

Senate Bill 172

Public Comment Summary

- Does the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) include “Special Schools” such as those included through DSCYF? Those schools serve some of our most at-risk students. They should be included.
- Page 2 of 5, section (2)(a) – looks like minor capital is included; what about major capital?
- What does “Maintenance of Plant” mean? How will mold, vermin, etc. be reported?
- Wanted to know the difference between the average and median salaries, suggesting that the median distribution as junior teachers will bring down the average.
- Wanted more information about “excluding community services,” and wanted that defined. The Department of Education (DOE) should consider adding definitions of these terms.
- Would like every penny to be seen.
- Details of money spent on 504 plans and students with special needs.
- Does this replace the Annual Financial Statement process?
- Can you compare the number per pupil and from school to schools? What will citizens infer?
- There is a need to look at coding and understand what it means.
- Additional reporting at the district level is not ok if it involves additional work at the district level.
- A system of processing is needed – that would easily and cleanly compute.
- These comments illustrate why we need to make changes. What is clear? What is fair?
- Consider publishing the statewide business rules to eliminate confusion.
- US DOE allows for a delay until 2019 reporting for ESSA. Consider it.
- Guidance given this year may be different from guidance given next year.
- Thank you all for being here and sharing your thoughts on how we can make education spending transparent and accessible to the public.
- We’re here tonight to work with stakeholders like you—parents, businesses leaders, school board members, and other engaged members of the public—to get this reporting process right. Your participation is a crucial part of the vision for Senate Bill 172.
- It is clear that we need to be able to understand education spending, so that we know how and where our tax dollars are being spent and how we are investing in our education system.
- While, increasing transparency is not going to magically close achievement gaps and improve student outcomes, it is an important tool that will help steer future policy decisions by effectively providing us with a dictionary to understand school spending.
- Clear data can help us answer the questions at the heart of core educational missions like closing the achievement gap, doing a better job for special education students, and improving student outcomes.
- Getting this right is a big deal for lawmakers, it is a big deal for educators, it’s a big deal for taxpayers, and most importantly, it’s a big deal for the students we’re investing in.
- Thank you again for taking the time to share your thoughts and perspectives tonight.
- Thank you to DOE and federal government regarding the improvement to financial reporting, specifically on a building level.
- Challenge is to find out how much we are spending for students in schools.

- Expenditures should be included with what their purpose is (coding for each expenditure category).
- Requested to post report sent to Senate and House Chairs on DOE's website.
- There is a need in education to have primary pillars where standards of living are equal to or greater than the previous generation.
- Thankful that discussing this issue with \$2.5B in funding that has an impact on educational opportunities for our children.
- In order to use that money appropriately, we need to make sure we are not miscoding; the more accurate codes, the more accurate data (garbage in equals garbage out).
- There is no equality between districts because of inconsistent coding into First State Financials (FSF).
- Inconsistencies between districts in coding expenditures cited in Auditor's report
- Difficult for users of the data to compare based upon widespread inconsistencies.
- Request additional account codes.
- Districts and charters need to consistently use correct codes.
- Strongly support school level reporting, need safeguards or terrible injustice to kids.
- If no safeguards are in place, should not report.
- Wants input from community be made available to the entire community.
- Recommend that comments be put on the website.
- Make information from tonight public.
- What action is DOE going to take action on?
- Request that DOE take all information it is going to receive and put it on the DOE website in an easily understandable and easy-to-read format and assign that responsibility to someone at DOE.
- Questions about the differences between Senate Bill 172 and ESSA – is there a way DOE can clarify what each does? What is the evolution of the process? Is there a side-by-side comparison?
- Thanks for the early input and clear guidance.
- Wants to ensure that the public input from ESSA and Senate Bill 172 is adequate.
- Appreciates community involvement and the three meetings.
- Wants to ensure that the group mentioned in the legislation is consulted throughout the process/ensure robust conversation.
- Will we be able to determine how much of the expenses are related specifically to teachers?
- Please include teachers' salaries/expenses – it is hard to get young people to choose teaching as a profession – please make sure there is no expenditure drift into NON-personnel path.
- What are bordering states doing to collect this data? Maybe we do not have to start from scratch.
- How do we determine how much to allocate to each school/district if we do not have any usable data?
- How do you know how much should be going to each district/charter school?
- Allocation of building salaries based upon seniority/years of service.
- We need to make sure we are allocating money by building instead of districts.
- Confused between ESSA and Senate Bill 172.

- Not all accounts are in FSF. Need to look at the total pool of money not just what is in the accounting system.
- Need to look at apples to apples comparison for student activity accounts to get full picture. Charters, vo-tech and districts must be treated fairly.
- ESSA only looks at FSF.
- There needs to be as much accountability as possible.
- More disparity within school buildings than when comparing districts (based upon salaries). How is it that we can't publish how much is spent at schools?
- 85% of budget is people. Let's remember that salary isn't just salary – it is also other employment costs, benefits – all rolled into a salary total.
- Personnel in building and then shared (art, music) need to know how much time in building and assigned...not just prorated.
- Wants financial reporting updated monthly reporting.
- Student counts should be trued up throughout the year too.
- Use a range not just mean, median of salaries.
- Funding source: foundation, donation, state, federal, restricted funds, etc.
- DOE expenses that directly support school districts allocated within the school they support
- Create a citizen advisory panel to look at data/provide input.
- Spread expenses by units...is this the most transparent?
- Look at the standard size of schools – you cannot compare a small school of 100 kids to a larger school with 300 kids. Size of school matters. Sum all of this information up in a way that clearly summarizes the information.
- How do we make sure kids get the most units available and that they get the IEPs/services they are entitled to?
- Interest in Senate Bill 85. Should be part of the report card.
- Student teacher ratio is important. Higher percentage of poverty should have a better student/teacher ratio.
- Create a citizens council for accountability.
- Allow people on the outside to have input.
- School codes are important. Make these codes similar to the World Health Organization codes – consistent across the state/comparable system.
- Create a community advisory committee.
- Interested to know how feedback shared tonight will be addressed/reflected in the final report.
- Make sure information is widely shared.
- Consider using info compiled by Data Service Center to standardize reporting.
- Give districts opportunity to weigh in on percentage allocations for central office staff.