



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
GOVERNOR DANIEL P. MALLOY

February 15, 2013

Dear Members of the Education Committee,

Last year the General Assembly took bold steps necessary to begin reforming our public education system. The measures and budget enacted last year have already created 950 new early childhood slots for our youngest children, sent more money to districts in need with the promise of results, started turning around four of our lowest performing schools, took steps necessary to make our schools home to the best educators and school leaders, and continued to expand the availability of high quality school models.

The sixth principle that guided education reform is to **“unleash innovation by removing red tape and other barriers to success, especially in our higher-performing school districts”**. These steps, only when taken together, will achieve the goal of supporting all of our schools and beginning to close the achievement gap. We know there are success stories in almost all of our districts, schools found throughout the state that are proving successful. To truly partner with districts in supporting the education of our students, we must find a way as a state to find opportunities to give districts flexibility and allow those successes to be replicated throughout our education system.

Last year, I convened a task force to evaluate opportunities to remove state mandates and burdens to help districts. Comprised of teachers, administrators, district leaders, and municipal officials, this task force worked over the course of this past year to find a path forward. I want to thank them for their service and their advocacy for our students and schools. Their efforts helped shape the proposal that is before you. It is a first step to address the needs of schools demonstrating true progress and high performance. More work is to be done, and that is why I am asking that the Red Tape Task Force reconvene and continue their discussions, and I thank them in advance for their contributions.

As I said in my budget address a week ago, “While we help our underperforming schools, we’re going to get out of the way of districts that are doing well. For high-performing schools, we can eliminate burdensome reporting requirements and free them from some state mandates.” The proposal in front of you does this by creating the infrastructure that will lead to much-needed flexibility. Commissioner Stefan Pryor is committed that this infrastructure will not impede his department’s ability to fulfill the regulatory responsibility that guides Connecticut’s public education system.

We are all aware that our communities and local school districts feel their success is hampered by too many mandates that do not improve students' learning. So I ask today that districts work with us to find flexibilities and unleash innovation at the local level. It's not easy work, but we are committed to finding common ground and encourage greater focus on student achievement.

We all share a commitment to our students, and I look forward to working together to build on the gains from last year and continuing to invest in our students to offer them the opportunity to learn and succeed.

Regards,

Dannel P. Malloy
Governor