

DRAFT

**CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

RESC Special Education Funding Working Group
Wednesday, May 11, 2016

I. Call to Order

Kathy Demsey called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

II. Introductions

Members Present:

Paula Colen, Executive Director, EASTCONN
Rep. Jeff Currey, Appropriations Committee
Kathy Demsey, Co-chair, Commissioner of Education Designee
Erika Forte, Assistant Executive Director for Schools and Programs, ACES
Mary Glassman, Manager of Office for Regional Efficiencies, CREC
Leah Grenier, OPM Designee
Eileen Howley, Executive Director, LEARN
Jeffrey Kitching, Executive Director, Education Connection
Michael Regan, Director of Special Education, CES
Deborah Richards, Director of Student Services, CREC
Margaret Walsh, Director of Pupil Personnel, Southington Public Schools

Non-Members Present:

Sharon Bremner, Director of Pupil Personnel, East Hartford
Martha Deeds, Senior Policy Analyst, the CT School Finance Project
Dorian Lockett, Assistant to Mayor Leclerc, East Hartford
Patrice McCarthy, Deputy Director and General Counsel, CABE
Michael Morton, Communications Manager, CT School Finance Project
Katie Roy, Director, the CT School Finance Project

III. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the April 20, 2016 meeting were approved. Minutes and agenda are posted on the SDE website at: <http://www.ct.gov/sde/RESCSpEdFundingWG>.

IV. Presentation by Katie Roy, Director of Connecticut School Finance Project

Katie reviewed key findings from her report *Improving How Connecticut Funds Special Education*. The link to the full report is: <http://ctschoolfinance.org/reports/improving-sped>. The link to her PowerPoint presentation is <http://ctschoolfinance.org/assets/uploads/files/RESC-Special-Ed-Finance-Overview.pdf>.

Committee members asked the following questions:

1. *How difficult was it to get the data?* The data was all publically available, and much of it came from the SDE. The data was visually changed to make it easier to understand. It is much more difficult to get municipal data.
2. *Did you look at the legislative history of special education funding?* A history of ECS and special education funding is available on the project's Website.
3. *Why did you not include IDEA funds?* It is included under the federal funds but is a small percentage of the funds

Katie presented the draft of a new idea model that looks at equity, predictability, consistence, and effectiveness. She discussed the concept of "smoothing" by pooling all of the expenditures statewide or regionally into an "insurance type model." Each district would pay a premium on their actual costs. There would need to be a governing body. Members expressed concerns that feds may see this as supplanting of funds, and if ECS is cut there may be a problem with maintenance of effort.

V. Use of RESCs (Sec. 10-66a)

Information was included in the packet.

VI. Break out of Medicaid funding

Information was included in the packet. Discussion ensued regarding the number of districts that bill. It was noted that reimbursement to the district is very low. Kathy and Leah will work on getting someone from DSS to join us for discussion.

VII. Update on Legislated Survey

Deb reported that we received over 100 responses statewide. This is a very extensive and lengthy survey. The RESC Special Education Directors are meeting on May 12 to tie together findings. As soon as the report is complete, the RESCS will bring it to this group for discussion.

VIII. Data on Private Special Education Approved Schools

Information was included in the packet. This is the list for private approved special education schools. There is no comparable list for non-approved schools.

IX. Data on Connecticut Prevalence Rates for Students with Disabilities

Information was included in the packet. Deb shared that the prevalence rate statewide is at 13 percent. Approximately 7 percent of these students are placed in an out-of-district or state placement.

X. Other

Kathy shared that she and Rep. Currey have discussed extending the date of submission of our report beyond July 1. This will allow us to take advantage of the information from the state special education survey.

XI. Next Meeting:

June 1, 2016

9:00 – 11:00 AM

Location: CREC Central, 111 Charter Oak Avenue, Hartford, CT
Council Room (1st FL)

June 23, 2016

9:00 – 11:00 AM

Location: CREC Central, 111 Charter Oak Avenue, Hartford, CT
EDO Conference Room (3rd FL)

XII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:47 p.m.