



CCM 2014 Testimony

900 CHAPEL STREET, 9th FLOOR, NEW HAVEN, CT 06510-2807 PHONE (203) 498-3000 FAX (203) 562-6314

Your source for local government management information www.ccm-ct.org

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

March 17, 2014

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 92% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on bills of interest to towns and cities.

HB 5562, "An Act Concerning Special Education"

This bill would create a three-tiered funding mechanism for excess cost payments. The Excess Cost-Student Based grant has been underfunded for years and this bill appears to help alleviate some of the issues associated with that grant being underfunded.

Special-education costs are currently about \$1.8 million statewide and rising. Towns and cities pay for about 60 percent of those costs. This bill appears to provide some additional Excess Cost funding to help address the rising costs of special education, though it would require additional local support for students at higher-cost levels. There is an additional concern that the bill does not do anything to ensure full funding of the Excess Cost grant. A change to the funding formula is not advantageous if the grant remains capped due to insufficient appropriations. **CCM would encourage the General Assembly to ensure that as proposals are considered, that adequate funding be appropriated to support them.**

As a point of clarification, CCM seeks to understand why, in Line 50, the date July 1, 2009, was used as the beginning date of the change in the formula.

Speaker Sharkey's Special Education Select Working Group is currently evaluating the delivery and funding of special-education services in the state. CCM believes a more prudent approach to addressing special-education issues is to 1) fully fund the current Excess Cost-Student Based Grant and 2) look to the Speaker's Select Work Group for their recommendations.



If you have any questions, please contact Chelsey Worth at cworth@ccm-ct.org or (203) 470-5214.