Lamont-Bysiewicz Transition Policy Committee Reporting Template

Committee Name: Education Policy Committee

Co-Chairs: Fran Rabinowitz and Yvette Melendez

1. **How do you propose the Lamont Administration should prioritize the policy goals in this area, and on what timeframe?** The committee's work aligns with the Governor-Elect's focus on workforce development and economic stimulus while keeping the best interests of public school students at the center. Short and long-term policy recommendations are outlined below. Details of each are provided in this linked addendum document.
   - *Early Childhood Education/Care Access and Quality:*
      - Raise Care4Kid payment rates and expand access to allow parents to enroll in training.
      - Set aggressive timeline for launch of Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).
      - Conduct an audit on early childhood care access and current level of unmet demand.
   - *Achievement/Opportunity Gap:*
      - Reexamine purpose/role of CSDE/SBE and relationship with RESCs and other partners.
      - Launch development of statewide curricula, inclusive of the technical school system.
      - Develop a statewide STEM education action plan that consolidates previous reports.
      - Create a Math Leadership Institute for school principals.
      - Require that computer science be taught in every high school.
      - Improve state's longitudinal data system to be more timely and user-friendly.
      - Demand greater transparency and accountability for Alliance Districts, Commissioner's Network, charter and magnet school progress/results; codify best practices.
      - Launch CT's "Teach.org" public relations campaign for the teaching profession.
      - Propose changes to out-of-state reciprocity for educator certification.
      - Expand educator preparation pathways and leadership development programs.
      - Shift oversight of Minority Teacher Incentive Program from OHE to the CSDE.
   - *Affordable Higher Education and Career Pathways:*
      - Establish a Governor's Industry, Higher Education, & Career Pathways Council.
      - Create FAFSA data MOU between OHE and CSDE; long-term merge of OHE with CSDE.
      - Launch a low-cost loan and scholarship program through CHESLA with focus on STEM.
      - Target external funding sources to develop career pathways and training programs.
      - Implement a marketing plan for the CT higher education system.
   - *School Funding and Regionalization:*
      - Commit to funding ECS at the statutory level for the biennium.
      - Implement a new, comprehensive school funding formula.
      - Create a dedicated state office in OPM focused on securing grant dollars.
      - Promote shared services models for school districts.
      - Establish a minimum school district size to be implemented over time.
      - Require small school districts to internally consolidate or regionally share services.
      - Move to a single, statewide, collaborative contract for an electronic IEP system.
      - Reduce statutory red tape, redundancies, and barriers to educational improvement.

2. **Which goals are achievable in the first 100 days of the Administration?** The goals highlighted in yellow above are achievable within the first 100 days.

3. **Which goals will require legislation to move forward? Which items can be advanced through the actions of the Administration alone? What is the fiscal impact of these legislative or executive actions?** Full funding of ECS requires administrative and legislative action. Legislative

approval is required to expand eligibility for Care4Kids to parents enrolled in training. Most other short-term recommendations do not require legislation to move forward, however the adoption of legislation can help speak to the importance and the urgency of these goals. It can also promote cross-agency collaboration. In terms of fiscal impact, expansion of Care4Kids would cost $30M (in part offset by SNAP E&T). The added cost of fully funding the ECS formula is $345M over the current budgeted level of $2.02B. The statutory funding level for FY20 is $2,052,556,112 and FY21 is $2,091,283,543. Other recommendations are cost neutral and could be accomplished through reallocation of existing budget or generation of philanthropic/grant dollars.

4. **Are there specific challenges you can identify with regard to achieving the Lamont Administration's goals, and how would you suggest to address those?** Clearly, the greatest challenge is that there are many competing priorities in the face of limited resources; schools and districts feel overwhelmed by compliance requirements. We recognize the historically political nature of school funding and regionalization. The shortage of talent within the educational system continues to be a concern; though we hope to address this through a number of the proposed recommendations. We believe change can be made in many different areas by streamlining systems and applying creative solutions through partnerships (e.g. the CSDE and the RESC Alliance) and reallocation of funds.

5. **How will implementation of policy in this area create jobs and spur economic growth?** Education is the engine behind driving our economy, and we can't afford not to invest in this. Education has the potential to break the cycle of poverty. Full funding of ECS will increase jobs in public education. A strategic, comprehensive approach to aligning our education system with workforce needs will also directly drive our state's ability to attract and retain talent.

6. **Are there opportunities of cost savings for CT state government in the context of implementing this policy?** If we expand shared services models and incentivize regionalization across the state, there is significant opportunity to realize cost savings. The intentional allocation/reallocation of state education funds will help avoid unnecessary or improperly distributed funds or use of funds. The creation of a dedicated office focused on securing grant funds would be critical as we believe CT has left a significant amount of money on the table, especially at the federal level.

7. **What examples of success from other states, countries, or the private sector in this policy area should the Administration study?** In terms of building connections between education and the workforce, we look to models in TN, CO, MD, and NY. Connecticut has some successful models of shared special education services programs (FVDC, STRIVE). The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving produced a report summarizing other states' efforts. CABE produced a report for the Preston Public Schools that summarizes the use of part-time and shared staff in CT. In terms of launching a standardized curriculum, we look to MA as a model. RI is also doing exciting work around advancing STEM education and establishing direct ties to the STEM workforce. TN has a marketing model for higher education. More examples are provided in a supplemental materials document.

8. **Are there any other issues/considerations you would like to highlight with regard to this policy area?** An immense amount of work has already been done to study and analyze school funding and regionalization opportunities. This work should not be ignored, nor duplicated, but rather consolidated and leveraged to develop achievable goals. One of the state's goals is to reduce racial, economic, and social isolation of students and teachers. To date, the state hasn't been consistent in its commitment to this goal and the state's plan to achieve this goal requires coherence. This requires attention.