



**TESTIMONY of the CT ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS  
Before the Planning and Development Committee**

**IN OPPOSITION TO:**

**HB 5085, An Act Authorizing Oversight Over Noneducational Expenses In School Budgets By Municipal  
Boards Of Finance**

The CT Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) is opposed to HB 5085, An Act Authorizing Oversight Over Noneducational Expenses in School Budgets By Municipal Boards of Finance, for the following reasons.

- School systems are organic agencies in which all aspects of their operations have an effect on how well children learn. For example, children learn better in schools that are clean and well maintained, in schools that have transportation systems that are effective, in schools where the lunch program is well run and in schools that have features that enhance safety and security. So, in a real sense, there are no "noneducational" expenses. Having different agencies in charge of different aspects of a school system, therefore, would inevitably lead to decisions that are made at cross purposes and this would be detrimental to the education of children.

For example, Superintendents and Boards of Education have the duty to produce a budget that provides for quality educational opportunities and yet is sensitive to the expense to the taxpayers. Therefore, when teacher negotiations are finalized it is often necessary to make adjustment to the budget that will meet both of the goals mentioned above. If contract negotiations result in a 4% budget increase and the local Board of Finance is recommending a 2% budget increase it becomes necessary for the Board of Education to make adjustments. This often results in a combination of eliminating items that directly impact the education of children and reducing cost elsewhere in the budget. If this bill becomes law, that flexibility would be gone and this would result in the entire cost of the contract being covered by the elimination of items that directly impact the educational program offered to children. In other words, a school system's budget cannot be bifurcated into two neat pieces.

**Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents**

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- Local boards of education and the superintendents of schools whom they hire are rightfully held accountable for all aspects of a school system's operations, not just those that directly relate to teaching and learning. If local boards and superintendents lose control of any of the expenses of a school system, they will still be held accountable for the areas related to those expenses, but without having any control over them. The placement of accountability has to be accompanied by the placement of control as well.
- Local boards of education have an exclusive focus on the impact of their actions on the well-being of the children for whose education the boards are responsible. Municipal boards of finance have to focus on many aspects of local government. Taking control of any school system expenses away from local boards of education, therefore, would place that control in the hands of people whose focus is not directly on the children impacted by their decisions, and this will inevitably lead to decisions that are not in the best interests of the children.

For all of these reasons, CAPSS is convinced that passage of HB 5085 would impair the delivery of effective educational programs to the children of CT and, accordingly, CAPSS urges the Legislature not to enact this bill.