



**CCM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE
BOARD OF EDUCATION FUNCTIONS WORKING GROUP
OF THE M.O.R.E. COMMISSION
April 5, 2013**

1. **DUE NO HARM**

Reject proposed state budget cuts that would further impair the ability of already struggling municipalities to meet education and non-education funding needs.

The proposed elimination of three out of four PILOT reimbursement programs, the loss of \$128 million in general (unrestricted) funding, and the loss of \$700 million in motor vehicle tax revenue, would be catastrophic.

2. **BACK TO BASICS**

Allow local boards of Education to focus on the core functions they are charged with – providing quality education to their students – by moving all non-education related functions to the local administration.

Overlapping functions - such as building maintenance, snow plowing, grounds upkeep, finance functions, and much more - can be combined with the efforts already employed on the town-side and savings can be realized as a result of reduced overlap.

3. **INCENTIVE FOR COLLABORATIVE SAVINGS**

Provide an incentive for municipalities and local school districts to voluntarily collaborate in order to identify and execute mechanisms that will achieve savings on the education side of the budget through cost reductions, shared services, or intra-/inter-municipal collaboration.

The incentive would provide that (1) at least 50% of the savings could be used for a rolling fund balance, maintained by the Board of Education, for future funding expenditures as they deem necessary; and, (2) the remainder of the savings would be returned to the municipality for property tax relief (exact percentages to be negotiated between the municipality and the local school district when entering into the individual collaborations). In addition, the municipality would be allowed to reduce their MBR by the amount returned to them.

4. **PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS**

Provide competitive grants to local school districts and municipalities to facilitate the necessary analyses and feasibility studies to pursue inter- and intra- resource sharing and collaboration.

Model the program after the successful one in Massachusetts, which provides grants

ranging from \$15k - \$20k for the planning and around \$50k for implementation. Consider using a similar structure as the Regional Performance Incentive Grant Program (CGS 4-124s). However, ensure that the eligibility criteria allows for individual municipalities to apply singly as well.

Lastly, capitalize on the systems already in place, the current regional education service center structure, to help promote and facilitate intra- and inter- municipal cooperation, along with identifying and implementing cost-savings measures for local and regional boards of education and municipalities.

5. **REGIONALIZATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

Provide strong financial and technical assistance incentives for school districts to *voluntarily* regionalize.

Follow the money: 60 cents out of every property tax dollar in Connecticut is now spent on preK-12 public education. For 113 out of 169 towns and cities, education makes up at least 70% of their budgets. The education side of municipal budgets continues to grow while the non-education side has shrunk in real dollar terms over the last decade. There are fewer municipal employees today than a decade ago, fewer today than five years ago.

6. **INFORMATION SHARING - REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS**

There continues to be a lack of understanding, and at times skepticism, across school districts and municipalities about the role of RESCs. To bridge this gap, a comprehensive, yet easy to understand, mechanism should be created to: (1) explain what the RESCs are all about; (2) how they provide needed services and access to resources to local and regional boards of education; and, (3) how the pooling of this purchasing power can benefit any municipality.

7. **INFORMATION SHARING – SUCCESS STORIES**

Towns and cities across the state are actively employing different ways to share resources and services; find innovative cost savings; and collaborate between the education and town government sides of local government.

The State should conduct a survey of local and regional boards of education and municipalities to compile a list of what is already being done around the state. Sharing this information with local governments can help illuminate successful programs that could be employed elsewhere in the state.