



HAMPTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
HAMPTON, CT 06247
AD HOC COMMITTEE FOR ADVOCACY
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY FEBRUARY 20, 2025
HAMPTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MEDIA ROOM/LIBRARY
11:00 AM

1. Call to Order

The meeting began at 11:08. Present were Board of Education members Stephanie Bora, Maryellen Donnelly and Dennis Timberman.

2. Public Comment

None

3. New Business

At its January meeting, the Board of Education approved the three action statements presented by the Ad Hoc Committee for Advocacy. They are:

1. Advocate to Maintain ECS funding for Small Schools
Request our state representatives to protect Hampton from funding losses by maintaining the current ECS funding levels of 2024-2025.
2. Advocate for Fair Special Education Cost Reimbursement
Urge our state representatives to reform the excess cost sharing grant for special education to provide reimbursement to small districts with high per pupil costs.
3. Advocate to Review EASTCONN'S Role and State Funding
Call on state representatives to assess EASTCONN's funding and responsibilities to better support the consolidation of education services for local town schools and provide seed funding for educational initiatives.

The committee reviewed communications from CAGE, Governor Lamont, legislators, the Select Committee on Special Education, EastConn and URSA/ NASA Superintendents. In response to Senator Gordon's email *Common Sense Matters: Investing in Our Schools, Fighting for Fair Education Funding in the 35th District*, in which he announced S. B. 591 to hold towns harmless in the rollout of the education cost-sharing, the following was developed:

(insert appropriate inside address and salutation)

The Hampton Board of Education supports provisions to hold towns harmless in ECS grants proposed by Senator Gordon. We want to bring to your attention two other issues that leave Hampton and other small towns with diminished chances for state funding.

First, Excess Cost Sharing for special education is calculated as 4.5 times the per pupil cost. The per pupil cost is relatively high in districts with small numbers of students. Most often, 4.5 times the per pupil cost results in no ECS funds being received. Though Hampton's education budget has been consistent, our census has declined and our per pupil cost has risen. An alternative formula for calculating Excess Cost Sharing would help greatly given that costs of very specialized services have increased.

Second, Governor Lamont proposed in his biennial budget address to provide "\$14 million incentive grants for districts to provide the highest quality special ed programming in-district". We support creating alternatives to expensive outplacements whereby students are removed from district schools and provided little or no time with general education students. However, it is proposed that seed money is available to develop only in-district programs. Given that small districts may not have a group of students with similar needs, it would be advantageous to define the districts eligible for seed money as those local public districts working together.

4. Action Items and Next Steps

The committee proposes to send letters to members of the legislature's Education Committee and the Select Committee on Special Education. It will request that Senator Gordon and Representative Boyd hold a meeting in Hampton.

The next meeting will be held at 11:00 AM in the HES Library/Media Room on Thursday, March 6.

5. Other Business

None

6. The meeting adjourned at 11:50.

Respectfully submitted,

Maryellen Donnelly