



Education Committee - Board of Representatives

Diane Lutz, Chair

Megan Cottrell, Vice Chair

Committee Report

Date: Monday, January 29, 2018
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Place: Republican Caucus Room, 4th Floor Government Center, 888 Washington Boulevard, Stamford, CT

The Education Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Chair Lutz, Vice Chair Cottrell and Committee Member Reps. Aquila, de la Cruz, Di Costanzo and Jacobson. Absent or excused were Reps. DeLuca, Moore and Stella. Also present were State Senator Carlo Leone, State Representative Dan Fox; State Representative Pat Billie Miller; State Representative Caroline Simmons; State Representative Terry Adams; Assistant Chief Wuennemann, Stamford Police Department; Richard Lyons and John Perrotta, Board of Education; and Jim Travers, Transportation Bureau Chief.

Chair Lutz called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

Item No.	Description	Committee Action
1. E30.009	REVIEW; Student Advisory Council 2017-18. Topic: "Connection Time" (at 6:00 p.m.) 01/03/18 – Submitted by Rep. Lutz	Held
There being no members of the Student Advisory Council present, this item was not taken up.		
The Committee next took up Item No. 5.		
5. E30.008	APPROVAL; School Liaison Assignments to Committee Members. (at 7:00 p.m.) 01/03/18 – Submitted by Rep. Lutz	Approved 6-0-0

Committee members discussed how this would work:

- Reaching out to the principals at the schools and determining what the school may want from the Board of Representatives
- Possibly working with the Board of Education
- The Board of Education has a similar point person for each school
- This might be a way to improve communications on issues where the City is involved
- Board of Education policies as mandated by State law
- Tamu Lucero has offered to take Committee members to visit schools

- A liaison would be able to follow up on an issue on behalf of a school and open up communication channels
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Committee members discussed the mission, vision, scope and objectives of the school liaison assignments. The following ideas were offered by committee members as part of a brainstorm of suggestions for how this program may work.

- The scope of this program will be
 - Safety/sidewalks
 - Impact Recycling efforts
 - Fielding constituent concerns
 - Monitoring Board of Ed policies
 - Monitoring metrics (absenteeism, graduation rates, suspension rates)
 - Open the flow of communication
 - Capital needs
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- The objective of this program will be:
 - to affect legislation in connection with the scope
 - Make the Board of Representatives more supportive of and visible to the academic community (areas include, but are not limited to Safety/sidewalks, impacting Recycling efforts, fielding constituent concerns, monitoring Board of Ed policies, monitoring metrics (absenteeism, graduation rates, suspension rates), open the flow of communication, capital needs
 - Easing the burden of items which do not necessarily fall within the jurisdiction of the Board of Education
 - Share information about what is going on in the district that possibly will impact the school (e.g. road closures, construction)
- Rep. Cottrell will form this into a more cohesive document
- Rep. Lutz will assign schools to members

A motion to approve going forward with school liaison assignments was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 6-0-0 (Reps. Lutz, Cottrell, Aquila, de la Cruz, Di Costanzo and Jacobson in favor).

The Committee took a 5 minute recess at 6:55 p.m. and reconvened at 7:01 p.m.

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| 2. | E30.006 | REVIEW; Overview of Board of Education with Board of Education President David Mannis (at 7:00 p.m.)
01/02/18 – Submitted by President Quinones | Held |
| 3. | E30.005 | REVIEW; Provisions for Pedestrian Safety Around Stamford Public Schools. (at 7:00 p.m.)
12/06/17 – Submitted by Rep. de la Cruz
12/18/17 – Held In Committee 5-0-0 | Report Made & Held |

This has been an ongoing item on the agenda. Mr. Perrotta distributed the attached report.

Mr. Perrotta, Mr. Lyons, Mr. Travers and Chief Wuennemann discussed this with the Committee:

- Over the years they have made numerous changes to make the schools safer, particularly at drop-off times. He believes that they have done as much as they can. Some items are incapable of being addressed due to locations of houses and schools, or other items beyond their control
- The Safe Routes to Schools program has been very successful but there is less grant money available for this now
- Crossing guards come out of the Police Department budget; there are 95 crossing guards, placed at 18 of the 21 schools
- High school students will not pay attention to a crossing guard
- The use of crossing guards depends upon the number of students crossing and the amount of traffic
- Crossing guards can't give out tickets
- Is there a way to determine what percentage of students who could take a bus are being driven
- What education about pedestrian safety are student receiving
- Should the Board of Education policy be reviewed
- Is there grant money available
- There is a formal crossing guard training program
- The current Street Smarts program is a good model for education; they worked with school age children and taught them how to cross the street; the committee meets every 2 weeks and they may grow to include a Board of Representatives member and members of the community

4. [E30.007](#) REVIEW; ECS Funding and Potential for Proposed Legislation. (at 7:00 p.m.) **Report Made**
01/03/18 – Submitted by Rep. Lutz

Chair Lutz explained that the ECS funding is provided by the State. The state funds it at 80% and then it is distributed to cities and towns. The question is whether it is fairly distributed. There are numerous factors that enter into the formula that determines how much a town should get. Towns do not seem to be getting what they are supposed to get according to this formula.

Senator Leone explained that the 2016 court decision determined that the formula needed to be changed in order to be equitable. The original formula was based on three factors, including the wealth of the town (this hurt Stamford due to high property values) (using 90% property value and 10% income). The formula has been changed to use 70% property value and 30% income, which will help Stamford, but it will take 10 years to be implemented. The formula to determine grant amount includes foundation dollar amount, student count with weightings for high needs students and the town wealth ratio. The original formula was not fair to Stamford, but the revised formula is more equitable. As a result of the new formula, Stamford will start receiving a larger amount each year.

There are numerous proposals, such as fully funding special ed, which would allow the ECS dollars to go further.

Senator Leone distributed numerous materials including the following State OLR Research Reports: [ECS Changes Since 1991](#) (2004-R-0499); [Education Cost Sharing Formula](#) (2012-R-0101); [Task Force to Study State Education Funding Final Report](#)

(2013-R-0064); [Education Cost Sharing Grants](#) (2016-R-0167); [Issue Brief: Education Cost Sharing Grant Formula](#) (2017-R-0001); [2017 Changes to the Education Cost Sharing \(ECS\) Formula](#) (2017-R-0319); and a presentation by the Office of Fiscal Analysis, Office of Legislative Research, [Education Funding 101](#). He also provided the following list of [OLR Search results](#).

Representative Adams noted that one of the proposals being considered is having the money follow the student. Rep. Miller noted that no bills to change the ECS funding have been submitted to date.

Chair Lutz adjourned the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Diane Lutz, Chair

This meeting is on video ([Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#))