the lowest possible cost.*

- Collaborate with RESCs to collect data and to document existing regional efforts. Make such efforts publicly available through a common website.
  - Identify services that are more efficiently operated through RESCs, such as ELL programs and professional development.
- Each town, region and the State is required to periodically produce a plan of conservation and development (POCD). A POCD is a blueprint for the future - including capital investments. Currently, statutes that direct local, regional and the state plans specify a range of subjects to be considered. However, there is no explicit direction to include education in long-range planning. Given the importance of education generally and the significant resources invested locally and statewide - it seems logical that we engage in long-term planning integrated into the other elements important to our state, regions and towns.
- Cooperative purchasing programs administered by CT RESCs and COGs have proven to save money through economies of scale, as well as save municipalities and school districts the resources invested in going out to bid themselves. Many purchasing agents believe that the only alternative to going out to bid for goods and services when

required by their local purchasing policy is to use the State bid list. Existing statute does not refer to cooperative purchasing programs, and interpretations vary.

- Many smaller towns lack the administrative capacity to adequately cover their existing financial, human services and IT needs. By partnering town administrative functions with their corresponding school district administration or by regionalizing such services through a RESC or COG, towns and school districts could realize efficiencies and cost savings. A recent study by the Citizens' Efficiency Commission in Illinois, in part concluded that:

*"Shared administration and improved "back office" management could assist in eliminating the opportunity costs associated with these concerns, because administrative personnel would be more likely to be retained across administrations and build institutional knowledge needed for strong local government operations. Finally, more **intentional efforts to share the burdens of administration regionally could lead to increased regional consistency in functions, allowing for opportunities for shared resources** and information to be identified and pursued.<sup>23</sup>" (emphasis added)*

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<sup>23</sup> Citizens' Efficiency Commission Recommendation: Shared Administrative Functions and Automated Human Resource and Financial Management, page 4

## Recommendations:

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### 1. Improve data collection, quality and dissemination

- a. Modify Section 10-10a of the General Statutes to require that:
  - ▶ The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) facilitate the continual development and dissemination of state, regional and district-level enrollment projections. To accomplish this responsibility, the CSDE should partner with and fund an agency with the capacity and expertise to carry out this work effectively, such as the Connecticut State Data Center at the University of Connecticut.
  - ▶ The CSDE report on school capacity and proposals raised in districts for school closures at a state, regional (COG and RESC) and district-level on an annual basis.
  - ▶ The CSDE publicly report on school choice lottery applications and placements, for both magnet and Open Choice, by town of residence.
- b. Two pilot projects, funded through the RPI Program, that have the ability to be readily replicated in other comparable state regions - one through a COG and the other through a RESC to:
  - ▶ Develop and disseminate annual, actual and projected regional district level projections, and
  - ▶ Develop a system to analyze the region's school facilities and advise on opportunities for regional and/or inter-municipal cooperation.

### 2. Education should be embraced as a fundamental element of regionalism in Connecticut

- a. Modify existing statutes (Sections 16a-27, 8-35a and 8-23) related to the preparation of the State, Regional and Municipal Plans of Conservation and Development to include an element addressing education from the perspective of examining regional efficiencies and educational opportunities.
- b. The Intergovernmental Policy Division at the Office of Policy and Management should should expand to serve as a liaison and information source for regional collaboration, including education. The recommendations below outline ways in which educators, RESCs and CSDE can actively participate in state, regional and local planning.
  - ▶ The six RESCs directors and nine regional COG directors should be convened as a standing committee to the Intergovernmental Policy Division or as an advisory body to the Connecticut Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR) to develop regional opportunities for municipal efficiencies that can be delivered through their existing regional structures. The agenda for this meeting should address:
    - Expertise, Capacity and Best practices of the RESCs and COGs that can be applied to either state or municipal delivery of services.
    - Barriers to regionalism
    - Capturing Economies of Scale
    - Increasing the positive externalities while reducing the negative externalities of regionalism

□ Partnering of the RESCs and COGs

- ▶ Amend Section 4-124s of the General Statutes to include RESCs as eligible regional organizations for the Regional Performance Incentive Program to further promote the application of regionalism in Connecticut.
- c. Clarify state statutes to enable town and school districts to access cooperative purchasing programs offered by governmental entities such as COGs and RESCs. Amend Conn. Gen. Stat. Sec. 7-148v. to include the following language: “Any municipality may purchase equipment, supplies, materials and services from a person who has a contract to sell such property or services to other state governments, political subdivisions of this state, nonprofit organizations or public purchasing consortia available through a RESC or COG, in accordance with the terms and conditions of such contract.”
- d. The State should enhance existing programs that would alleviate declining enrollment issues, such as the Open Choice program (Conn. Gen. Stat. Sec. 10-266aa), which would both increase enrollment in and further the State’s efforts to reduce racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic isolation in public schools.
- e. Support the Legislature’s Program Review and Investigations Committee recommendations in the December 2015 report on “Regional Cooperation Between Local Boards of Education.” Specifically, the “Legislature should consider either establishing a new grant or loan program to provide (seed) money for start-up costs for new cooperative efforts among local boards of education or resume funding of the Technical Assistance for Regional Cooperation grants (C.G.S. Sec. 10-262t) to support plans that implement cost-saving strategies.”

### 3. Incentivize local school districts to embrace regional options and opportunities

- a. Both formula-based and competitively awarded education funding from the State should include incentives for regional efforts and/or inter-district/town initiatives being undertaken by towns and school districts.
- b. The State should, initially as a pilot program through one of the RESCs, fund a common student management platform for use in all public schools and districts to maximize use of education data while reducing costs.
- c. The State should adopt the use of student enrollment as a determinant factor:
  - ▶ When deciding to provide funding for school construction projects. Additionally, the CDE and DAS should be required to make an analysis of neighboring communities when a construction grant request is made to determine if there are potential partnerships or economies of scale that can be gained. Amend Section 10-286 to require that the “number representing the highest projected enrollment” occur “during the last four years of an eight year period” rather than at any point “during the eight year period,” as is currently required.
  - ▶ To enable smaller districts or combinations of districts to opt for alternative superintendent services and enable RESCs to provide such administrative services.
  - ▶ Enable regional school districts that have diminished enrollments resulting in decreased opportunities for students and disproportionately high per pupil expenditures to initiate a comprehensive study regarding options to dissolve or reconstitute (add or delete grades to a regional system) their regional arrangement by a majority vote of the districts/towns involved; the

current law requires a unanimous vote of each town. The further intent is to allow either a majority of the participating towns' legislative bodies or boards of education, to initiate this process.

**4. Require that the use of public funds for education transportation are based on a measurable system predicated on efficiency**

- a. Provide funding (\$250,000) to the Connecticut Transportation Institute at the University of Connecticut, in consultation with CSDE and the Intergovernmental Policy Division of OPM, through the Regional Performance Incentive Program (4-124s) to develop an Efficiency Rating System for the distribution of public transportation funds.
- b. Recommendations made for the Efficiency Rating System shall be forwarded to the Education Committee for possible legislative action.
- c. Pilot the system developed by UCONN on a regional, urban, suburban and rural basis.



## Appendix - Draft Bills

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### ***AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL DISTRICT ENROLLMENT DATA***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Section 10-10a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (On Passage):

(a) As used in this section:

(1) “Teacher” means any certified professional employee below the rank of superintendent employed by a board of education for at least ninety days in a position requiring a certificate issued by the State Board of Education;

(2) “Teacher preparation program” means a program designed to qualify an individual for professional certification as an educator provided by institutions of higher education or other providers approved by the Department of Education, including, but not limited to, an alternate route to certification program.

(b) The Department of Education shall develop and implement a state-wide public school information system. The system shall be designed for the purpose of establishing a standardized electronic data collection and reporting protocol that will facilitate compliance with state and federal reporting requirements, improve school-to-school and district-to-district information exchanges, and maintain the confidentiality of individual student and staff data. The initial design shall focus on student information, provided the system shall be created to allow for future compatibility with financial, facility and staff data. The system shall provide for the tracking of the performance of individual students on each of the state-wide mastery examinations under section 10-14n in order to allow the department to compare the progress of the same cohort of students who take each examination and to better analyze school performance. The department shall assign a unique student identifier to each student prior to tracking the performance of a student in the public school information system.

(c) The state-wide public school information system shall:

(1) Track and report data relating to student, teacher and school and district performance growth and make such information available to local and regional boards of education for use in evaluating educational performance and growth of teachers and students enrolled in public schools in the state. Such information shall be collected or calculated based on information received from local and regional boards of education and other relevant sources. Such information shall include, but not be limited to:

(A) In addition to performance on state-wide mastery examinations pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, data relating to students shall include, but not be limited to, (i) the primary language spoken at the home of a student, (ii) student transcripts, (iii) student attendance and student mobility, (iv) reliable, valid assessments of a student’s readiness to enter public school at the kindergarten level, and (v) data collected, if any, from the preschool experience survey, described in section 10-515;

(B) Data relating to teachers shall include, but not be limited to, (i) teacher credentials, such as master’s degrees, teacher preparation programs completed and certification levels and endorsement areas, (ii) teacher assessments, such as whether a teacher is deemed highly qualified pursuant to the No Child Left Behind Act, P.L. 107-110, or deemed to meet such other designations as may be established by federal law or regulations for the purposes of tracking the equitable distribution of instructional staff, (iii) the presence of substitute

teachers in a teacher's classroom, (iv) class size, (v) numbers relating to absenteeism in a teacher's classroom, and (vi) the presence of a teacher's aide. The department shall assign a unique teacher identifier to each teacher prior to collecting such data in the public school information system;

(C) Data relating to schools and districts shall include, but not be limited to, (i) school population, (ii) annual student graduation rates, (iii) annual teacher retention rates, (iv) school disciplinary records, such as data relating to suspensions, expulsions and other disciplinary actions, (v) the percentage of students whose primary language is not English, (vi) the number of and professional credentials of support personnel, ~~and~~ (vii) information relating to instructional technology, such as access to computers and (viii) disseminate state, region and district-level enrollment projections on an annual basis and (ix) report on school capacity and proposals raised in districts for school closures at a state, regional (COG and RESC) and district-level on an annual basis.

(D) The Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, shall establish two pilot programs, one through a Regional Council of Governments and the other through a Regional Education Service Center, funded through the Regional Performance Incentive Program (Section 4-124s), to Develop and disseminate annual, actual and projected regional district level projections, and develop a system to analyze the region's school facilities and advise on opportunities for regional and/or inter-municipal cooperation.

(2) Collect data relating to student enrollment in and graduation from institutions of higher education for any student who had been assigned a unique student identifier pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, provided such data is available.

(3) Develop means for access to and data sharing with the data systems of public institutions of higher education in the state.

(d) On or before July 1, 2011, and each year thereafter until July 1, 2013, the Commissioner of Education shall report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education on the progress of the department's efforts to expand the state-wide public school information system pursuant to subsection (c) of this section. The report shall include a full statement of those data elements that are currently included in the system and those data elements that will be added on or before July 1, 2013.

(e) The system database of student information shall not be considered a public record for the purposes of section 1-210. Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the ability of a full-time permanent employee of a nonprofit organization that is exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or any subsequent corresponding internal revenue code of the United States, as from time to time amended, and that is organized and operated for educational purposes, to obtain information in accordance with the provisions of subsection (h) of this section.

(f) All school districts shall participate in the system, and report all necessary information required by this section, provided the department provides for technical assistance and training of school staff in the use of the system.

(g) Local and regional boards of education and preschool programs which receive state or federal funding shall participate, in a manner prescribed by the Commissioner of Education, in the state-wide public school information system described in subsection (b) of this section. Participation for purposes of this subsection shall include, but not be limited to, reporting on (1) student experiences in preschool by program type and by numbers of months in each such program, and (2) the readiness of students entering kindergarten and student progress in kindergarten. Such reporting shall be done by October 1, 2007, and annually thereafter.

(h) On and after August 1, 2009, upon receipt of a written request to access data maintained under this section by a full-time permanent employee of a nonprofit organization that is exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or any subsequent corresponding internal revenue code of the United States, as from time to time amended, and that is organized and operated for educational purposes, the Department of Education shall provide such data to such requesting party not later than sixty days after such request, provided such requesting party shall be responsible for the reasonable cost of such request. The Department of Administrative Services shall monitor the calculation of such fees charged for access to or copies of such records to ensure that such fees are reasonable and consistent with those charged by other state agencies. The Department of Education shall respond to written requests under this section in the order in which they are received.

(i) The superintendent of schools of a school district, or his or her designee, may access information in the state-wide public school information system regarding the state-wide mastery examination under section 10-14n. Such access shall be for the limited purpose of determining examination dates, examination scores and levels of student achievement on such examinations for students enrolled in or transferring to the school district of such superintendent.

***AN ACT CONCERNING REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS AND PARTICIPATION IN THE REGIONAL PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE PROGRAM***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Section 4-124s of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (On Passage):

(a) For purposes of this section:

(1) “Regional council of governments” means any such council organized under the provisions of sections 4-124i to 4-124p, inclusive;

(2) **“Regional Education Service Center” means any such established under section 10-66a.**

(3) “Municipality” means a town, city or consolidated town and borough;

(4) “Legislative body” means the board of selectmen, town council, city council, board of alderman, board of directors, board of representatives or board of the warden and burgesses of a municipality; and

(5) “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management or the designee of the secretary.

(b) There is established a regional performance incentive program that shall be administered by the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management. On or before December 31, 2011, and annually thereafter, any regional council of governments, ~~any two or more municipalities acting through a regional council of governments~~, any economic development district, **regional education service center** or any combination thereof may submit a proposal to the secretary for: (1) The joint provision of any service that one or more participating municipalities of such council, **regional education service center** or agency currently provide but which is not provided on a regional basis, (2) a planning study regarding the joint provision of any service on a regional basis, or (3) shared information technology services. A copy of said proposal shall be sent to the legislators representing said participating municipalities.

(c) (1) A regional council of governments, **regional education service center or** an economic development district shall submit each proposal in the form and manner the secretary prescribes and shall, at a minimum, provide the following information for each proposal: (A) Service description; (B) the explanation of the need for such service; (C) the method of delivering such service on a regional basis; (D) the organization that would be responsible for regional service delivery; (E) a description of the population that would be served; (F) the manner in which regional service delivery will achieve economies of scale; (G) the amount by which participating municipalities will reduce their mill rates as a result of savings realized; (H) a cost benefit analysis for the provision of the service by each participating municipality and by the entity submitting the proposal; (I) a plan of implementation for delivery of the service on a regional basis; (J) a resolution endorsing such proposal approved by the ~~legislative body of each participating municipality~~ **regional council of governments, regional education service center or an economic development district** and (K) an explanation of the potential legal obstacles, if any, to the regional provision of the service.

(2) The secretary shall review each proposal and shall award grants for proposals the secretary determines best meet the requirements of this section. In awarding such grants, the secretary shall give priority to a proposal submitted by (A) any entity specified in subsection (a) of this section that includes participation of all of the member municipalities of such entity, and which may increase the purchasing power of participating

municipalities or provide a cost savings initiative resulting in a decrease in expenses of such municipalities, allowing such municipalities to lower property taxes, and (B) any economic development district.

(d) On or before December 31, 2013, and annually thereafter, in addition to any proposal submitted pursuant to this section, any municipality or regional council of governments may apply to the secretary for a grant to fund: (1) Operating costs associated with connecting to the state-wide high speed, flexible network developed pursuant to section 4d-80, including the costs to connect at the same rate as other government entities served by such network; and (2) capital cost associated with connecting to such network, including expenses associated with building out the internal fiber network connections required to connect to such network, provided the secretary shall make any such grant available in accordance with the two-year schedule by which the Bureau of Enterprise Systems and Technology recommends connecting each municipality and regional council of governments to such network. Any municipality or regional council of governments shall submit each application in the form and manner the secretary prescribes.

(e) The secretary shall submit to the Governor and the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to finance, revenue and bonding a report on the grants provided pursuant to this section. Each such report shall include information on the amount of each grant, and the potential of each grant for leveraging other public and private investments. The secretary shall submit a report for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2011, not later than February 1, 2012, and shall submit a report for each subsequent fiscal year not later than the first day of March in such fiscal year. Such reports shall include the property tax reductions achieved by means of the program established pursuant to this section.

***AN ACT CONCERNING PLANS OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Section 16a-27 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (On Passage):

(a) The secretary, after consultation with all appropriate state, regional and local agencies and other appropriate persons, shall, prior to March 1, 2012, complete a revision of the existing plan and enlarge it to include, but not be limited to, policies relating to transportation, energy, and air. Any revision made after July 1, 1995, shall take into consideration the conservation and development of greenways that have been designated by municipalities and shall recommend that state agencies coordinate their efforts to support the development of a state-wide greenways system. The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection shall identify state-owned land for inclusion in the plan as potential components of a state greenways system.

(b) Any revision made after August 20, 2003, shall take into account (1) economic and community development needs and patterns of commerce, and (2) linkages of affordable housing objectives and land use objectives with transportation systems.

(c) Any revision made after March 1, 2006, shall (1) take into consideration risks associated with natural hazards, including, but not limited to, flooding, high winds and wildfires; (2) identify the potential impacts of natural hazards on infrastructure and property; and (3) make recommendations for the siting of future infrastructure and property development to minimize the use of areas prone to natural hazards, including, but not limited to, flooding, high winds and wildfires.

(d) Any revision made after July 1, 2005, shall describe the progress towards achievement of the goals and objectives established in the previously adopted state plan of conservation and development and shall identify (1) areas where it is prudent and feasible (A) to have compact, transit accessible, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development patterns and land reuse, and (B) to promote such development patterns and land reuse, (2) priority funding areas designated under section 16a-35c, and (3) corridor management areas on either side of a limited access highway or a rail line. In designating corridor management areas, the secretary shall make recommendations that (A) promote land use and transportation options to reduce the growth of traffic congestion; (B) connect infrastructure and other development decisions; (C) promote development that minimizes the cost of new infrastructure facilities and maximizes the use of existing infrastructure facilities; and (D) increase intermunicipal and regional cooperation.

(e) Any revision made after October 1, 2008, shall (1) for each policy recommended (A) assign a priority; (B) estimate funding for implementation and identify potential funding sources; (C) identify each entity responsible for implementation; and (D) establish a schedule for implementation; and (2) for each growth management principle, determine three benchmarks to measure progress in implementation of the principles, one of which shall be a financial benchmark.

(f) Any revision made after October 1, 2009, shall take into consideration the protection and preservation of Connecticut Heritage Areas.

(g) Any revision made after December 1, 2011, shall take into consideration (1) the state water supply and resource policies established in sections 22a-380 and 25-33c, and (2) the list prepared by the Commissioner of Public Health pursuant to section 25-33q.

(h) Any revision made after October 1, 2013, shall (1) take into consideration risks associated with increased coastal erosion, depending on site topography, as anticipated in sea level change scenarios published

by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in Technical Report OAR CPO-1, (2) identify the impacts of such increased erosion on infrastructure and natural resources, and (3) make recommendations for the siting of future infrastructure and property development to minimize the use of areas prone to such erosion.

(i) Any revision made after October 1, 2016, shall take into account local education and the potential of regional collaborations to improve efficiency and educational opportunities.

~~(j)~~ Thereafter on or before March first in each revision year the secretary shall complete a revision of the plan of conservation and development.

Section 2. Section 8-35a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (On Passage):

(a) At least once every ten years, each regional council of governments shall make a plan of conservation and development for its area of operation, showing its recommendations for the general use of the area including land use, housing, principal highways and freeways, bridges, airports, parks, playgrounds, recreational areas, schools, public institutions, public utilities, agriculture and such other matters as, in the opinion of the council, will be beneficial to the area. Any regional plan so developed shall be based on studies of physical, social, educational, economic and governmental conditions and trends and shall be designed to promote with the greatest efficiency and economy the coordinated development of its area of operation and the general welfare and prosperity of its people. Such plan may encourage energy-efficient patterns of development, the use of solar and other renewable forms of energy, and energy conservation. Such plan shall be designed to promote abatement of the pollution of the waters and air of the region. The regional plan shall identify areas where it is feasible and prudent (1) to have compact, transit accessible, pedestrian-oriented mixed use development patterns and land reuse, and (2) to promote such development patterns and land reuse and shall note any inconsistencies with the following growth management principles: (A) Redevelopment and revitalization of regional centers and areas of mixed land uses with existing or planned physical infrastructure; (B) expansion of housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs; (C) concentration of development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options and land reuse; (D) conservation and restoration of the natural environment, cultural and historical resources and traditional rural lands; (E) protection of environmental assets critical to public health and safety; (F) regional educational efficiency and (G) integration of planning across all levels of government to address issues on a local, regional and state-wide basis. The plan of each region contiguous to Long Island Sound shall be designed to reduce hypoxia, pathogens, toxic contaminants and floatable debris in Long Island Sound.

(b) Before adopting the regional plan of conservation and development or any part thereof or amendment thereto the regional council of governments shall hold at least one public hearing thereon, notice of the time, place and subject of which shall be given in writing to the chief executive officer and planning commission, where one exists, of each member town, city or borough. Notice of the time, place and subject of such hearing shall be published once in a newspaper having a substantial circulation in the region. Such notices shall be given not more than twenty days or less than ten days before such hearing. At least sixty-five days before the public hearing the regional council of governments shall post the plan on the Internet web site of the council, if any, and submit the plan to the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management for findings in the form of comments and recommendations. By October 1, 2011, the secretary shall establish, by regulations adopted in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, criteria for such findings which shall include procedures for a uniform review of regional plans of conservation and development to determine if a proposed regional plan of conservation and development is not inconsistent with the state plan of conservation and development and the state economic strategic plan. The regional council of governments shall note on the record any inconsistency with the state plan of conservation and development and the reasons for such inconsistency. Adoption of the plan or part thereof or amendment thereto shall be made by the affirmative vote of not less than a majority of



the representatives on the council. The plan shall be posted on the Internet web site of the council, if any, and a copy of the plan or of any amendments thereto, signed by the chairman of the council, shall be transmitted to the chief executive officers, the town, city or borough clerks, as the case may be, and to planning commissions, if any, in member towns, cities or boroughs, and to the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, or his or her designee. The regional council of governments shall notify the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management of any inconsistency with the state plan of conservation and development and the reasons therefor.

(c) The regional council of governments shall assist municipalities within its region and state agencies and may assist other public and private agencies in developing and carrying out any regional plan or plans of such council. The regional council of governments may provide administrative, management, technical or planning assistance to municipalities within its region and other public agencies under such terms as it may determine, provided, prior to entering into an agreement for assistance to any municipality or other public agency, the regional council of governments shall have adopted a policy governing such assistance. The regional council of governments may be compensated by the municipality or other public agency with which an agreement for assistance has been made for all or part of the cost of such assistance.

Section 3. Section 8-23 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (On Passage):

(a)(1) At least once every ten years, the commission shall prepare or amend and shall adopt a plan of conservation and development for the municipality. Following adoption, the commission shall regularly review and maintain such plan. The commission may adopt such geographical, functional or other amendments to the plan or parts of the plan, in accordance with the provisions of this section, as it deems necessary. The commission may, at any time, prepare, amend and adopt plans for the redevelopment and improvement of districts or neighborhoods which, in its judgment, contain special problems or opportunities or show a trend toward lower land values.

(2) If a plan is not amended decennially, the chief elected official of the municipality shall submit a letter to the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management and the Commissioners of Transportation, Environmental Protection and Economic and Community Development that explains why such plan was not amended. A copy of such letter shall be included in each application by the municipality for discretionary state funding submitted to any state agency.

(3) Notwithstanding any provision of subdivisions (1) and (2) of this subsection, no commission shall be obligated to prepare or amend a plan of conservation and development for such municipality from July 1, 2010, to June 30, 2014, inclusive.

(b) On and after the first day of July following the adoption of the state Conservation and Development Policies Plan 2013-2018, in accordance with section 16a-30, a municipality that fails to comply with the requirements of subdivisions (1) and (2) of subsection (a) of this section shall be ineligible for discretionary state funding unless such prohibition is expressly waived by the secretary, except that any municipality that does not prepare or amend a plan of conservation and development pursuant to subdivision (3) of subsection (a) of this section shall continue to be eligible for discretionary state funding unless such municipality fails to comply with the requirements of said subdivisions (1) and (2) on or after July 1, 2015.

(c) In the preparation of such plan, the commission may appoint one or more special committees to develop and make recommendations for the plan. The membership of any special committee may include: Residents of the municipality and representatives of local boards dealing with zoning, inland wetlands, conservation, recreation, education, public works, finance, redevelopment, general government and other municipal

functions. In performing its duties under this section, the commission or any special committee may accept information from any source or solicit input from any organization or individual. The commission or any special committee may hold public informational meetings or organize other activities to inform residents about the process of preparing the plan.

(d) In preparing such plan, the commission or any special committee shall consider the following: (1) The community development action plan of the municipality, if any, (2) the need for affordable housing, (3) the need for protection of existing and potential public surface and ground drinking water supplies, (4) the use of cluster development and other development patterns to the extent consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity within the municipality, (5) the state plan of conservation and development adopted pursuant to chapter 297, (6) the regional plan of conservation and development adopted pursuant to section 8-35a, (7) physical, social, economic and governmental conditions and trends, (8) the needs of the municipality including, but not limited to, human resources, education, health, housing, recreation, social services, public utilities, public protection, transportation and circulation and cultural and interpersonal communications [both within the municipality and regionally](#), (9) the objectives of energy-efficient patterns of development, the use of solar and other renewable forms of energy and energy conservation, (10) protection and preservation of agriculture, (11) sea level change scenarios published by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in Technical Report OAR CPO-1 [and](#) (12) [the goal of maximizing educational administrative efficiencies, including those related to the transportation of students](#).

(e) (1) Such plan of conservation and development shall (A) be a statement of policies, goals and standards for the physical and economic development of the municipality, (B) provide for a system of principal thoroughfares, parkways, bridges, streets, sidewalks, multipurpose trails and other public ways as appropriate, (C) be designed to promote, with the greatest efficiency and economy, the coordinated development of the municipality and the general welfare and prosperity of its people and identify areas where it is feasible and prudent (i) to have compact, transit accessible, pedestrian-oriented mixed use development patterns and land reuse, and (ii) to promote such development patterns and land reuse, (D) recommend the most desirable use of land within the municipality for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial, conservation, agricultural and other purposes and include a map showing such proposed land uses, (E) recommend the most desirable density of population in the several parts of the municipality, (F) note any inconsistencies with the following growth management principles: (i) Redevelopment and revitalization of commercial centers and areas of mixed land uses with existing or planned physical infrastructure; (ii) expansion of housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs; (iii) concentration of development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options and land reuse; (iv) conservation and restoration of the natural environment, cultural and historical resources and existing farmlands; (v) protection of environmental assets critical to public health and safety; and (vi) integration of planning across all levels of government to address issues on a local, regional and state-wide basis, (G) make provision for the development of housing opportunities, including opportunities for multifamily dwellings, consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity, for all residents of the municipality and the planning region in which the municipality is located, as designated by the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management under section 16a-4a, (H) promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low and moderate income households, and encourage the development of housing which will meet the housing needs identified in the state's consolidated plan for housing and community development prepared pursuant to section 8-37t and in the housing component and the other components of the state plan of conservation and development prepared pursuant to chapter 297, **and** (I) consider allowing older adults and persons with a disability the ability to live in their homes and communities whenever possible. Such plan may: (i) Permit home sharing in single-family zones between up to four adult persons of any age with a disability or who are sixty years of age or older, whether or not related, who receive supportive services in the home; (ii) allow accessory apartments for persons with a disability or persons sixty years of age or older, or their caregivers, in all residential zones, subject to municipal zoning regulations concerning design and long-term use of the principal property after it is no longer in use by such persons; and

(iii) expand the definition of “family” in single-family zones to allow for accessory apartments for persons sixty years of age or older, persons with a disability or their caregivers. In preparing such plan the commission shall consider focusing development and revitalization in areas with existing or planned physical infrastructure. For purposes of this subsection, “disability” has the same meaning as provided in section 46a-8 and be designed to promote, with the greatest efficiency and economy, the coordinated administrative functions of town government and their respective public educational functions.

(2) For any municipality that is contiguous to Long Island Sound, such plan shall be (A) consistent with the municipal coastal program requirements of sections 22a-101 to 22a-104, inclusive, (B) made with reasonable consideration for restoration and protection of the ecosystem and habitat of Long Island Sound, and (C) designed to reduce hypoxia, pathogens, toxic contaminants and floatable debris in Long Island Sound.

(f) Such plan may show the commission’s and any special committee’s recommendation for (1) conservation and preservation of traprock and other ridgelines, (2) airports, parks, playgrounds and other public grounds, (3) the general location, relocation and improvement of schools and other public buildings, (4) the general location and extent of public utilities and terminals, whether publicly or privately owned, for water, sewerage, light, power, transit and other purposes, (5) the extent and location of public housing projects, (6) programs for the implementation of the plan, including (A) a schedule, (B) a budget for public capital projects, (C) a program for enactment and enforcement of zoning and subdivision controls, building and housing codes and safety regulations, (D) plans for implementation of affordable housing, (E) plans for open space acquisition and greenways protection and development, and (F) plans for corridor management areas along limited access highways or rail lines, designated under section 16a-27, (7) proposed priority funding areas, and (8) any other recommendations as will, in the commission’s or any special committee’s judgment, be beneficial to the municipality. The plan may include any necessary and related maps, explanatory material, photographs, charts or other pertinent data and information relative to the past, present and future trends of the municipality.

(g) (1) A plan of conservation and development or any part thereof or amendment thereto prepared by the commission or any special committee shall be reviewed, and may be amended, by the commission prior to scheduling at least one public hearing on adoption.

(2) At least sixty-five days prior to the public hearing on adoption, the commission shall submit a copy of such plan or part thereof or amendment thereto for review and comment to the legislative body or, in the case of a municipality for which the legislative body of the municipality is a town meeting or representative town meeting, to the board of selectmen. The legislative body or board of selectmen, as the case may be, may hold one or more public hearings on the plan and shall endorse or reject such entire plan or part thereof or amendment and may submit comments and recommended changes to the commission. The commission may render a decision on the plan without the report of such body or board.

(3) At least thirty-five days prior to the public hearing on adoption, the commission shall post the plan on the Internet web site of the municipality, if any.

(4) At least sixty-five days prior to the public hearing on adoption, the commission shall submit a copy of such plan or part thereof or amendment thereto to the regional council of governments for review and comment. The regional council of governments shall submit an advisory report along with its comments to the commission at or before the hearing. Such comments shall include a finding on the consistency of the plan with (A) the regional plan of conservation and development, adopted under section 8-35a, (B) the state plan of conservation and development, adopted pursuant to chapter 297, and (C) the plans of conservation and development of other municipalities in the area of operation of the regional council of governments. The commission may render a decision on the plan without the report of the regional council of governments.

(5) At least thirty-five days prior to the public hearing on adoption, the commission shall file in the office of the town clerk a copy of such plan or part thereof or amendment thereto but, in the case of a district commission, such commission shall file such information in the offices of both the district clerk and the town clerk.

(6) The commission shall cause to be published in a newspaper having a general circulation in the municipality, at least twice at intervals of not less than two days, the first not more than fifteen days, or less than ten days, and the last not less than two days prior to the date of each such hearing, notice of the time and place of any such public hearing. Such notice shall make reference to the filing of such draft plan in the office of the town clerk, or both the district clerk and the town clerk, as the case may be.

(h) (1) After completion of the public hearing, the commission may revise the plan and may adopt the plan or any part thereof or amendment thereto by a single resolution or may, by successive resolutions, adopt parts of the plan and amendments thereto.

(2) Any plan, section of a plan or recommendation in the plan that is not endorsed in the report of the legislative body or, in the case of a municipality for which the legislative body is a town meeting or representative town meeting, by the board of selectmen, of the municipality may only be adopted by the commission by a vote of not less than two-thirds of all the members of the commission.

(3) Upon adoption by the commission, any plan or part thereof or amendment thereto shall become effective at a time established by the commission, provided notice thereof shall be published in a newspaper having a general circulation in the municipality prior to such effective date.

(4) Not more than thirty days after adoption, any plan or part thereof or amendment thereto shall be posted on the Internet web site of the municipality, if any, and shall be filed in the office of the town clerk, except that, if it is a district plan or amendment, it shall be filed in the offices of both the district and town clerks.

(5) Not more than sixty days after adoption of the plan, the commission shall submit a copy of the plan to the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management and shall include with such copy a description of any inconsistency between the plan adopted by the commission and the state plan of conservation and development and the reasons therefor.

(i) Any owner or tenant, or authorized agent of such owner or tenant, of real property or buildings thereon located in the municipality may submit a proposal to the commission requesting a change to the plan of conservation and development. Such proposal shall be submitted in writing and on a form prescribed by the commission. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of section 8-7d, the commission shall review and may approve, modify and approve or reject the proposal in accordance with the provisions of subsection (g) of this section.

***AN ACT CONCERNING COOPERATIVE BIDDING***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Section 7-148v of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (On Passage):

(a) Notwithstanding the provisions of any municipal charter or any special act to the contrary, any municipality may, by ordinance, establish requirements for competitive bidding for the award of any contract or the purchase of any real or personal property by the municipality. Such ordinance may provide that, except as otherwise required by any provision of the general statutes, sealed bidding shall not be required for contracts or purchases having a value less than or equal to an amount established in the ordinance, which amount shall not be greater than twenty-five thousand dollars. Nothing in this section shall be deemed to invalidate any ordinance enacted by a municipality prior to October 1, 1989. Nothing in this section and no ordinance adopted pursuant to this section shall be construed to limit the ability of a municipality to enter into a contract pursuant to section 4a-53a.

(b) Any municipality may purchase equipment, supplies, materials and services from a person who has a contract to sell such property or services to other state governments, political subdivisions of this state, nonprofit organizations or public purchasing consortia available through a RESC or COG, in accordance with the terms and conditions of such contract.

## ***AN ACT CONCERNING STUDENT TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCIES***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (Effective from passage) That the General Assembly direct the Connecticut Transportation Institute at the University of Connecticut to study how local school districts can reduce costs by increasing efficiencies in the provision of student transportation, including but not limited to the development of a statistical evaluation of efficiency model, using linear programming, for local school district student transportation operations.

(b) The Connecticut Transportation Institute shall submit a report to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education concerning recommendations for the efficient transportation of public school children.

Sec. 2. The Study described in Section 1 of this Act shall be funded by the regional performance incentive program, Sec. 4-124s, and shall not exceed two-hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

### Statement of Purpose

The develop a statistically sound methodology for the funding of student transportation as a means to reduce transportation costs.