

**CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

RESC Special Education Funding Working Group
Monday, September 26, 2016

I. Call to Order

Kathy Demsey called the meeting to order at 8:45.

II. Introductions

Members Present:

Paula Colen, Executive Director, EASTCONN
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
Rob Parenti, Director of Business Operations, Education Connection
Mike Regan, Director of Special Education, CES
Deborah Richards, Director of Student Services, CREC
Margaret Walsh, Southington Public Schools

Non-Members Present:

Martha Deeds, Senior Policy Analyst, CT School Finance Project
Patrick Heick, River Street School
Sheila Mackay, CAFE

III. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the July 22, 2016 meeting were approved. Minutes and agenda are posted on the SDE website at: <http://www.ct.gov/sde/RESCSpEdFundingWG>.

IV. Remarks by Fran Rabinowitz

- Superintendent Rabinowitz was unable to attend.

V. Review of Final Recommendations for the RESC Survey Report

- Eileen acknowledged and thanked Deb Richards and the other RESC Special Education Directors for their work on the survey and report.
- There needs to be more discussion regarding dissemination of the report and methods to thank directors for taking the time to complete the survey.
- Discussion of format for the Special Education Funding Working Group report. Kathy explained that the report would include a comprehensive review of all information that was gathered from various stakeholders. The report was due July 1 or such date when the Group's work was completed. It was helpful to have the survey report completed

first. The CCJEF decision may also impact recommendations. The group felt that most of what we have is cost containment; not new revenue. There needs to be a comprehensive review of other revenue sources such as DCF and DSS. Variance is one of the largest problems; the lack of predictability. There also needs to be a review of how the state IDEA budget is used and what are the target goals for this resource.

- Kathy shared the intent of blending special education into the academic office. This is an important part of the ESSA planning.
- Discussion that the RESCs do not feel comfortable identifying themselves for a project. That needs to be designated to them if they are the most appropriate resource.

VI. Discussion of Working Group Draft Recommendations

- See attached list of draft recommendations.
- Medicaid funding – Suggestion that we look at what point do we get economy of scale with Medicaid billing to make it worth the district's effort. Need to work with DSS and SDE to study how to accomplish statewide Medicaid billing. This may be seen by districts as an unfunded mandate.
- Special Education Transportation – the state should negotiate fuel rates for districts. The Sheff regional transportation system report should be out by the holidays. We can review this when it is complete. There are problems with vendors refusing to provide trained staff for transportation (bus monitors, aides).
- Independent Education Evaluations – This should include neuropsychologists. This would be very helpful to districts. We should include conversations with professional organizations.
- Pool of Specialists and Shortage Areas – It would be helpful if we had dual certification as in other states (special/general education). We need support to retain new staff as many who enter the field are leaving.
- Cost of Special Education in Choice Programs – We need to maximize resources used for both choice and magnet schools.
- Statewide IEP – This is in the pipeline – waiting on funding. This would assist with the Medicaid billing and for Choice programs.

VII. Schedule of Future Meetings

- Final meeting will be Monday, October 24, 8:30 – 10:30.
- Location: CREC Central, 111 Charter Oak Avenue, Hartford, CT, Council Room

VIII. Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 10:30.