

Representative Sharkey, Senator Coleman and members of the Planning and Development Committee, I am Paula Colen, Executive Director of EASTCONN, one of the six regional education service centers in Connecticut. I am writing to provide testimony in support of the Smart Growth proposals on behalf of the RESC Alliance.

The Alliance of Regional Educational Service Centers, comprised of the six regional educational service centers (RESCs) in Connecticut, is committed to supporting initiatives created by the Smart Growth Task Force in any way that we can. Although we are six individual entities we have historically operated together, as an alliance, to provide programs and services to our regions and statewide. We have been able to effectively access and utilize each others capacity when necessary so in essence what one has we all have. The Alliance has a statewide infrastructure and has a successful history of working with school districts, municipalities, councils of government and agencies throughout the state. The Alliance promotes, encourages and supports partnerships, collaborations and regional solutions in voluntary efforts to bring about cost savings and efficiencies as recommended in the Smart Growth legislative proposals

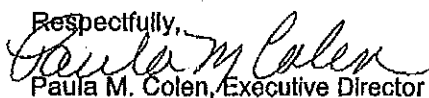
In these unprecedented economic times, cost efficiencies realized through cooperative purchasing and other collaborative regional efforts will result in economic and professional benefits to school districts and municipalities. All school districts have, for example, the need for non-instructional goods and services that are consuming more and more of their budgets. As schools continue to be challenged by constrained financial resources, we need to support arrangements that will result in cost savings. Currently the six RESCs work closely with districts throughout the state on collaborative arrangements such as the purchase of instructional supplies, technology, cafeteria supplies including food as well as the sharing of transportation for special education students. Other cooperative efforts involved the purchase of energy such as oil, office and custodial supplies, collection of e-waste, provision of shared human resources, fiscal services, food service and transportation.

These and other numerous quality ventures have been successfully implemented by the Alliance of Regional Education Service Centers and have provided cost savings and efficiencies. A number of these ventures were outlined in a presentation to the Smart Growth Task Force Regional Efficiency sub-committee in July of last year. Some of these educational programs include regional special education, adult education and early childhood programs, sharing of staff such as specialty teachers, occupational, physical and/or speech therapists and magnet school programs. The RESC virtual learning programs have been very well received by districts and have provided a valuable cost saving quality opportunity to students in grades K-12.

I have also attached a document outlining some of the services that the RESCs can provide to districts on a regional basis. I would like to thank the chairs and the committee for considering these bills and for exploring the use of RESCs as part of these proposals. Please feel free to contact any of the six executive directors if you have any questions or ideas to share.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

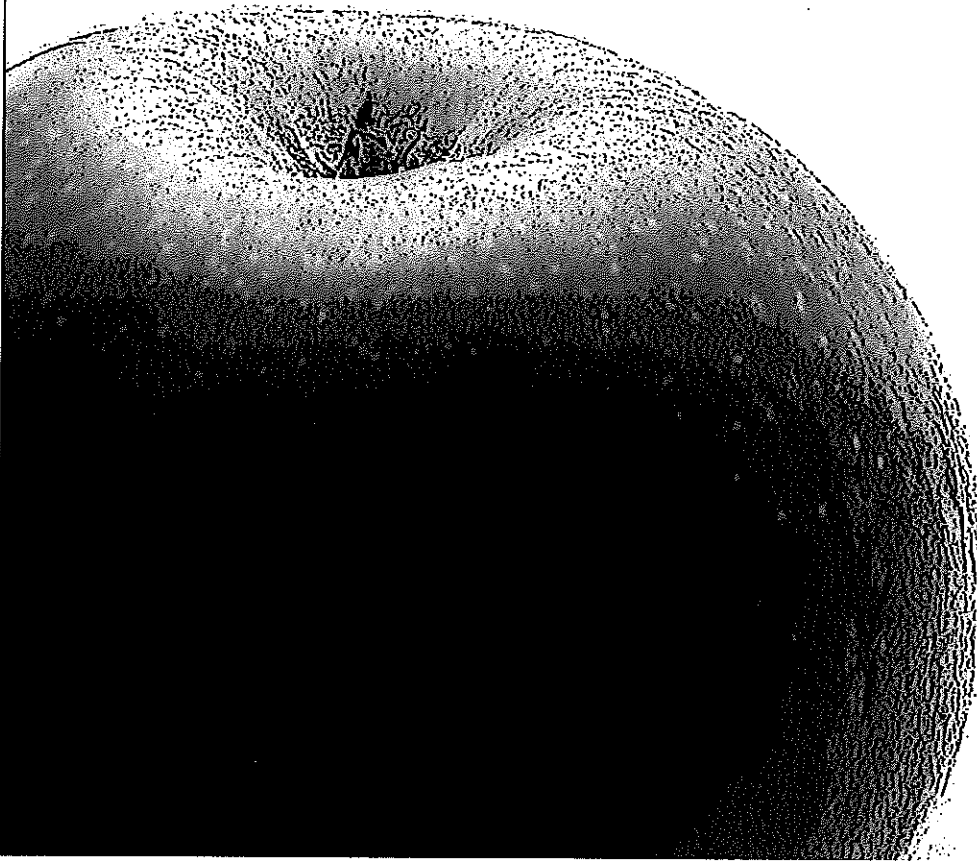
  
Paula M. Colen, Executive Director

EASTCONN  
376 Hartford Turnpike  
Hampton, CT 06247  
860-455-0707

the Alliance

of Regional Educational  
Service Centers

**Services Offered by  
the Connecticut RESC Alliance**





RESC

# Alliance

## of Regional Educational Service Centers

### **1. Cooperative Purchasing**

- The RESC Alliance offers pre-awarded bids that aggregate district and municipality buying power statewide and nationally. Current offers range from technology products and software to school supplies, furniture, and portable classrooms, among many others.

### **2. Energy Savings**

- The RESC Alliance offers energy programs to help school districts upgrade lighting through CL&P's incentive programs. The projects were financed entirely out of savings with no up front costs.

### **3. Communications/Public Relations/Marketing**

- The RESC Alliance offers media relations, graphic design support, communications and marketing assistance, and e-mail campaign services to municipalities, school districts, and private clients at very reasonable rates.

### **4. Information/Network Management**

- To help municipalities and districts maximize their technology investments, the RESC Alliance offers technology audit services. The audit identifies ways that towns and schools can minimize the total cost of ownership associated with purchasing and maintaining computer networks and hardware. Additionally, the Alliance provides best-practice advice on how districts can improve the use of technology to support operations.

### **5. Database Development**

- The RESC Alliance can assist districts and municipalities with customized information and workflow management solutions by developing desktop, workgroup, and enterprise-level databases and applications. We can provide school lottery systems, discipline databases, and assessment management systems. We create solutions for your specific needs and help expand your internal capacity.

### **6. Workforce Readiness and Transition**

- The RESC Alliance serves as a regional leader in workforce development by providing adult education (including GED and ELL) training. In addition, the Alliance provides assessment services for job seekers and incumbent workers. These educational and transitional services support a robust workforce and provide avenues for further career development to current workers.

## **7. Project Management/Construction Services**

- The RESC Alliance's can provide municipalities or school districts with high value project management and construction-related services at lower costs.

## **8. Business Office Management**

- The RESC Alliance has an extraordinarily successful record of financial management. Our consultative services can help municipalities and school districts improve internal controls and timely reporting.

## **9. Facility and Food Service Management**

- The RESC Alliance management infrastructure can improve operations for both municipalities and school districts.

## **10. Regional Transportation**

- The RESC Alliance can design and implement a regional transportation service for any group of local districts.

## **11. Professional Development**

- The RESC Alliance provides professional development for educators in all aspects of education from early childhood through adult education. By offering sessions, conferences and on-site support throughout the region, the RESC Alliance is able to offer high quality, cutting-edge educational practices to its member districts at rates significantly less than any one district could provide for itself.

## **12. On-Line Student Learning Services**

- The RESC Alliance coordinates the Virtual High School Consortium for the State of Connecticut and offers Virtual Learning Academy to the RESC Alliance schools. Both offer a cost-effective way for schools with limited resources to offer courses online. Options include honors, AP, career exploration, and credit recovery courses.

## **13. Speech/Language Pathologist Assistant Program**

- The RESC Alliance is working collaboratively with the State Department of Education on a new program to prepare individuals to be Speech/Language Pathology Assistants, a critical area of shortage within Connecticut.

## **14. Program Audits**

- The RESC Alliance conducts reviews of special education programs to provide practical recommendations for efficient resource allocation, appropriate inclusion strategies, and special education organizational structure and processes. Special education costs are a significant portion of each local budget. Managing these costs, while maintaining a high quality program, is critical to the fiscal responsibility of districts.

## **15. Services to Special Needs Students**

- The RESC Alliance provides a wide variety of special education services to children and adolescents (ages three to 21) with autism, behavioral issues, and hearing impairment.

## **16. Magnet Schools**

- The RESC Alliance operates a variety of outstanding and recognized inter-district magnet schools, providing educational choice to our member districts.

### **17. Open Choice Program**

- The Open Choice Program allows urban students to attend public schools in nearby suburban towns.

### **18. Special Needs Transportation**

- The RESC Alliance is working with its member districts to provide transportation services to out-of-district special needs students. The objectives are to increase service quality and reduce costs.

### **19. Early Childhood Services**

- The RESC Alliance is working with the State Department of Education, community-based providers, school districts, and early childhood advocates to support Connecticut's groundbreaking early childhood initiative.

### **20. Common Assessment Consortium**

- The RESC Alliance has developed a consortium for districts to share assessment resources that are utilized by all districts in preparing students for success on the high-stakes assessments mandated by No Child Left Behind. This collaborative effort will reduce individual costs for each district by creating and validating assessment tools for teaching and learning and by building capacity in the region for best practices in assessment.

 RESC Alliance

of Regional Educational  
Service Centers

 aces  
area cooperative educational services

 C.E.S.  
Cooperative Educational Services

 CREC  
Capital Region Educational Council

 EASTCONN  
Where Learning Comes to Life

 EDUCATION  
CONNECTION

 LEARN  
LIFE LONG LEARNING