The meeting was called to order at 1:01 PM by Chairman, Rep. Sanchez R. 025.

The following committee members were present:

Senators: Berthel E. S32; Bizzarro G. S06; Daugherty Abrams M. S13; Flexer M. S29; Kushner J. S24; Lesser M. S09; McCrory D. S02; Winfield G. S10

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; Devlin L. 134; 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; Sanchez R. 025; Simanski B. 062

Absent were:

Senators:  

Representatives: Rotella K. 043

The meeting was recessed at 1:03 PM.

Rep. Sanchez, R. 25 reconvened the meeting at 2:51 PM.

Rep. McCarty, K. 38 stated it’s a pleasure to be here with you today.

Rep. Sanchez, R. 25 asked for a motion to open the agenda for a limited purpose to add H.B. No. 7149 AN ACT BOLSTERING MINORITY TEACHER RECRUITMENT to the Agenda.

Sen. McCrory, D. S02 offered the motion and it was seconded by Rep. Currey, J. 11.

Rep. Sanchez, R. 25 hearing no discussion on the motion called for a voice vote on the motion. Hearing all yays and no nays, the motion passed.


Rep. McCarty, K. 38 asked where will this item be placed on the agenda?

Rep. Sanchez, R. 25 replied H.B. No. 7149 will be added last on the agenda as item #5.

Rep. Sanchez, R. 25 called for item # 2., H.B. No. 7350 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING REGIONAL COOPERATION AND THE SHARING OF SERVICES AMONG REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTERS AND MEMBER BOARDS OF EDUCATION. (ED) LCO 5960, to be called next and we will get back to item #1.

Rep. Sanchez, R. asked for a motion to JF H.B. No. 7350 to the floor.

Sen. McCrory, D. S02 offered the motion and it was seconded by Rep. Currey, J. 11.

Rep. Sanchez, R. 25 asked for comments or questions.

Rep. McCarty, K. 38 thanked the Chairman and stated that the mission and value of the RESCs are that they find cost efficiencies in shared services. However, given that we have looked at several bills in this session that have talked about mandates on our local districts and through the RESCs, as we go forward due to a lot of angst in various communities and some of the wording in H.B. No. 7350 in particular line #31 mentions the word need, she will flag the bill and be a no vote today.


Rep. Currey, J. 11 commented that he understands the intent is to find out what local Boards of Educations and RESCs are sharing.

Rep. Sanchez, R. 25 thanked him and commented that the committee will take his comments under consideration. Hearing no other comments or questions, Rep. Sanchez, R. and asked the Clerk to call the roll vote.

The Clerk called the roll.

Rep. Sanchez, R. 25 announced the votes will be held open until 5:00 PM.

Rep. Pavalock-D’Amato, C. 77 departed the Committee meeting after the roll call vote and was absent for the remainder of the votes.

Rep. Sanchez, R. 25 called for item # 1 S.B. No. 1023 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROVISION OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPelled STUDENTS BY BOARDS OF EDUCATION. (ED) and asked for a motion to JFS to the Floor.


Rep. Currey, J. 11 stated the Clerk is in possession of Amendment A and called for Amendment A to be distributed to the members.

Rep. Sanchez, R. 25 asked for the committee to stand at ease until Amendment A is distributed.


Rep. Currey, J. 11 responded the amendment removes language in direct contrast to standards adopted by the State Board of Education and asked for a roll call vote.


Rep. McCarty, K. 38 asked for further clarification on Amendment A and asked would it put the onus back on standards by the Department and does it include 900 hours in original bill?


Rep. Currey, J. 11 replied yes to both questions.


Rep. MacLachlan, J. 35 asked if it’s lines 47 & 48 Sect 2330 changing?


Rep. Currey, J. 11 replied the Amendment keeps existing language and removes proposal for each individual district to come up with their own standards.


Rep. MacLachlan, J. 35 asked for clarification as to what lines are being altered.


Rep. Lavielle, G. 143 thanked the Chairman and replied that they passed a bill of 900 hours a few years ago and referred it to the State Board of Education to come up with a plan. The State Board of Education came back with more punitive standards. Are we saying that we are referring back to the State Board of Education?


Rep. Currey, J. 11 replied this bill would remove the ability for districts to come up with their own plans.


Rep. Lavielle, G. 143 thanked the Chairman.


Rep. McCarty, K. 38 replied that her side believes in best education possible however, offering the local Boards of Education the flexibility to offer an alternative plan based on
the needs of the whole child are very important and for that reason she will be voting no on the Amendment.

Rep. Sanchez, R. 25 called for a roll call vote on Amendment A and only those present can vote, the vote will not be held open until 5:00 PM.

The Clerk called the roll.

The Clerk announced 18 Yeas, 14 Nays and 5 absent and not voting.


Rep. McCarty, K. 38 stated we worked hard in the past to give some mandate relief to the Boards of Education and now we’re putting this back onto them again. We want to help expelled students, the bill amended the way it is will give a superior education to those expelled with one on one attention. We are rewarding students in the alternative program and parents have requested that the expelled student remain in the program because they are getting a better education in the expelled programs. I object to the bill as amended.

Rep. Sanchez, R. 25 responded her comments were duly noted and he recognized Rep. Cook, M. 65.

Rep. Cook, M. 65 wanted clarification on 900 hours, can the student still go to an alternative program.

Rep. McCarty, K. 38 responded the bill made reference to going back to the way it was in a former session but now they will be held to a standard commensurate with the 900 hours and that is what she heard Rep. Currey, J. 11 say earlier.


Rep. Currey, J. 11 replied nothing will prevent expelled students from going to an alternative program.


Rep. Cook, M. 65 asked isn’t every student required to have 900 hours/180 days of education in a given school year?


Rep. Devlin, L. 134 said as the amendment suddenly appeared, she is trying to understand it. Most students are in a class of 24-25 students during regular session and they will have much smaller class sizes as expelled students. Is there a fiscal impact as a result of this change?

Rep. Sanchez, R. 25 replied he is not sure if there’s a fiscal impact and called on Chris Cordima (LCO).

Chris Cordima from LCO referred the fiscal question to Alan Shepard from OFA.

Alan Shepard from OFA replied there is no fiscal impact.

Rep. Devlin, L. 134 thanked the Chairman.


Rep. Candelora, V. 86 thanked the Chairman and asked if we are returning everything back to the original law?


Sen. McCrory, D. S02 replied yes, it goes back to the original law with the 900 hour requirement.

Rep. Candelora, V. 86 responded so now we are mandating the 900 hours with no flexibility whereas the current law allows flexibility?


Rep. Currey, J. 11 replied is Rep. Candelora’s question relating to the 17 & 18 year old piece?

Rep. Candelora, V. 86 replied yes, it relates to under 18. It seems that if they are over 18, they can avail themselves to adult education which is new. But, if you are under 18 this bill is just maintaining what our current law is or are we stripping away flexibility that local schools might have in dealing with those students under the age of 18, am I correct?

Rep. Currey, J. 11 replied we are not stripping away.

Rep. Candelora, V. 86 –asked if a student is under age 18, they are treated the same way as current law?


Rep. Candelora, V. 86 said he appreciates the response and will be voting no because bill is changing so much and undoing another piece to allow towns to operate with some flexibility. It seems that it will be very expensive moving forward under this bill.


Rep. Currey, J. 11 responded he needed to clarify that yes, the flexibility that we once had with the 17 & 18 year olds, they would have to provide that opportunity for 900 hours.


Rep. Lavielle, G. 143 responded that she will align with Rep. Candelora in voting no because a couple of things, the 900 hour requirement was a bill in the Judiciary Committee not the Education Committee at its origin and as it became law there was so much concern from schools all over that they didn’t think they could meet such an onerous mandate in the same way. That is why a previous Education Committee introduced flexibility and it passed unanimously. She is very uncomfortable restoring the mandate in the face of all of the objections they had received.


Rep. Linehan, L. 103 replied with a clarification that students who stay in school have 180 days/1,080 hours of instruction and 900 hours is far less. It still works out as less
hours for the expelled student. 900 hours equals 150 days and it’s not too much to ask, she absolutely supports this.


Rep. Bolinsky, M. 106 said he will flag this bill with a no vote because he objects to the fact that they are sitting here 3 ½ hours after the meeting was to begin, with an amendment that nobody had seen and procedurally they put the LCO in an awkward place a few moments ago when we asked if there was going to be a fiscal impact, and through questioning in particular with Rep. Candelora’s line of questions and it seems really apparent that there is a fiscal impact and this will be another unfunded mandate. Procedurally, we should have had these conversations days ago not today. It’s not courteous legislation and he is a no vote.


Rep. Hill, L. 17 said she agrees with her colleague’s comments, if this language had been available for a public hearing she is confident that she would have heard from her district’s Superintendents because of the mandate nature of it and the change for the local districts. She is a no vote.


The Clerk called the roll.

Rep. Sanchez, R. 25 called Item # 3 on the Agenda S.B. No. 874 AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATION INITIATIVES AND SERVICES IN CONNECTICUT (ED) and asked for a motion to JFS to Appropriations.

Sen. McCrory, D. SO2 offered the motion and it was seconded by Rep. Currey, J. 11.


Rep. McCarty, K. 38 stated that there are very important changes. The structure is still in place for various duties and obligations and at some point it could turn into being forced. There is much angst throughout the state, it is overreach, she is not in support of changes for endowed schools and academies and will be a no vote.

Rep. Sanchez, R. 25 replied there’s been a lot of discussion about home schooling and it was removed from the bill.

Rep. Linehan, L. 103 stated there are parts of SB 874 that she likes and others that she doesn’t like such as her district is against forced regionalization and she supported regulations around home schooling.


Rep. Currey, J. 11 stated we’re living up to promise to our constituents. He moves supporting it, wants lines 186-210 for joint reports from municipalities and Boards of Education.


Rep. Lavielle, G. 143 stated that she remains extremely concerned about the bill, it still reflects the original discourse and discontent, there is language about cost savings but nothing about the quality of education, many districts have voluntarily regionalized, binding arbitration rules make it difficult, funding of $1 million in the Governor’s budget to create and fund a commission. Based on the premise that effective school districts
manage themselves well she doesn’t believe that the state has any business interfering with them.

Rep. Sanchez, R. 25 thanked the Governor for at least coming back and making some changes to his recommendations on the bill. He knows that there will be further discussions on this bill. It doesn’t seem like the bill is something forced at this point but he can understand where people have their doubts. He is happy about the home schooler piece because he has two nieces who have been calling and e-mailing him asking him to leave the home schoolers alone.


Rep. MacLachlan, J. 35 stated that he will be voting against the bill because the feedback from his district is opposed to a number of parts of the bill particularly the inclusion of commissions because we are growing state government instead of being more efficient, reporting mandates and unfunded mandates.


Sen. Berthel, E. S32 stated that he aligns his comments with Rep. MacLachlan, the mandate piece is a concern to our districts, he likes that the home schooling requirements were removed but he will vote no on the overall bill.


Rep. McCarthy, K. 38 stated the social emotional learning was put in another education bill.


Rep. Linehan, L. 103 thanked the Chairman for indulging her for the second time. She knows the social emotional learning was in another bill. There was another bill that came out of Children’s Committee. But, we can’t turn down any opportunity to focus on social emotional learning because it’s going to be the cornerstone of making our little people into great big people. Also, she spoke to all of the talk about flagging a bill today from the other members and they voted no. To her, flagging allows the right to vote yes in the Committee but reserves her right to vote no on the floor.


The Clerk called the roll.

Rep. Sanchez, R. 25 called Item #4 on the Agenda H.B. No. 7150 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR’S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING EDUCATION. (ED) LCO No. 6738 and asked for a motion to JFS to Appropriations.

Sen. McCrory, D. S02 offered the motion and it was seconded by Rep. Currey, J. 11.


Rep. Miller, P. 145 asked which LCO # are we looking at?


Rep. Miller, P. 145 asked if the committee has a copy of LCO 6738?

Rep. Sanchez, R. 25 hearing several Representatives state they don’t have possession of LCO 6738 asked the committee to stand at ease while copies were distributed.
Rep. Sanchez, R. 25 explained that LCO 6738 strikes out the TRS in the bill.


Rep. McCarty, K. 38 stated that it removes the TRS requirement and it’s a positive move. But, there are concerns with the accelerated rate reduction in the ECS funding for 74 towns and for that reason she will be voting no.


Rep. Barry, J. 31 stated she appreciates the efforts to remove the cost share burdens for TRS she will be voting no because her district’s ECS funding will be significantly reduced and she can’t support it.


Sen. Berthel, E. S32 said he will be a no vote because of the reasons stated by Rep. McCarty, K. 38. Also, he appreciates the section about reimbursement for healthcare services for all of the private and catholic schools throughout the state.


Sen. Daugherty Abrams, M. S13 will be a yes vote although she has concerns about the reductions in ECS funding.


Rep. Candelora, V. 86 said he is against the proposal as it is an undoing of a previous bi-partisan budget that worked hard for the ECS formula and agreed to a 10 year phase-in of reimbursement reductions, we are going in the wrong direction.


Rep. Kokoruda, N. 101 stated that we should take another look at direct certification, the only city that showed a student population decline was Hartford, all of the other cities increased their student population and we should not write off the direct certification so easily.


Rep. Comey, R. 102 said she will vote yes for this budget bill, she has some concerns about it and moving forward she hopes there is more conversation for a more gradual phase in for sifting the cost burdens onto the towns.

Rep. Sanchez, R. 25 called for a roll call vote on HB 7150.

The Clerk called the roll.

Rep. Sanchez, R. 25 called Item # 5 on the Agenda H.B. No. 7149 AN ACT BOLSTERING MINORITY TEACHER RECRUITMENT. (ED) LCO No. 4517 and asked for a motion to JF to Floor.

Sen. McCrory, D. S02 offered the motion and it was seconded by Rep. Currey, J. 11.


Rep. McCarty, K. 38 asked for a clarification as the Education Committee already sent a bill out of committee for this same topic as a united force, are there any changes to this bill?

Rep. Sanchez, R. 25 replied it’s the same bill, no changes.
Rep. Sanchez, R. 25 called for a roll call vote on HB 7149.

The Clerk called the roll.

Rep. Sanchez, R. 25 thanked the Committee’s staff, Kathy Shea, Garnet McLaughlin, Colin Carroll and the Clerk, Luz Osuba, Chris Cordima from LCO, John Moran and Mary Beth Sullivan from OLR, Janelle Stevens, Alan Shepard and Sarah Bourne from OFA for all of their work. We had a really great session and he’s very proud of the bi-partisan work and we passed 95% of the bills on consent calendar. It’s been outstanding working with our Ranking Members, Senator Bethel and Representative McCarty, my Co-Chair Senator McCrory and our Vice-Chairs Representative Barry and Senator Abrams.


Sen. Berthel, E. S32 added his voice to the chorus of praise, it was his best experience in his years in the legislature. It’s been a pleasure working on this committee and thanked everyone for their cooperation.

Sen. McCrory, D. S02 echoed all of the sentiments mentioned previously for their work on the most important committee in the Legislature. He thanked Laura Stefon from the Department of Education for all of her research on matters before the Education Committee.

The meeting was recessed at 4:05 PM, adjourning at 5:00 PM.

Luz Osuba
Administrator

Kathy K. Shea
Committee Clerk