Bill No.: HB-7350
Title: AN ACT CONCERNING REGIONAL COOPERATION AND THE SHARING OF SERVICES AMONG REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTERS AND MEMBER BOARDS OF EDUCATION.
Vote Date: 3/29/2019
Vote Action: Joint Favorable
PH Date: 3/18/2019
File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:
Education Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:
Previously, SDE encouraged use of regional education services. Now, bill mandates regional educational service center develop list of shared services and share with their member boards of education and SDE.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner, State Department of Education: In support of the bill to require a study of shared services as “we believe that we are no longer living in a time where it is practical, or feasible, for the state to have over 200 independently operated school districts.” The SDE doesn’t have a full time employee to perform the work outlined in the bill and would require additional resources.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

CABE: Strongly supports intent of bill. RESCs currently have inventories of services available to school districts and given the existing data, an additional survey many not be necessary. It may not be feasible to require SDE to report on best practices given their staffing shortage.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:
**Ross Tartell:** Opposes the bill because while it's very appropriate to identify resources that might be shared and best practices, it doesn't mention improving educational outcomes. Also, this bill is redundant to Section 4 of the Governor’s bill # 874.

**Betsy Gara, COST:** Supports the bill but requests it be amended to include seven recommendations that address impediments and barriers to shared service approaches as follows:

1. Strengthen the existing statute to permit a town’s appropriating authority to initiate the consolidation of non-educational services;
2. Facilitate efforts to ensure that municipalities and school districts can achieve savings by consolidating the purchase of health, property casualty and workers/compensation insurance;
3. Allow towns to negotiate all fringe insurance benefits (similar to pension) to allow collaborative negotiations;
4. Prohibit boards of education from entering into leases for equipment, such as phone systems, computers, portable classrooms, vehicles, and copiers, without town authorization;
5. Require boards of education to adhere to town purchasing procedures;
6. Require boards of education to consult with towns before purchasing new payroll, and payable software systems to determine whether such purchases can be shared or purchased on a regional basis; and
7. Encourage shared maintenance of buildings, grounds, equipment, and IT between schools and towns.

**Orlando Rodríguez, CEA:** “We believe the proposed survey of RESC services is redundant as the issue is already covered in the governor’s bill, SB 874 Education Initiatives and Services in Connecticut.”

**Reported by:** Kathy K. Shea

**April 5, 2019**