



**Testimony  
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Connecticut Council of Small Towns  
Education Committee  
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The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) appreciates the opportunity to comment on **HB-5078, An Act Imposing a Moratorium on the Implementation of the Common Core State Standards** and **HB-5331, An Act Concerning the Implementation of the Revisions to the PEAC Guidelines**.

Connecticut is more dependent on property taxes to fund public education than any other state in the nation, according to United States Census data. And in most towns, education expenditures make up more than 70% of the local budget.

Unfortunately, although funding under the Education Cost Sharing formula has increased somewhat, most small towns have not seen any significant increase in state education funding for more than a decade. As a result, property taxpayers have had to shoulder the burden for increasing costs associated with the delivery of education.

Implementation of the Common Core State Standards has imposed new, unfunded costs on municipalities. School districts have had to invest considerable time and resources into developing data assessments, aligning curricula, purchasing new instructional technologies, developing and implementing new teacher evaluations, preparing/updating lesson plans, etc. Some districts also created full-day Kindergarten programs, in large part, because the new standards require students to perform at levels that will require more classroom instruction at younger ages. More rigorous standards designed to boost student achievement levels are certainly laudable goals, but goals that come with hefty price tags.

**Given the costs and challenges of implementing the new standards successfully, COST supports legislation to delay and evaluate implementation of the Common Core State Standards.** This will provide us with an opportunity to evaluate how the standards can be successfully implemented and how the state can meet its obligation to provide additional funding to *all* school districts to implement the standards.

In addition, the state should adjust the Minimum Budget Requirement to reflect that towns have invested significant local funding to implement the state standards. Towns may have been in a position to reduce education spending due to declining enrollment or other factors but, instead,



had to redirect this savings to pay for additional professional development, technology, curriculum development, data assessment, etc. in order to implement the new standards.

These expenditures should not be factored into a district's MBR because they are not – or should not be – considered baseline education costs.

COST would also like to take this opportunity to once again call for the state to focus on:

- 1) Developing a long range plan for phasing in increases to the ECS grant with the goal of fully funding the program to provide adequate fair share funding for all towns;
- 2) Assisting towns and cities in meeting special education needs;
- 3) Adjusting the Minimum Budget Requirement to allow towns to successfully reduce spending; and
- 4) Reducing or eliminating mandates that drive up the cost of education.

Thank you for your consideration.