

TIMELINE REMINDERS

1. Governor Malloy spoke at the State FFA Conference in May at Ledyard, talked about his support for the agriscience programs as a way to expand job growth while supporting the 3.6 Billion Dollar Connecticut Agriculture Industry.
2. Lt. Governor Wyman spoke at the NHS Legislative Open House in October in Woodbury, saying at both she and the Governor see the value of the agriscience programs and are committed to expanding them because this is the year for education and they both are big agriculture supporters.
3. HB 6801, AN ACT PROMOTING ECONOMIC GROWTH AND JOB CREATION IN THE STATE, is passed in October of 2011. Under the Workforce Development section entitled Education Offerings, this law requires local and regional boards of education to inform middle and high school students and parents within their respective jurisdictions of the availability of agricultural science and technology (vo-ag) education at vo-ag education centers. The law specifically mentions having all school districts inform their students about agriscience programs as an option since they ultimately will train future employees for job growth in CT.
4. Commissioner Pryor sends his policy director to Nonnewaug High School to find out what policy changes are necessary for Connecticut to have a World Class Agricultural Education Program.
5. The Governor sends a letter to all legislators mentioning the importance of Education Reform for the upcoming session. Throughout the letter, he mentions job growth, workforce and career readiness and how important education is to the economy and that “expanding the availability of high-quality school models, including agriscience programs” is one of his 6 Principles of his educational reform package.
6. The Governor mentions to State Board of Education member Terry Jones that he wants to see more opportunity for students who are not enrolled in the agriscience programs who already attend the host schools to be able to take a class in the agriscience program that interests them.
7. At the recent Education Reform Workshop held at CCSU, the Governor mentioned several times in his speech about the importance of job growth, workforce training, and education’s crucial role in preparing our students to enter the workforce for Connecticut’s future.
8. At the recent Governor’s Council on Agricultural Development meeting, Governor Malloy states that “Agriculture was an important part of Connecticut’s past. We believe it must be an equally important part of Connecticut’s future”, and that he is proposing more farm funds to train new hires and boost locally produced agriculture.

**Top Ten Reasons to Increase Funding to Agriscience Programs
so that Connecticut will have a World Class Agriscience Education System:**

10. They have a rich, long history of time-tested success.

(They have **existed for more than 90 years of success in preparing high school students for careers in Connecticut's Agriculture Industry**)

9. They are the ORIGINAL magnet schools, but are the only ones that are CAREER-BASED.

(Unlike other school choice programs, **agriscience programs** are the only ones that **directly influence job growth in CT**)

8. The State already has invested over 200 million dollars in building the 19 regional centers.

(However, many are **one third empty due to lack of funding for operating costs** for the host high schools.)

7. Hundreds of students are on waiting lists in several agriscience programs across the state.

(Yet, they have room for over 1,100 more students in these centers, and **have waiting lists** to fill those spots.)

6. They suffer from a gross inequity in state support for school choice programs.

(A significant increase in operating funding is LONG overdue. At **\$1,417 per student** state support, agriscience programs are by far the LOWEST of any school choice program (**charters are at \$9,400 per student** state support, **magnets from \$7,600 to \$10,800** per student state support, and **Vo-Tech programs** are fully funded by the state at over **\$12,000** per student.)

5. They are not asking for full funding, only about \$4,000 more per student to cover operating costs.

(The increase from \$1,417 to \$5,300 per student would still be far below other school choice programs.)

4. They produce college and career ready graduates.

Only 41% of 2004 CT graduates who went to college earned a degree after 6 years. However, **78% of 2005 agriscience program graduates who went to college earned a degree in only 5 years.**

3. This is the year of Education Reform, and several groups such as CAPSS have indicated that the agriscience programs are the perfect models of their recently announced Education Reform Initiative, "NextEd." (See December 2011 State Board of Education meeting minutes)

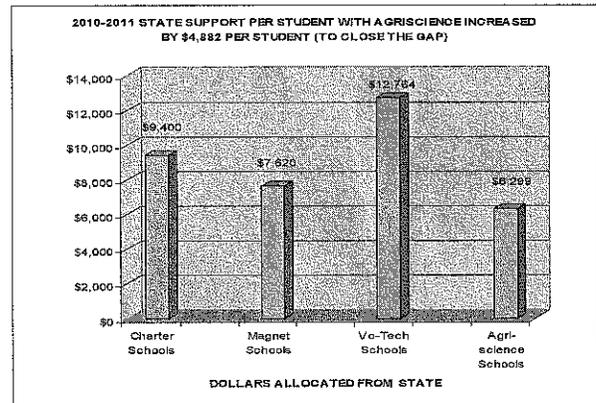
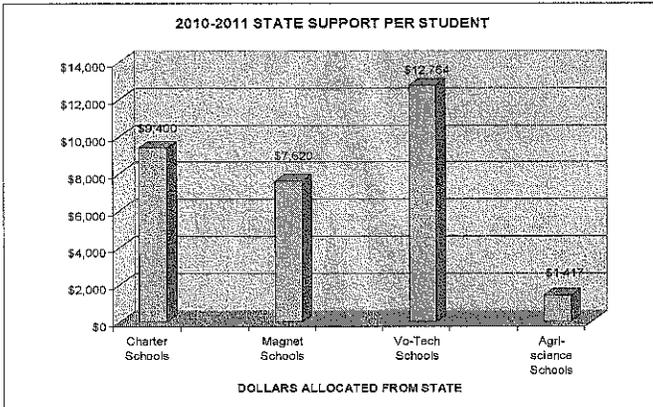
2. With both Governor Malloy and Lt. Governor Wyman announcing their strong support of the Connecticut Agricultural industry and its importance to the state economy, they have also publically stated their support and intentions to expand support for the state's agriscience programs as valuable school choice options that provide trained employees for this growing industry.

1. THE AGRISCIENCE PROGRAM MODEL WORKS.

- **FUND THEM ADEQUATELY,**
- **HOLD THEM ACCOUNTABLE (CONDITIONAL FUNDING) AND USE THEM AS AN EXAMPLE OF EDUCATION THAT WORKS.**
- **LET THEM GROW TO HELP FILL THE VOID OF TRAINED EMPLOYEES FOR CONNECTICUT'S 3.6 BILLION DOLLAR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY.**

DON'T FORGET ABOUT THE AGRISCIENCE PROGRAMS

- PLEASE INCREASE FUNDING FOR THE STATE'S "ORIGINAL MAGNET SCHOOLS", THE 19 REGIONAL AGRISCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS (FORMERLY KNOWN AS VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS) LOCATED ACROSS THE STATE FROM STAMFORD TO KILLINGLY AND FROM FALLS VILLAGE TO LEDYARD, SERVING MORE THAN 3,000 STUDENTS FROM ALL 169 MUNICIPALITIES



INSTEAD OF THIS,

WHY NOT THIS?

- THESE PROGRAMS NEED 11 MILLION DOLLARS IN ORDER TO EXPAND TO ACCEPT OVER 1,100 MORE STUDENTS FROM THE INTERESTED AND QUALIFIED APPLICANTS ON WAITING LISTS EACH YEAR FOR THESE POPULAR AGRISCIENCE PROGRAMS.

- 11 MILLION DOLLARS WOULD BRING THE STATE SUPPORT PER PUPIL UP FROM \$1,400.00 TO \$6,300.00, WHICH IS STILL FAR BELOW ALL OTHER SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAMS.

HOWEVER, THAT IS ALL THEY NEED.

- THE STATE HAS ALREADY INVESTED OVER 200 MILLION DOLLARS IN BUILDING THESE REGIONAL AGRISCIENCE CENTERS, YET MANY ARE ONE THIRD EMPTY DUE TO THE LOW LEVEL OF OPERATING GRANT FUNDING PROVIDED BY THE STATE.
- THE STATE'S REGIONAL AGRISCIENCE PROGRAMS ARE WIDELY RECOGNIZED AS A SOURCE FOR CAREER TRAINING AND JOB GROWTH FOR CONNECTICUT.
- THE AGRISCIENCE PROGRAMS ARE SPECIFICALLY REFERENCED UNDER THE WORKFORCE FORCE DEVELOPMENT PORTION OF PUBLIC ACT 11-1, AN ACT PROMOTING ECONOMIC GROWTH AND JOB CREATION IN THE STATE.
- THE LAW SPECIFICALLY REQUIRES THAT ALL LOCAL AND REGIONAL BOARDS OF EDUCATION TO INFORM STUDENTS AND PARENTS OF THE AVAILABILITY OF THE REGIONAL AGRISCIENCE PROGRAMS AS A CAREER-BASED SCHOOL CHOICE OPTION.
 - INCREASING FUNDING FOR AGRISCIENCE PROGRAMS WILL DIRECTLY BENEFIT JOB GROWTH IN CONNECTICUT'S 3.5 BILLION DOLLAR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY, WITH OVER 50,000 CITIZENS CURRENTLY EMPLOYED IN IT.
 - THERE ARE 5,800 CURRENT JOB OPENINGS IN THE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY, WHICH CAN BE FILLED WITH AGRISCIENCE PROGRAM GRADUATES

THIS LONG OVERDUE INCREASE IN FUNDING FOR THE AGRISCIENCE PROGRAMS WILL ALLOW OVER 1,000 ADDITIONAL STUDENTS TO ACCESS THESE SUCCESSFUL, TIME-TESTED REGIONAL AGRISCIENCE CENTERS THAT HAVE EXISTED IN CONNECTICUT SINCE THE 1920's.

