



Good evening, Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian and members of the Appropriations Committee.

I am Danuta Thibodeau, Executive Director of EDUCATION CONNECTION, the regional education service center (RESC) serving districts in northwestern Connecticut. I am here today on behalf of Connecticut's six education service centers to express our deep concern on the proposed decrease in base funding to RESCs.

For forty-five years, RESCs have been committed to working with school districts to provide quality programs and services in a cost-effective manner. Through regional cooperation, we have been able to maximize cost efficiencies in areas such as cooperative purchasing agreements, special education services, technology services, transportation, and school construction. As an example, this year alone, through regional co-operation, the aggregate savings to districts for technology services is \$3,400,000. Based on the annual dollars spent statewide on technology services, the potential savings is \$11,000,000. (See attached chart)

Base RESC funding, which is distributed equitably among the six RESCs, is the foundational funding that allows for the operation and implementation of those regional cooperative programs and services to school districts that result in cost savings. Yet, this funding has been reduced by 33% over the last ten years. Funding for RESC lease reimbursement has been eliminated. Further loss of funding will jeopardize our ability to implement many of the regional initiatives that drive cost efficiencies, just when it's needed the most. To continue to reduce base RESC funding reduces the capacity of the ONLY network in that state that provides needed support to all Connecticut school districts at a time when they are facing significant financial challenges. It would occur at the very time that both the Governor and the Legislature are looking to encourage regional collaboration and to implement cost saving strategies.

We recognize that these are particularly difficult times and resources are scarce. We also understand that tough decisions must be made. However, you can be assured that, by fully funding RESCs, you will be making an investment that will not only help to ensure that vital support services to districts are maintained, but that RESCs will continue to help school districts save precious resources and save actual dollars.

Thank you for your consideration and continued support.

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## Regional Services

The RESCs were established to help local school districts share resources and to do more together than they could alone. We've been doing this successfully for decades. Now, in these trying economic times, the need to assist districts in this manner is crucial. Below are some of the ways we are doing so, and the benefit of these services.

Service	Number of Districts Currently Using the Service from a RESC	<u>Estimated Current Savings to Districts</u>	<u>Estimated Savings Potential Statewide</u>	Total \$ Spent Annually Statewide
Transportation	24	\$370K	\$30M	\$277M (SDE)
Special Ed Transportation	84	\$1.5M	\$3M	\$16M (Est.)
Cooperative Purchasing	150	\$4.1M	\$13.5M	\$90M (Est.)
Special Ed & Related Svcs.	155	\$23M	\$25.5M	\$1.6B (Est.)
Technology Services	123	\$3.4M	\$11M	\$74M (Est.)
School Construction	5	\$166K	\$5.5M	\$1B (Est.)

The figures above represent only a select few services. There are significant potential savings that districts could realize by utilizing the RESCs for brokering of teachers, nursing services, regional diagnostic centers, and more. Furthermore, in addition to the actual savings in dollars spent, districts could save by not having to bid, manage, report, recruit, and everything else that goes into providing these services.