



Lamont-Bysiewicz Transition: Education Policy Committee Final Memo

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.



Lamont-Bysiewicz Transition: Education Policy Addendum

Co-Chairs: Fran Rabinowitz and Yvette Melendez

Education Policy Committee

Addendum to Final Education Policy Committee Memo

The following is an addendum that provides additional detail for each of the Education Policy Committee's proposed policy goals/actions (listed in the same order as the main document). The goals highlighted in yellow are believed to be achievable within the first 100 days.

Early Childhood Education/Care Access and Quality:

- **Raise Care4Kid payment rates and expand access to allow parents to enroll in training:** Connecticut has one of the highest, if not the highest, rate of preschool attendance in the country. While more can and should be done to reach the remaining 20% of children who don't attend preschool, the more urgent problem is that there are only 27 licensed infant/toddler spaces for every 100 children under age three. This shortage of licensed childcare prevents parents from working, which contributes to disproportionately high rates of child poverty among children ages birth to three. The new administration should prioritize expanding access to affordable, quality child care, particularly infant/toddler care, through the Care4Kids program. Eligibility for Care4Kids should also be expanded as part of a broader Two-Generation strategy to address poverty, so that parents have access to child care while they are in school or a training program, as well as when they are working. The new administration can increase supply and bring more providers into the market by approving the Office of Early Childhood's pending proposal to increase payment rates for infant and toddler care under the Care4Kids program. Legislative approval will be required to expand eligibility for Care4Kids to parents who are enrolled in school (see [sample "State-Approved Activities" language from Georgia](#) under section 6.8). A \$25 million state investment could leverage an additional \$5 to \$15 million in Federal SNAP Education and Training funds.
- **Set aggressive timeline for launch of Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS):** There is a need to appropriately assess the quality of every early child care/education program that receives public funding. The QRIS provides a universal standard for evaluation of programs statewide.

A full-time position to support QRIS was hired in 2014, and a pilot was implemented in 2017-18. The timeline for full implementation has been extended into the future (a full launch could be as late as 2025). The committee feels strongly that implementation of this system should be made a priority. This would require setting a more aggressive timeline for full launch of QRIS.

- **Conduct an audit on early childhood care access and current level of unmet demand:** A major concern of the committee is that there is a need to better understand access challenges for the existing early child care/education program slots. For example, although there may be School Readiness slots available within a district, the families most in need may not be able to access these slots because of transportation challenges or related issues. There is a general belief that additional preschool slots should be made available. However, an audit would serve to determine the current unmet demand for care so that a more formal, data-informed recommendation can be made on the number of slots needed.

Achievement/Opportunity Gap:

- **Reexamine purpose/role of CSDE/SBE and relationship with RESCs and other partners:** The overarching structure of the state’s education support system, including the role and purpose of the the CT State Department of Education, the State Board of Education, the RESC Alliance, and other educational organizations, needs to be reexamined. Within the first 100 days, the administration should announce a new vision for how these organizations will collaboratively serve the needs of the state through a coordinated approach. A coordinated system would define the roles of each of these organizations in service of districts, schools, and students effectively and efficiency with limited resources. The system would maximize the use of available capacity in each of these organizations for key functions, including professional development, data analysis, auditing, and compliance in order to reduce redundancies and improve the consistency and quality of services and support statewide.

The state education support system should also explore building its capacity to identify, evaluate, disseminate, and support the implementation of evidence-based national and local interventions related to the areas of trauma-informed practice, social/emotional learning restorative justice in schools, expanded school counselor/social worker supports, effective wraparound service models, embedded STEM programming, science enrichment curricula, math remediation, and arts integration.

- **Launch development of statewide curricula, inclusive of the technical school system:** Too many districts are developing curricula independently or are purchasing off-the-shelf products that do not meet an appropriate level of rigor. There should be an effort to develop a statewide curriculum, aligned to all relevant content standards, in order to remove inefficiencies (e.g. curriculum writing time spent at the local level) and to ensure that the curricula being implemented meets high standards. Connecticut should look to MA as an example of establishing a model curricula for all school districts to adopt/build upon. CREC recently modeled a collaborative process to develop and distribute shared curriculum for the [Next Generation Science Standards](#). This effort should include customized curriculum development as it pertains to the [technical education and career system schools](#).

- **Develop a statewide STEM education action plan that consolidates previous reports:** There have been a number of efforts to study and address needs related to enhancing and promoting STEM education within our state. There is now a need to synthesize and prioritize these studies in order to develop a more explicit action plan that can move STEM education forward as a key strategy in strengthening our academic and professional STEM systems. Such an effort could also highlight the STEM/STEAM efforts already happening in Connecticut schools. Strong models already exists in vocational-technical high schools, agricultural-technical school programs, and STEM-themed magnet schools, in addition to efforts in public schools

across the state. Highlighting these efforts can help explain their value to public and private industry. CT should look to the [RI STEAM Center](#) as an example of a program focused on increasing interest in and advancement of STEM within the state.

- **Create a Math Leadership Institute for school principals:** [Math results for CT students continue to lag](#). The latest statewide assessment (SBAC) indicates that only 43% of grade eight students statewide met standard and only 17-19% of Black and Hispanic students met the state standard. CT is in middle of the pack compared with other states and significantly behind our peer states (see [National Assessment of Educational Progress](#) results). Math remediation rates are also very high for students who go on to college, taking time and money away from students pursuing their career interests. There is a need to increase professional development supports to ensure that all districts, especially those making fewer gains in math, are effectively delivering math instruction and assessment. School leaders play a critical role in this effort, and they often have had less direct exposure to the math content area. A Math Leadership Institute for school principals could be modeled after the [Literacy Leadership Institute](#) currently being run as a partnership between CCER, the CSDE, and CAS. It is also worth looking into a potential partnership with national supports such as [Math for America](#).
- **Require that computer science be taught in every high school.** There is great momentum underway for implementing computer science across all state high schools. [An action plan](#), modeled after the Rhode Island plan, has been provided by Norman Sondheimer from the CS4CT Initiative.
- **Improve state's longitudinal data system to be more timely and user-friendly:** The current [EdSight system](#) provides data on the K-12 system. While this information can be useful, the data is oftentimes outdated or difficult to access or interpret. For instance, the current public data available for School Performance and Profile reports is only as recent as 2016-17. The system can be challenging to navigate, and there are limits on filter functionality in order to review patterns of performance across groups of schools/districts (e.g. all Commissioner's Network Schools).
- **Demand greater transparency and accountability for Alliance Districts, Commissioner's Network, charter and magnet school progress/results; codify best practices.** The committee recommends examining the intended and actual outcomes of the Alliance District and Commissioner's Network funding programs, including whether these investments are designed and implemented in a manner that results in long-term, systemic outcomes. The definition of an Alliance District needs to be revisited. The number of Alliance Districts has become too large to sufficiently manage the program in a way that drives sustainability and results for students. With an effort to fully fund ECS, the state should consider reducing the number of Alliance Districts from the current number of 30+ to between 10 and 12, not withdrawing funding from any of the districts. This will allow for more targeted approaches to intervention and more robust outcome and accountability data. The current funding processes focus more heavily on the approval of use of funds, rather than the auditing of use of funds. Have these programs achieved the results they were designed to achieve? Are the programs sustainable? More robust measures need to be in place to evaluate program outcomes and then codify best practices for the benefit of districts and schools statewide.

- Launch CT's "Teach.org" public relations campaign for the teaching profession:** Connecticut has developed a Connecticut.teach.org public relations campaign, which is a comprehensive approach to attracting diverse and talented people, both locally and nationally, to the teaching profession in our state. By partnering with TEACH.org, which is a national organization, Connecticut was able to create a dedicated website (connecticut.teach.org), a broad social media campaign, and a series of in-person events, including the creation of a teacher ambassador program. The program is currently funded by a grant from the [Peter and Carmen Lucia Buck Foundation](#), which covers the cost of the platform and a dedicated CT-based project director. While a [press statement](#) was made in October 2018, there is not widespread awareness of this effort.
- Propose changes to out-of-state reciprocity for educator certification:** It is important to review current regulations that create barriers to minority recruitment efforts for out-of-state teachers. While some progress was made during the 2018 legislative session ([C.G.S. 18-34](#)), we must further eliminate and streamline reciprocity. There is an Interstate Agreement that facilitates reciprocity, however, there is a need to push this further. A larger, longer-term project is to reconsider the [regulations for educator certification](#). These regulations were last updated in 1998 and are outdated and misaligned with the content standards and various roles/responsibilities in our school systems.
- Expand educator preparation pathways and leadership development programs:** In order to address the ongoing issue of teacher shortage areas (e.g. math, science, special education, bilingual) and challenges with recruitment of a diverse educator workforce, the committee recommends the expanding the alternative-route-to-certification (ARC) programs such as [Relay ARC program](#). This program places an emphasis on recruiting career changers and non-certified staff members who are already working within a school district (e.g. paraeducators and clerical staff).
- Shift oversight of Minority Teacher Incentive Program from OHE to the CSDE:** Under the current [State Board of Education five-year strategic plan](#), there is a committed focus of the CSDE on diversification of the educator workforce. Currently, [the percentage of educators of color is far from mirroring the percentage of students of color](#) within the public school system. The Minority Teacher Incentive Program was created to recruit candidates of color into the teaching profession. While it lives within the OHE, there is a lack of coherence/alignment with the efforts underway at the CSDE. As well, OHE does very little to promote the program or follow up with candidates. The role of OHE in this work is currently defined in statute, [C.G.S. 10a-168a](#), so this would require a statutory amendment.

Affordable Higher Education and Career Pathways:

- Establish a Governor's Industry, Higher Education, & Career Pathways Council:** The Advisory Board would be comprised of senior representatives from the private sector; PK-12 schools/districts; post-secondary educational institutions; nonprofits; and labor. There would be a number of subcommittees, including but not limited to: Financial Services/Insurance, Healthcare, Technology, and Educational Models/Non-profit Partnerships. Industry-specific subcommittees would have representatives of relevant employers.

 - Goals of the Board would be to:

- Identify the common workforce needs and skills gaps of current employees in order to address underemployment and educational/training opportunities;
- Develop continuous, sustainable pipelines for the workforce; and
- Conduct a comparative analysis of best practices within CT and in other states (SC, CO, TN, MD) and make this information publicly available through a centralized website.
- Outcomes of the Board would be to:
 - Develop curricula to integrate and make available, for credit, work-based coursework, including, but not limited to: apprenticeships; coding academies and training bootcamps; dual-enrollment; credentials/associate's degree;
 - Build partnerships with community colleges and four-year colleges to expand and adjust relevant offerings based on need/demand;
 - Study and identify existing high school/post-secondary models that are most effective in order to scale them; and
 - Coordinate and align funding opportunities.

We may also want to consider the [Maine Spark](#) coalition model, which received buy-in from a wide range of stakeholders in order to advance career readiness at a statewide level.

- **Create FAFSA data MOU between OHE and CSDE; long-term merge of OHE with CSDE:** The committee felt that FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) completion should be prioritized as a strategy for achieving more affordable higher education. FAFSA completion is a cornerstone of moving toward free college for students within the state, which would allow CT to keep pace and compete with states such as NY ([now providing free college to the middle class](#)) and NJ ([currently moving toward free community college](#)). CT's [FAFSA completion rate](#), while dynamic, fluctuates between is about 36% and 47% for students. By regulation, the federal government sends FAFSA information only to the State Office of Higher Education (OHE); however, this data cannot be linked to students since the student data systems are maintained by the CSDE. Therefore, a first step in increasing completion rates is for the CSDE to have direct access to this data by way of an MOU between OHE and the CSDE. The CSDE can then work directly with school districts to increase FAFSA awareness and completion rates. With an MOU in place, a campaign comprised of the following steps should be implemented:
 - Announce a goal of increasing FAFSA completion rate to 50% within the next academic year.
 - Provide direct technical assistance support focused on FAFSA completion by way of workshops with students and families.
 - As part of this campaign, the CSDE and districts should leverage the [National College Access Network](#), which exists to promote FAFSA completion.
 - Gradually move towards requiring FAFSA completion as part of high school graduation requirements.

Related to this recommendation, the committee propose that there be further consideration given to merging OHE into the CSDE in order to streamline efforts and provide further efficiencies.

- **Launch a low-cost loan and scholarship program through [CHESLA](#) with focus on STEM:** CHESLA (Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority) is targeting STEM,

engaging employers, and increasing awareness of loans and other programs for certificate programs offered by accredited schools. CHESLA will also target applicants for STEM-related jobs, and enhance opportunities for new entrants to the workforce that will address diverse workforce needs. CHESLA's work to further workforce initiatives through participation in various national organizations such as the Strada Education Network focused on new pathways between education and employment.

- **Target external funding sources to develop career pathways and training programs:**

Target philanthropic/corporate foundations that have worked successfully with other states to develop career pathways and training programs (e.g. [Lumina Foundation](#), [Nellie Mae Foundation](#), [Year Up](#), Jewish Vocational Services, the [Dalio Foundation](#), [Federal Apprenticeship Grant Program](#), Perkins Funds, and [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#)). This should be done in coordination with the aforementioned Career Pathways Advisory Board.

- **Implement a marketing plan for the CT higher education system:** We know that a strong economy is predicated on access to education and training opportunities. Our community colleges serve as a pathway to advanced educational opportunities as well as good paying jobs in industries that require advanced skills and training. CT is currently the 4th largest exporter of college-going students. To address this head on, an aggressive marketing campaign should be developed promoting CT's higher education system while setting strategic goals promoting access and statewide degree and certificate completion.

School Funding and Regionalization:

- **Commit to funding ECS at the [statutory level](#) for the biennium:** Appropriate funding of the state's education system is essential to our state's long-term economic success. For too long, the state's primary grant to municipalities for education has been underfunded. Statutorily, full funding of ECS would be phased-in over 10 years. FY19 is year 1. In the biennium budget, the commitment needs to be adherence to the statute for FY 20 & 21 and providing the funding appropriation to do so. This will send an important message to our state that education is a priority and an essential pillar of the state's economic health and future.
- **Implement a new, comprehensive school funding formula:** The means by which the state distributes education funds to municipalities and choice schools has been political for too long. The state must see the appropriate distribution of these funds as a moral imperative and a strategic means of ensuring that all students will receive a high-quality education and will have the opportunity to contribute positively to our state's economy. To achieve this outcome, the state's funding formula(s) must be fairer, simpler, more predictable, and more efficient. Connecticut's legislature has established more than [10 different funding formulas](#) to determine how much money public schools should receive. These funding formulas must be updated and aligned, using a single funding system with consistent criteria for districts and choice schools. To begin this process, the state must determine the true foundational cost of educating a child in Connecticut. In order to implement a systematic and logical approach to school funding, this base must be updated to reflect the true cost of educating a child, not the cost that CT can currently afford. Extensive work has been done in this area and a comprehensive proposal is presently being developed by the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS). We have provided an [annotated appendix](#) of many existing, relevant resources related to school funding.

- **Create a dedicated state office in OPM focused on securing grant dollars:** Accessing federal dollars should be a priority and explicit expectation for the State Department of Education. A first step toward accessing these potential resources is to systematically study where CT is lagging in terms of taking advantage of federal and grant funds. Absent funds to create a dedicated state office in OPM or hire dedicated grant writers at SDE, the department should have access to and support from the extensive grant writing resources and capacity available at the state's institutions of higher education. Further, as a longer-term goal, capacity for grant writing should be built within local school districts to enable them to access additional resources for education.
- **Promote shared services models for school districts:** Extensive work on opportunities for shared services has been completed by past committees and organizations. We have provided an [annotated appendix](#) of many existing, relevant resources related to regionalization. The first step is to assign a team to: review the extensive, existing studies and recommendations related to regionalization; develop a comprehensive plan for reducing costs and improving service to children through regionalization; and execute the plan. In particular, there is opportunity for regionalized services for students with special educational needs. Special education typically cost about 25-30% of a district's overall budget. If we don't begin to contain special education costs, those costs will take over a larger and larger percentage of every district's budget. There are successful examples of regional programs that serve students with special educational needs. These collaboratives have the potential as regional solutions to reduce the cost of special education delivery and increase the quality of the services provided. In many cases, the barrier to these programs getting off the ground is the initial start-up cost, such as the cost of renovating a space for this purpose. Although these costs are proportionally small and are quickly recovered through the program savings, they are a barrier to programs getting started. Low- or no-interest loans should be offered to local school districts to support the site development costs of starting up collaborative special education programs. This proposal can be near to cost neutral depending on implementation specifics. Loan funds could be allocated through bonding or funded through private partnerships. These collaborative special education programs should be flexible and designed to meet the needs of the participating districts. Lessons learned from successful, existing programs suggest that these collaboratives must be well designed; have a clear mission and population; and the budget and tuition should be determined by the participating districts. These programs could potentially be managed by an outside provider if the school districts don't have the capacity or desire to manage the program.
- **Establish a minimum school district size to be implemented over time:** Across the state, the tax base is shrinking and service demands are growing. With more scarce resources and pressure for economies of scale, sustaining the small town governance model is increasingly difficult. The goal is to maintain strong communities and excellent schools, while fostering cooperation across municipalities. To date, simply encouraging these collaborations has not been successful. The committee does not recommend that the state require consolidation, but that it no longer subsidize small school districts with state education funds. The committee recommends that towns that do not meet minimum size requirements be given two years to develop and implement a plan for consolidation. If they do not, the state should gradually withdraw state funding (e.g. reduced by 25% per year).

- **Require small school districts to internally consolidate or regionally share services:** The state should not continue to subsidize small school districts with significant administrative overhead. Currently in Connecticut, there are 28 school districts with a single school but both a principal and a superintendent. These school districts should be expected to consolidate roles internally (such as a superintendent serving in the role of principal) or regionally share district administrators. These consolidations should include, but not be limited to, principals and superintendents. If they choose not to do so, the state should gradually withdraw state funding (e.g. reduced by 25% per year).
- **Move to a single, statewide, collaborative contract for an electronic IEP system:** The state has a common IEP form, which is currently being redesigned. However, districts are contracting separately for electronic management of those forms. Currently, most districts are independently contracting with the same provider: IEP Direct. The state should start by distributing an RFP for a single, statewide, collaborative contract. Districts should be willing to contribute to the cost of this contract, because they are currently paying for the online system and the shared cost would be less than the individual cost. In addition, there is current legislation that requires all districts bill Medicaid (with some exceptions). Having a single electronic IEP system will help with the capitalization of the Medicaid system, because then the state could have a single vendor for Medicaid billing as well. A single online IEP system would also make it significantly easier for the state to audit data related to special education.
- **Reduce statutory red tape, redundancies, and barriers to educational improvement:** A general concern of the committee was that there are an overwhelming number of statutes related to education that burden districts unnecessarily. Some of these statutes even limit expansion of regionalization. The education statutes need to be audited/inventoried, and recommendations made to streamline and/or eliminate barriers and redundancies. New statutes related to education should be carefully vetted for their impact on local school districts, including an extensive and transparent cost/benefit analysis prior to adoption.



Education Policy Transition Committee: ANNOTATED APPENDIX

The following annotated list of studies, reports, and recommendations have been provided to demonstrate the wealth of research and analysis that has already been performed by a variety of legislated and appointed committees, stakeholder groups, and researchers around school funding and regionalization.

Funding

Resource & Link	Contents	Publication Year
Task Force to Study State Education Funding - Final Report (PDF Version)	<p>The final report for the State of Connecticut’s Task Force to Study State Education Funding features recommendations to address problems with the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant formula, which distributes the largest share of state education aid to towns, and certain other major state education grants. The final recommendations build on interim recommendations to (1) support efforts to increase and make more predictable ECS funding; (2) update and improve the ECS formula; (3) support equitable funding for school choice programs, including interdistrict magnet schools and regional agriscience technology centers; and (4) explore fairer and more reasonable approaches to funding services for students with special educational needs. Due to the state's budget constraints, the Task Force offered its recommendations without a specific recommendation for more ECS funding.</p>	2013
OFA Fact Sheet: ECS Formula Beginning in FY19	<p>This fact sheet from the Connecticut General Assembly's Office of Fiscal Analysis details the revised Education Cost Sharing formula, which was passed in October 2017 as part of the bipartisan biennial budget and began being implemented in fiscal year 2019. The ECS formula is the formula the state legislature has established to distribute approximately \$2 billion in state education funding to local public school districts. Under the new formula, a</p>	2018

	district's full funding is to be phased in over 10 years.	
OFA Infographic: The ECS Formula	This infographic from the Connecticut General Assembly's Office of Fiscal Analysis illustrates the workings of the revised Education Cost Sharing formula, which was passed in October 2017 as part of the bipartisan biennial budget and began being implemented in fiscal year 2019. The ECS formula is the formula the state legislature has established to distribute approximately \$2 billion in state education funding to local public school districts.	2018
OLR Issue Briefs: Education Cost Sharing Grant Formula November 2018 February 2017	These issue briefs from the Connecticut General Assembly's Office of Legislative Research examine the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant, its legislative history, and its basic structure.	2017 2018
OLR Research Report: Comparison of Charter, Magnet, Agricultural Science Centers, and Technical High Schools	Research report from the Connecticut General Assembly's nonpartisan Office of Legislative Research that compares Connecticut's laws and funding for four types of public schools: charter schools, interdistrict magnet schools, regional agricultural science and technology education centers ("agri-science centers"), and technical high schools.	2018
2017 Changes to the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) Formula	Research report from the Connecticut General Assembly's nonpartisan Office of Legislative Research that describes the changes made in Conn. Acts 17-2 (June Special Session) to the formula for the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant.	2017
Public Education Funding Mechanisms in Other States	This research report from the Connecticut General Assembly's Office of Legislative Research examines funding formulas for public education used by other states, and provides several examples. The report uses research from the Education Commission of the States, a nonpartisan organization created by states to track state policy trends, translate academic research, and provide unbiased evidence about education topics. According to the Commission, there are three primary types of public education funding formulas: (1) foundation programs, (2) resource allocation systems, and (3) a hybrid of the two.	2017

<u>School Finance Reform and the Distribution of Student Achievement</u>	<p>This working paper studies the impacts of post-1990 school finance reforms on gaps in spending and achievement between high-income and low-income school districts. The working paper finds reform events—court orders and legislative reforms—led to sharp, immediate, and sustained increases in absolute and relative spending in low-income school districts. Using representative samples from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the paper also finds reforms caused gradual increases in the relative achievement of students in low-income school districts.</p>	<p>2016</p>
<u>School Funding: Do Poor Kids Get Their Fair Share?</u>	<p>This feature article from the Urban Institute examines how states are using school finance formulas to allocate additional state dollars to low-income students who research has shown need additional resources to learn at similar levels to their non-need peers. The Urban Institute feature asks the question "Where is education funding progressive?" and looks at state, local, and federal funding to determine whether or not a state's school finance system is progressive, meaning most of the state's education aid is going to low-income students.</p>	<p>2017</p>
<u>The Property Tax - School Funding Dilemma</u>	<p>The report includes a comprehensive review of recent research on both the property tax and school funding, and summarizes case studies of seven states—California, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Ohio, and Texas, the majority of them heavily reliant on property tax revenues to fund schools. One objective of the report is to provide information helpful to state policy makers and others who are grappling with the twin challenges of court mandates regarding school funding and constituent pressure to lower property taxes. Another objective is to correct some common misconceptions through a critical analysis of nine myths regarding school funding litigation, property tax characteristics, and the state role in funding education.</p>	<p>2007</p>
<u>OLR and OFA Research Report: Education Cost Sharing Grants</u>	<p>Joint research report from the Connecticut General Assembly's nonpartisan Office of Legislative Research and Office of Fiscal Analysis that provides a history of the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula and</p>	<p>2016</p>

	describes how it has worked.	
PreK-12 Public Education: How Massive Underfunding Threatens Connecticut's Social and Economic Future	In preparation for the 2016 elections, the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities issued this candidate bulletin detailing flaws in Connecticut's school funding system and why a new formula is needed. In addition to calling for a new school funding formula, the candidate bulletin urges state policymakers to implement changes to how special education is funded.	2016
Improving the Equity and Efficiency of Connecticut's State K-12 Education Funding – A Student-Based Funding Proposal	In its 2015 report, the Connecticut Policy Institute offers a detailed proposal for how to reform state education funding in Connecticut. The paper reviews the shortcomings of Connecticut's current funding system and lays out a detailed proposal for replacing this structure with a new funding system centered on students, not educational bureaucracies. The report also discusses how much state educational aid each municipality or district would receive under the proposal, along with the implications of tweaking different aspects of the proposal.	2015
Updating the Cost of Adequacy For Connecticut: An Update of The 2005 Connecticut Adequacy Study	An update to the cost-adequacy study that consulting firm Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, Inc. prepared for the Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Funding in 2005. The update uses more recent figures to provide an estimate for the cost of providing an "adequate education" to Connecticut's students.	2005
Evaluating Connecticut's Education Cost Sharing Program, School Funding & Educational Resources	<p>Report from Dr. Bruce Baker, Rutgers University, and Dr. Robert Bifulco, Syracuse University, examining Connecticut's Education Cost Sharing grant. The report looks at the ECS by:</p> <p>Assessing the ECS grant "relative to conceptions of equity that are well established in the academic literature on school finance."</p> <p>Examining the grant's distribution of state education aid across districts, and then evaluating "the extent to which equal and adequate educational opportunities are provided across school districts and children."</p>	2011

	Exploring disparities in specific programs and services available to students in districts with low resource levels and low outcomes compared to students in districts with high resource levels and high outcomes.	
Problems with Connecticut's Education Cost Sharing Grant	This Connecticut Voices for Children report examines the flaws in Connecticut's ECS formula and the challenges they present to fairly funding public schools. The report calls for Connecticut to align state aid with local need and for lawmakers to create an equitable funding system that will help achieve educational equality.	2011
Connecticut's Comprehensive Statewide Interdistrict Magnet School Plan	In December 2016, as required by Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 172, § 264l(b)(1), the Connecticut State Department of Education released a comprehensive statewide plan for Connecticut's interdistrict magnet schools. Along with providing an overview of Connecticut's interdistrict magnet schools and examining the State's interdistrict magnet program, the plan, which was submitted to the Connecticut General Assembly, included data and information about the challenges and future of interdistrict magnet schools in Connecticut, and highlighted recommendations for practice, policy, and research.	2016
Regional Educational Service Center (RESC) Special Education Funding Working Group Committee - Draft Recommendations	PA15 5 JSS, Sec 274 established a regional educational service center special education funding working group. The working group was required to: (1) Study the funding provided to and expenditures of regional educational service centers for the provision of special education and related services, including, but not limited to, the sources of special education funds received by regional educational service centers and the ways in which regional educational service centers use such funds to provide special education and related services, and (2) make recommendations regarding how regional educational service centers can access additional special education funding and use such funds more efficiently and in ways that expand the provision of special education services, such as transportation, training and therapeutic services.	2016

Regionalization

Resource	Contents	Publication Year
K-12 Regionalization in Connecticut: Pros, Cons and Surprises	<p>In an effort to get a clearer understanding of the potential educational and community impacts of school and district regionalization, the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving sponsored a comprehensive analysis of the impacts of K-12 regionalization to help inform those efforts. The literature review focuses on what is known about the effects of K-12 regionalization on education expenditures and educational achievement, based on recent empirical studies.</p>	2018
Municipal Opportunities & Regional Efficiencies (MORE) Commission Special Education Select Working Group – Recommendations for Legislative Action	<p>The Municipal Opportunities and Regional Efficiencies (MORE) Commission was created by House Speaker J. Brendan Sharkey in 2010 to work on finding solutions to issues that face Connecticut’s municipalities. The Special Education Select Working Group was formed as a sub-committee of the MORE Commission in December 2013 with the mission of determining how to provide special education in a more effective manner. The bipartisan group aims to bring together legislators, town and school officials, advocates, and citizens to address critical issues in special education. This document represents the culmination of yearlong efforts to provide the Connecticut General Assembly with a set of working recommendations for legislative action.</p>	2015
URSA & NASA Summary of Regional Efforts	<p>A document presented at the University Region Superintendents Association & Northeast Region Superintendents Association legislative breakfast describing examples of cooperative efforts / shared services currently in place in Northeast Connecticut.</p>	2018
Municipal Opportunities & Regional Efficiencies (MORE) Commission Special Education Select Working Group – Recommendations for	<p>The Municipal Opportunities and Regional Efficiencies (MORE) Commission was created by House Speaker J. Brendan Sharkey in 2010 to work on finding solutions to issues that face Connecticut’s municipalities. The Special Education Select Working Group was formed as a sub-committee of the MORE</p>	2015

Legislative Action	<p>Commission in December 2013 with the mission of determining how to provide special education in a more effective manner. The bipartisan group aims to bring together legislators, town and school officials, advocates, and citizens to address critical issues in special education. This document represents the culmination of yearlong efforts to provide the Connecticut General Assembly with a set of working recommendations for legislative action.</p>	
Executive Summary and Recommendations - RESC Alliance Special Education Survey	<p>In response to state law, the RESC developed, distributed, and analyzed a survey of special education services and programs provided in the state for the purpose of identifying the need for enhanced or new special education services and programs provided by the RESCs. This document offers a summary of the findings of that survey.</p>	2016
How CREC is poised to help the MORE Commission actualize their recommendations.	<p>A document developed by CREC in response to the MORE Commission's recommendations related to special education services.</p>	2016
Preston Superintendent Report	<p>CABE produced a report for the Preston Public Schools that summarizes the use of part-time and shared staff in CT</p>	2015
Regional Cooperation Impacting School Districts	<p>A policy brief by the Connecticut School Finance Project that outlines the CT statutes that impact a school district's ability to pursue regionalization.</p>	2018
The Research on District Consolidation & Vermont's Recent Efforts	<p>This policy brief by the Connecticut School Finance Project provides a summary of the academic research on the benefits and drawbacks of state-led efforts to encourage, or require, school districts with low enrollments or density to consolidate</p>	2017