Education Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, January 28, 2019

12:00 PM in Room 1E of the LOB

The meeting was called to order at 12:06 PM by Chairman, Sen. McCrory D. S02.

The following committee members were present:

Senators: Abrams M. S13; Berthel E. S32; Fasano L. S34; Kushner J. S24; Lesser M. S09; McCrory D. S02

Representatives: Barry J. 031; Blumenthal M. 147; Bolinsky M. 106; Candelaria J. 095; Candelora V. 086; Comey R. 102; Cook M. 065; Currey J. 011; Genga H. 010; Gibson B. 015; Gilchrest J. 018; Haines I. 034; Hill L. 017; Johnson S. 049; Kennedy K. 119; Kokoruda N. 101; Lavielle G. 143; Lemar R. 096; Linehan L. 103; MacLachlan J. 035; McCarty K. 038; McGee B. 005; Miller P. 145; Napoli R. 073; Pavalock-D’Amato C. 077; Rotella K. 043; Sanchez R. 025; Simanski B. 062

Absent were:

Senators: Flexer M. S29; Winfield G. S10

Representatives: Devlin L. 1344

REMARKS BY THE CO-CHAIRS:

Rep. McCarty, K. 038 thanked the Chairs and welcomed everyone.

Sen. McCrory, D S02 announced the Committee is raising 30 concepts today, they are not bills, we will work together to have committee bills, we won’t be raising too many
individual bills and from the concepts we will be creating bills. He asked for any comments or questions.

1. AAC the Legislative Commissioners’ Recommendations for Technical Revisions to the Education and Early Childhood Statutes.
2. AAC Authorization of State Grant Commitments for School Building Projects.
3. AAC Various Revisions and Additions to the Education Statutes.
4. AAC Minor Revisions to the Education Statutes.
5. AAC Education Issues.
6. AAC Public Schools.
7. AA Implementing the Recommendations of the Office of Early Childhood.
8. AA Implementing the Recommendations of the Department of Education.
9. AA Requiring the Office of Early Childhood to Develop a Proposed Early Childhood Educator Compensation Schedule.
10. AAC Loan Forgiveness for Early Childhood Educators.
11. AAC the Staff Qualifications Requirement for Early Childhood Educators.
12. AAC the Creation of a Pilot Program for an Early Childhood Business Incubator Model.
13. AA Expanding Eligibility for Certain Families in the Care4Kids Program.
14. AA Expanding Eligibility in the Care4Kids Program to Parents Enrolled in School.
15. AAC Payments to Child Care Providers.
16. AAC Minority Teacher Recruitment and Retention.
17. AAC Disengaged Youth.
18. AAC Community Schools.
19. AAC School Literacy.
20. AAC the Inclusion of Puerto Rican and Latino Studies in the Public School Curriculum.
23. AAC Alternative Educational Opportunities for Expelled Students.
24. AAC Education Mandate Relief.
25. AAC a Study of Issues Relating to Early College and Dual Enrollment Programs.
26. AAC Minimum Budget Requirement.
27. AAC the Technical Education and Career System.
28. AAC the Testing of School Water Supplies for the Presence of Lead.
29. AAC a Study of the Education Cost Sharing Formula.
30. AAC the Administration of Special Education Programs by Regional Education Service Centers.
Rep. McCarty, K. 038 commented that she realizes and appreciates that the committee is raising concepts with more work and discussion to follow. However, concept #21 the regionalization of education services is causing some concern. She wanted assurances that concept #21 will not cause forced regionalization and that is written to allow school districts to regionalize if they wish to combine.

Sen. McCrory, D. S02 replied that concept #21 included ideas of incentivizing districts to regionalize services not mandating regionalization.

Rep. Lavielle G. 143 thanked the Chair and stated this committee is one of the most organized in the legislature. She commented that we’ve all been made aware of Senator Looney’s SB 454 and will it become a part of concept #21? Many people that she heard from are distressed over the existence with the bill and the forced character of the hypothetical regionalization the bill is suggesting. Is the Chair’s intent to raise Senator Looney’s bill separately or will it be part of concept #21?

Sen. McCrory, D. S02 replied he has not read SB 454, he heard conversations through the media, doesn’t know what’s in the bill, as a committee they will work together and raise concepts and put necessary material in a concept if we choose to move forward with any particular bill he doesn’t think anybody is particularly thrilled about anything being forced but he thinks a great idea to have a conversation.

Rep. Sanchez R. 025 stated when they sat down to discuss this concept the intent was to give districts a choice. It wasn’t a mandate and his intent as we move forward with ranking members and co-chairs that it’s not a part of what will be discussed in regard to 454.

Rep. Lavielle G. 143 thanked the co-chairs, the stress has been great and she would feel more comfortable if the title of the concept was enabling voluntary regionalization of services if that were possible.

Sen. McCrory, D. S02 replied this concept came up last week, we had ideas about what we were looking at, will stay that way until further notice, hasn’t read 454, doesn’t know what’s in it, he is here to listen to ideas, he is open minded about ideas will not put an idea away, because he feels scared or afraid or neglected. We’re here to discuss educational issues in the State of CT and he thinks we should be open minded about any conversation we have.

Rep. Lavielle G. 143 thanked the chair and stated that just for the record she too believes that voluntary regionalization is a conversation we must have.

Rep. Bolinsky M. 106 stated that he doesn’t have any questions. However, on the record there has been consternation about forced regionalization and he wants to move the agenda forward on concept and not forcing through a mandate. He has another concern regarding concept #29 - a Study of the Education Cost Sharing Formula, he has no questions but, the new ECS formula launched last year had a 10 year scale of predictability, from a budgetary standpoint it’s important to maintain and not pull rugs out from the communities. He is in favor of letting the current formula run until we come up with something better.

Rep. McCarty, K. 038 stated the intent of concept #29 is to not change the ECS formula but to have it reviewed and have a study to review what the impact was.
Rep. Cook M. 065 thanked the leaders on the extensive work on the concepts and if we sit idle and not change the way we do things our children will continue to suffer. She commended them on the number of early childhood concepts. She stated that the fees and compensation for the early childhood worker are not paid enough. She stated that when we talk about the concepts, if we close the conversation before it starts we'll never make change and if regionalization is what we have to do to make education in the State of CT work then we need to figure out how to make it work and she knows that forcing people to do things is not always the right way to go but sometimes we have to help them get there, we don’t have the money to do what we need to do in this state. She comes from a state where education was regionalized, she looks forward to some honest conversations and listen to all sides and maybe making some tough decisions because that is what we are elected to do.

Rep. Lemar R. 096 attaches his comments to Rep. Cook's comments. He thanked the Chairs for not bowing down over the last 4 days, any time there’s a difficult concept he wouldn’t dream of picking a fight in a committee room with the raising of the discussion. He stated that over the last 4 days we’ve seen people subject to great distress over the regionalization of districts. We have to be vigilant and adamant that we’ll have the conversations that are hard and challenging and may cause distress to the status quo.

Rep.Candelora V. 086 stated he seeks clarification because today we are raising a concept about regionalization but a question was put on the table of what this concept encompassed because there has been conversation about another concept through bill proposals in SB454 and what does the concept encompass because of conversations about SB 454. Will the second concept being raised today about regionalization by population be a conversation down the road?

Sen. McCrory, D. S02 responded that's what he said.

Rep.Candelora V. 086 stated he wanted to make it clear that what they are voting on today wasn’t the regionalization based on school population and he thanked the chair.

Rep. McCarty, K. 038 thanked the chair for the clarification.

Rep. Johnson S. 049 thanked the committee for the concepts, she is interested in regionalization and wants dual language magnet schools and she is pleased about early education concepts.

Rep. Sanchez R. 025 stated just to reiterate the discussion regarding item#21, this discussion was done before SB454. SB454 to him is separate and he is sure that we will discuss SB 454 down the road.

Sen. McCrory, D. S02 called for a voice vote. The motion passed unanimously.


Sen. McCrory, D. S02 stated information will be coming out regarding the next meeting.

The meeting was recessed at 12:27 PM, adjourning at 4:00 PM.