



Cheshire Board of Education

Legislative Committee Meeting
December 12, 2022

Legislative Agenda- Items for Consideration

1. Excess Cost Reimbursement/Special Education Cost
2. Right to Read
3. Teacher Shortage
4. Teacher Evaluation
5. Virtual Learning
6. Educational Cost Sharing
7. Unfunded Mandates
8. HVAC Improvements
9. Other Considerations

Recommendations consistent with the Connecticut Association of Public Schools Superintendents

Excess Cost Reimbursement

CT is supposed to reimburse local districts who have students receiving special education services with costs in excess of 4.5X the PPE. Historically, CT has established a set budgetary amount and districts received a percentage of the total figure. This was recently replaced by a wealth-based assessment that intended to further support towns (PA 22-118). Unfortunately, in many towns (Cheshire included) this is not the case. The legislative leadership is aware of the unintended consequence of the bill and is seeking a resolution. Nevertheless, it is important for us to vocalize support of the change.

Moreover, we should advocate that this Grant receive full funding from the state.

Burden of Proof In Special Education Hearings

The cost of special education has grown significantly. This is driven in part, by the arbitration process where families wish to implement programming not supported by the full Planning and Placement Team. Connecticut is one of only 10 states that place the burden of proof in a hearing of this nature on the school district exclusively. Most states place the burden of proof on the party bringing the claim to amend the program. This drives budgets astronomically higher as districts fight claims and outplacement costs soar. It is requested that legislation be considered to place the burden of proof on the party making the claim.

Right to Read

[Senate Bill 1202 \(section 395\)](#)

Reading Leadership Implementation Council was directed to identify no less than 5 “evidence-based and scientifically-based” reading programs that focused on “Oral language, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, rapid automatic name or letter name fluency, and reading comprehension.”

- Only 11 of 112 districts responding to a CAPSS survey use one of the 5 identified programs
- There has been no evidence shared about the evaluation of these programs
- There no data to support these programs as it relates to elevated student achievement
- Cheshire will be asked to devote tremendous time and money to programs whose efficacy is questionable.
- CEA does not support this decision either

Teacher Shortage

Cheshire will see a growing demand for teachers in the next decade. The certification process should focus more on demonstrating “good teaching” through longer and better student teaching experiences and accepting prior successful experience as a part of the credential review.

The SDE is releasing a Report on Certification to the Legislature on January 1, 2023. CAPSS/CABE have been strong advocates for adjusted standards.

Teacher Evaluation

For 40 years, the CSDE has tried to provide guidance and support for local teacher evaluation programs. The most recent statutory requirements have been virtually abandoned in most states. The best solution would be a fresh start with minimal broad state guidance and local initiatives with annual attestation of continuous evaluation for all staff.

We would like the opportunity to develop an innovative and creative evaluation system that reflects new and effective instructional methodologies. This new system should be based on the Common Core of Teaching and be supported by practitioners serving as coaches.

Virtual Learning

CPS sees the value in high-quality Remote & Virtual Learning in meeting the multi-faceted learning needs of all students. The personalization efforts already underway statewide will be enhanced by greater access to remote learning and greater offerings in a virtual classroom. We would like:

- Local discretion to hold a remote learning day for emergency closures (perhaps with a cap of 3 per year).
- The State to develop a regional (ACES) concept for a model that includes virtual and in-person learning opening the content opportunities for students across the region.

Educational Cost Sharing

The ECS formula is made up of several different components: the foundation (\$11,525 per student), student need-based weights (% added for students with different needs), the Base Aid Ratio (Town's ability to pay), and the phase-in schedule. The adjusted ECS formula began a phase in period in 2019. For Cheshire, we start losing approximately \$10,000 annually beginning in the next budget year (2023-2024). Ultimately, our ECS Grant drops from \$9,420,222 in 2022-23 to \$9,349,952 in 2030-31. At the least, we are asking that the phase out be deferred in order to provide the current level of funding in the coming year.

<https://schoolstatefinance.org/issues/ecs-formula>

Mandates...

- Adult Education
- English Learners – EL
- Excess Costs and Agency Placement Fees
- ADA accommodations
- Alternate Ed for Expelled Students
- Indoor Air Quality – Tools for Schools
- Asbestos Management
- Background Checks, Finger Printing, etc.
- Blood Borne Pathogens
- Safe School Climate Requirements
- Child Abuse Reporting
- Professional Development Committee
- In-Service Training for Certified Staff
- CPR/First Aid and Heimlich Training
- Student Physicals and Immunizations
- Drug Education (health staff)
- EFS (was ED-001) End of Year Report
- All Other ED-XXX Reporting
- Family and Medical Leave Act
- HIPAA
- Internet Protection Act for Children
- Integrated Pest Management
- Public/Non-Public School Transportation
- Transportation to Regional Vo-Ag/Tech
- Special Education Transportation
- Sexual Harassment Training
- Special Education
- Vision, Hearing, Scoliosis Screenings
- Summer School
- Three Year Technology Plan (we still do it)
- Truancy Reporting
- Tuition to Regional Vo-Ag schools
- 504 Accommodations
- Student Wellness Policy and Committee
- DEEP Requirements, Water, Septic and Pesticides, UST's
- Elevator Service/Inspections
- Sprinkler Inspections/Reports
- Hood Suppression Systems
- Fire Alarm System
- Radon Testing
- Green Cleaning
- Biohazard Waste Disposal (+Fluorescent Bulbs)
- Homeless Student Accommodation
- Open Choice
- NCLB–now ESSA(Every Student Succeeds)

Mandates...

- PPACA
- TEAM and TCC (Team Coordinating Committee)
- SEED
- Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)
- UCOA
- Concussion Protocol
- Masters Degree for Teachers
- SMARTER Balance Assessment (SBA)
- CT Plan for Secondary School Reform (2020)
- Reading Survey for K-3 Teachers
- EL Registration
- SAT Testing
- LAS Links Testing Training for English Learners
- Restraining and Seclusion Training
- Suicide Prevention Training
- Dating Violence Training
- Increased Pre-Employment Verifications
- Enhanced Transition Services for Special Education Students Age 18 to 21
- Medicaid Billing for Services Provided (potential revenue stream offset by related costs)
- EG Grants System for Processing Grants (replaces paper-based system)
- Data Accountability Index (replaced previous Strategic School Profile mandate)
- Holocaust and Genocide Education Awareness (Social Studies Curriculum Requirement)
- Student Data Privacy – Public Act 16-189
- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) – School Spending Transparency Requirement
- NAEP Testing
- Identification of Gifted and Talented Students
- Seclusion and Restraint Reporting

Newest Mandates...

- New elective course requirements for Grades 9-12:
 - Computer Science including, but not limited to computer programming instruction
 - African-American, Black, Puerto Rican & Latino Studies
- New Graduation requirement: Mastery-based Performance Assessment
- Exclusionary Time Out training
- Written Parent notification of a child's standing as to the gifted and talented classification
- CT State Minimum Wage - increasing to \$15 per hour by 6/1/2023
 - Increased to \$12/hour on 9/1/20, \$13/hour on 8/1/21, \$14/hour on 7/1/22 & \$15/hour on 9/1/23
- 2 Hour Sexual Harassment Training for All Employees every 10 years
- COVID-19 Pandemic Requirements
- PA 21-2 – BOE's must ensure that employees involved in or responsible for hiring educators must complete a video training module related to implicit bias and anti-bias developed by the SDE before participating in the district's educator hiring process. In addition, the video training module has to be added to the in-service training program that school district's must offer to teachers.
- **Implementation of State provided Special Education Data System**
- **School Lunch Requirement on Early Dismissal Days for Middle and High School Students**

HVAC Improvements

This is especially important in light of the new legislative requirement made to CGS 10-220 that begins with "Prior to January 1, 2024, and every five years thereafter, a local or regional board of education shall provide for a uniform inspection and evaluation of the heating, ventilation and air conditioning system within each school building under its jurisdiction" with a detailed list of specific requirements.