



Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, Inc.

81 Wolcott Hill Road, Wethersfield, CT 06109-1242 - (860) 571-7446 - Fax (860) 571-7452 - Email admin@cabe.org

**Testimony
Submitted to the
Appropriations Committee**

February 16, 2010

**HB 5018 AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO STATE EXPENDITURES AND REVENUES FOR THE
FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2011**

The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) appreciates the opportunity to offer our comments on the 2010-2011 state budget.

CABE commends the Governor for her effort to minimize the impact on education programs and local property taxpayers by maintaining major education grants at current levels. Needless to say, local education costs will increase in 2010-11, causing program reductions if there is an inability to increase local taxes. CABE is particularly troubled that the state's share of local public education is currently 36.8% - the lowest since 1983. We are also concerned about the 2011-12 budget gap created by the expiration of the Federal stimulus package.

CABE strongly urges you to support the development of a comprehensive, fair funding formula for Open Choice, magnet and charter schools. The existing patchwork of funding for these programs leads to inequities, uncertainty, and the need for a new band aid each year.

The continuation of the cap on special education excess cost grants has a significant impact on all local budgets. We urge you to make reinstatement of this "safety net" for costs that are beyond the control of the school districts a priority.

We are concerned about the impact of proposed cuts:

- Magnet school funding (\$1.5 million)
- Transportation (\$5.2 million)
- Interdistrict Cooperation (non-Sheff) (\$3 million)
- Bilingual Education (\$200,00)

These proposed cuts would force districts to reduce programs in other areas.

We support the inclusion of incentives to support regional efficiencies. The services provided by the regional educational service centers, which include special education programs, transportation and joint purchasing, serve as an example of voluntary regionalism.

There are several issues that relate to state and local spending that we also urge you to address. We urge you to support legislation to allow two or more boards of education or municipalities to jointly purchase health insurance. CABE supports a statutory prohibition on the enactment of new unfunded or underfunded mandates without a 2/3 vote of both chambers of the Legislature. We also support the proposals to reduce educational mandates, and implore you to refrain from enacting any additional mandates on school boards during this legislative session. Let us all use this economic crisis as an opportunity to evaluate what works to support student achievement, and then focus on supporting those priorities.

We appreciate your attention to these issues.