



TESTIMONY
of the
CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF MUNICIPALITIES
to the
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

March 8, 2010

CCM is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 93% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony to you on issues of concern to towns and cities.

CCM has concerns with Sections 3 and 4 of the Governor's Bill 5020 "An Act Implementing the Budget Recommendations of the Governor Concerning Education".

Section 3 would reduce funding to magnet schools operated by regional education service centers.

Section 4 would change the grant funding to local and regional boards of education for meeting nutrition standards to **"within available appropriations."**

State education funding in Connecticut is falling behind the need:

- **\$271 million of "level-funded" ECS grants, in each year of the biennium, come from federal ARRA/stimulus funding** and will be gone for FY11-12.
- There has never been a single year increase of \$271 million in ECS funding, which would be necessary in FY 11-12 just to keep funding at FY 08-09 levels.
- The State's **share of overall statewide public education costs has declined, from 43.1% in FY 07-08 to 36.8% for FY 09-10.** Under the Governor's proposal it would decline again.
- **Special Education Excess Cost grants were cut this year by \$13 million.** Some of it was made up by federal ARRA IDEA grants, but that money did not necessarily go to the same municipalities that lost under the cut, because the federal program does not track the State's.
- **Special Education Excess Cost is funded at \$120 million** – but applications for reimbursements will be about \$145 million with municipalities eating the \$25million difference.
- The **Governor proposes to reduce funding** for public and non-public school transportation by a combined \$5.2 million, and magnet schools by \$1.5 million.

We urge you to reject any proposal before you that would shift costs onto local governments by capping programs at the level of state appropriations rather than tying funding to actual costs."

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If you have any questions, please contact Kachina Walsh-Weaver, Senior Legislative Associate of CCM via email kweaver@ccm-ct.org or via phone (203) 498-3026.