

CONNECTICUT HIGHER EDUCATION SUPPLEMENTAL LOAN AUTHORITY
Minutes of Authority Advisory Committee Meeting
August 30, 2021

The State of Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority held a telephonic meeting of the Advisory Committee at 11:00 a.m. on Monday August 30, 2021.¹

The meeting was called to order at 11:02 a.m. by Mr. Josh Hurlock, Assistant Director of CHESLA. Those present and absent were as follows:

Present: Richard Bishop, retired Financial Aid Director, CCSU
Lewis J. DeLuca, Head of Student Financial Literacy, SCSU
Wilson Luna, retired Dean of Students, Gateway Community College.

Absent: Matthew Rosen, High School Counselor, Wilton High School

Also Present: Jeanette W. Weldon Executive Director, CHEFA and CHESLA
Daniel Giungi, Communication and Legislative Affairs Specialist, CHEFA
Joshua Hurlock, Assistant Director, CHESLA

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Ms. Weldon provided the following organizational overview:

- The Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority (CHESLA) is a quasi-public state authority created by the General Assembly in 1982.
- CHESLA became a subsidiary of the Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority (CHEFA) on July 1, 2012.
- Governing Board includes State Treasurer, Secretary of OPM, President of CCSU, and the State’s Chief Workforce Officer.
- Advisory Committee includes High School Counselor, the Head of Student Financial Literacy at SCSU, a retired Financial Aid Director from CCSU, and a retired Dean of Students from Gateway Community College.

PRODUCT OVERVIEW

Mr. Hurlock provided a detailed overview of the following CHESLA products:

- CT Dollars & Sense: A financial literacy tool that is a “one-stop shop” for information and resources for Connecticut students and their families.
- Need-based Scholarship Program: Need-based college scholarships for Connecticut residents attending Connecticut non-profit institutions of higher education. Scholarships available for students pursuing an undergraduate degree or healthcare and manufacturing certificate programs.
- In School Loan Program: Student Loan Program for students in or from Connecticut offering non-tiered fixed interest rate of 4.59%. There are no fees.
- Refi-CT: Refinancing loan program for CHESLA borrowers and Connecticut residents with school-certified student loans. Fixed rate as low as 4.75%. There are no fees.

A brief discussion ensued.

¹ All attendees participated in the meeting via conference telephone that permitted all parties to hear each other

FY 2022 – FY 2024 STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW

Ms. Weldon reported that the strategic plan resulted from a joint process involving CHEFA and CHESLA Board members and staff. Ms. Weldon stated that the Authority will maintain the same five strategic pillars that already exist under the current strategic plan. The five pillars are: Collaboration, Economic and Workforce Development for the Public Good, Technology, Innovation, and Public Engagement and Accountability. Ms. Weldon stated that future initiatives continue to fit within these pillars.

Ms. Weldon highlighted key initiatives #1 and #3 of the strategic plan relative to CHESLA for the next three years.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Mr. Giungi provided a legislative update on the success of the Alliance District Teacher Loan Subsidy Program as well as expanding the definition of education assistance as outlined in CHESLA's enabling statutes. Mr. Giungi gave a brief history on the two proposals. Mr. Giungi noted that staff was successful in working with House Representative Jason Doucette to have an amendment filed on a pre-existing bill. The amendment contained 3 components, language establishing the Alliance District Teacher Loan Subsidy Program, language that expands the definition of education assistance as outlined in CHESLA's enabling statutes, and language requiring CHESLA to conduct a study and participate in a working group focusing on examining the feasibility of expanding access to CHESLA's products. Mr. Giungi stated that it is staff's understanding that CHESLA will be serving as one of the Co-Chairs in conjunction with Representative Jason Doucette and the working group will convene for its first meeting within the next month. Mr. Giungi reported that the Governor held a bill signing ceremony following the legislation's passage.

Mr. Giungi reported on legislation regarding CHESLA's ability to create loans for high value certificate programs. Mr. Giungi stated that this is part of the Governor's workforce development plan, and after a special legislative session, an implementer bill was passed containing language that would enable CHESLA to provide loans for high value certificate programs. These programs would be reviewed and determined by the Chief Workforce Officer on an individual basis. Ms. Weldon noted that the high value certificate programs could include for-profit programs. A brief discussion ensued.

FINANCIAL LITERACY DISCOUNT CONCEPT

Mr. Hurlock stated that the majority of CHESLA's financial literacy portal is powered by iGrad, a leading financial literacy platform in the industry. As part of their platform, there are financial literacy courses that can be completed. Mr. Hurlock stated that the financial literacy discount concept would involve tying the completion of these courses to an interest rate discount on CHESLA loans. A discussion ensued.

Mr. Hurlock stated that he will continue to update the Advisory Committee as the concept gets developed. Ms. Weldon and Mr. Hurlock thanked the members for their time and feedback.

Ms. Weldon noted that the CHESLA Board of Directors Annual Meeting is on September 20th and all Advisory Committee members are invited to attend.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted



Jeanette W. Weldon
Executive Director