

Testimony Submitted to
Education Committee
Connecticut General Assembly

Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto
Superintendent of Hartford Public Schools

February 15, 2013

Co-Chairs Senator Andrea Stillman and Representative Andrew Fleischmann, Vice-Chairs Senator Beth Bye and Representative Douglas McCrory, Ranking Members Senator Toni Boucher and Rep. Tim Ackert, and distinguished members of the Education Committee, for the record, my name is Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto, Superintendent of Hartford Public Schools.

First, let me thank you for the opportunity to appear before you and for your ongoing support of Hartford Public Schools. Our success over the years is due in great part to the hard work of the members of this committee.

Second, I want to publicly thank Governor Dannel Malloy and Commissioner Stefan Pryor for their leadership on school reform and commitment to deliver a quality education to every child in the State of Connecticut.

As you may know, for seven years Hartford Public Schools has been engaged in a significant reform effort. Our efforts have resulted in the reduction of the achievement gap in the City of Hartford by one-third. We have done this in an era of diminishing resources.

In fact, this current fiscal year is the only year we experienced a modest budget increase. The years prior to that we have seen flat budgets and budget reductions. As a result, we have experienced a reduction in force of ~~X~~ since the beginning of our reform. Our Central Office administration alone has been reduced by two-thirds.

I wholeheartedly support Governor Malloy's proposal to increase ECS funding. However, I would submit to you that Hartford Public Schools is in a very different situation than other districts. We have seven years of experience in the work of school reform and have made very tough budgetary decisions from the very beginning.

When we began this work only 48% of our resources were concentrated in the classroom. I am proud to say that 75% of our resources are in the classroom and 25% support central services (E.g. Transportation, Special Education, etc.).

For us, carving out additional dollars from ECS for specific Alliance District initiatives does not necessarily make sense, because as you can see, we have already taken many of the actions called for in the governor's proposal.

We are at the point in which it is not possible for us to further reduce our administration services.

Where we do need the additional resources to comply with and provide quality Special Education and English Language Learner services, and carry out the necessary planning and implementation of the Common Core State Standards and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium test that will soon replace the CMT and the CAPT.

I urge you to take this into consideration as you deliberate the Governor's recommendations.

Thank you