

2/26/11

The Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) which represents all of the superintendents in CT along with many central office administrators in the state **strongly supports** the enactment of a Minimum Budget Requirement that prohibits municipalities from using Equalized Cost Sharing Funds (ECS) and Federal Jobs Education Funds from being used by municipalities for non-education purposes. CAPSS, however, is **strongly opposed** to a section of HB 6431, AN ACT CONCERNING THE MINIMUM BUDGET REQUIREMENT that would allow a municipality to reduce its appropriation to its school system by an amount equal to what the school system might save in costs by participating in regional cooperative efforts. CAPSS takes this position for the following reasons.

- For the past two years, ECS grants to municipalities have not increased. While this has been welcomed by school districts as the best that could be expected in difficult economic times, it did result in less buying power for every school district in the state because the cost of just about everything that districts do has risen in the past two years.

For example, each year the cost of personnel has risen on the average by at least 3%. Yet school district budgets have increased on the average by no more than 1.5% each year. One of the results of this has been the loss of 2,700 teaching positions in the state over those two years. This, in turn, has resulted in a gradual increase in class size across the state.

School districts, therefore, have sought to save money by exploring regional efforts for student transportation, purchase of instructional and non-instructional supplies and equipment, purchase of heating oil and other areas of district operations. They have done this to ameliorate the negative impact of level funded ECS on the instructional program for children.

If municipalities are allowed to in effect take the savings that districts accrue via regional efforts and use that money for non-educational purposes, districts' efforts to ameliorate a negative impact on the instructional program will have been rendered ineffective.

- The aforementioned section is being proposed as an incentive for school districts to engage in regional efforts in order to reduce costs. These efforts require time and effort from people who already have a great deal to do. Districts are eager to devote that time and effort, however, if the result is a situation in which districts can devote to instructional purposes funds that otherwise would not be available.

If the result of the time and effort needed to engage in regional efforts, however, is a situation in which the funds accrued will be used by municipalities for non-educational purposes, there would be little incentive for districts to engage in these efforts.

For these reasons, CAPSS urges you to oppose the section of HB 6431 which would allow municipalities to reduce their appropriations to school systems by an amount equal to savings that school districts would accrue via regional efforts.

