



CONNECTIONS

Education News From Northeastern Connecticut

New Laws, Regional Efficiencies May Help Our Region

Regional cost-sharing and collaboration are more important than ever as state legislators enact and consider new laws to address problems caused by shrinking revenues.

This month, two new Connecticut laws aimed at promoting regional efficiencies in transportation and health insurance took effect and may assist local educators as they build future budgets.

The new state laws allowing regionalized transportation and health insurance bids took effect on October 1st and grew out of the state Legislature's Commission on Municipal Opportunities and Regional Efficiencies (MORE). The MORE Commission was created last winter to explore ways to restructure government and save municipalities money.

"In particular, I'm hoping that boards and towns take a look at the new law relating to pooling their insurance," said state Rep. Joan Lewis, D-8th Dist., who served as co-chair of the Board of Education Functions Committee of the MORE Commission. Lewis represents part of the EASTCONN region.

The state's new transportation law allows local boards of education to make inter-town cooperative arrangements for school transportation. (PA 10-167) The new health insurance law allows municipalities and/or boards of education to purchase health insurance collectively for their employees. (PA 10-174)

Lewis called both new laws "a step in the right direction."

The state Legislature will not be in session again until January, but Lewis said the MORE Commission will continue its work.

EASTCONN already hosts or offers 13 regional groups or councils to help educators and school personnel share successful strategies and create new opportunities for collaboration.

[Editor's Note: Go to www.eastconn.org/councils to view a list and calendar for regional councils and groups.]

EASTCONN is actively exploring regional opportunities in both the school transportation and health insurance. To learn more, contact EASTCONN Executive Director Paula M. Colen at pcolen@eastconn.org, or at 860-455-0707.