

**Dear Representative Geragosian, Senator Harp and members of the Appropriations Committee:**

We, the members of the Stamford Board of Education, are extremely disappointed that Governor Rell has decided to reverse the will of the Legislature by repealing the \$426,000 ECS grant that Stamford was to receive. This comes on the heels of the decision to use stimulus money to flat fund ECS. While school districts all over the country saw substantial gains in funding through stimulus funds from Washington, Connecticut's school districts did not benefit at all. Not one teacher job was saved in Stamford.

Through the efforts of our delegation in Hartford, a wrong that was done in 2007 was righted in 2008. In 2007, Stamford was omitted from the list of Priority School Districts (PSD) receiving an increase in the base aid ratio. The additional \$426,000 ECS grant approved by the Legislature in 2008 will be a step in bringing Stamford in closer parity with the other PSD's in Connecticut.

85% of the Stamford Board of Education budget comes from local funding, i.e. property taxes, which is substantially more than any other urban area in Connecticut. In fact, we receive one tenth the amount of ECS funding than other municipalities in DRG H. While it is true that Stamford has a large grand list, it is also true that we have substantial needs in our schools. Over 40% of Stamford's students qualify for free and reduced price lunch, almost 15% of our students are English Language Learners, 37% of our students come from homes where English is the second language, and about 10% of our students have disabilities.

We are asking you to not single out Stamford in your quest to balance the budget. In this daunting economic climate, every additional dollar we receive back from Hartford will help Stamford's taxpayers meet their obligation to the children in the Stamford public schools. This will allow Stamford to continue to be the kind of vibrant, successful city that is so important to Connecticut's economy.

Thank you for your consideration.

Stamford Board of Education

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