



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
**OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT**

**TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**  
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Testimony Supporting House Bill No. 5020

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GOVERNOR  
CONCERNING EDUCATION

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Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann and distinguished members of the Education Committee thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on House Bill No. 5020, An Act Implementing the Budget Recommendations of the Governor Concerning Education.

This bill is necessary to implement the Governor's Budget.

**Section 1** would allow the Commissioner of Education to provide supplemental magnet transportation grants to regional educational service centers for FY 2010-11. Some funding was carried forward from FY 2009-10 for this purpose.

**Section 2** would eliminate the \$426,769 in additional ECS funding for Stamford. The purpose of the ECS grant is to equalize education funding between poorer and richer communities. To provide a single town additional funding outside the formula undermines the equitable distribution of funding for all towns.

**Section 3** would suspend the special Magnet School subsidies for Wintergreen Magnet School in Hamden and Edison Magnet School in Meriden. The FY2010 - FY2011 Budget includes \$750,000 each for additional funding for Wintergreen Magnet School in Hamden and Edison Magnet School in Meriden. Both Wintergreen and Edison are operated by a Regional Education Service Center (ACES).

Although both Wintergreen and Edison have other school district partners, the vast majority of students come from their home communities of Hamden and Meriden. The percentage of in-district students is so high that both schools are in danger of losing any reimbursement from the magnet school grant since these schools essentially operate as Hamden and Meriden schools rather than interdistrict magnet schools.

Section 22 of PA 09-6 included language that would allow both schools to continue to receive Magnet school grants and to receive magnet school grants at special rates for their particular schools. The additional funding of \$750,000 each would provide Hamden with \$4,894 per pupil for Hamden students and Meriden with \$4,250 per pupil for Meriden students instead of \$3,000, which other non-*Sheff* magnet schools receive.

It is not equitable to provide two magnet schools with additional funding, especially when those schools are essentially in danger of being deemed district-run schools and would no longer be eligible for magnet school funding.

Section 4 would provide that the grants for the Healthy Foods Initiative are funded within available appropriations, rather than at the current rate of ten cents per lunch. Depending on the number of districts that apply for the grant, the grants distributed might be less than ten cents per lunch. This is an incentive program to encourage districts to adopt more healthy feeding programs; this proposed change would not affect funding for the major school lunch programs.

Section 5 would suspend the new Early Childhood Office in the Department of Education. During these tough economic times, it is imprudent to expand state bureaucracy, particularly when the work contemplated by this office could be professionally accomplished by current staff in the Department of Education.

I would like to again thank the committee for the opportunity to present this testimony. I respectfully request the Committee support this bill and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.