TESTIMONY OF CT ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS ON HB 6357
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
February 21, 2013
DAVID J CALCHERA, DIRECTOR, PUBLIC POLICY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The CT Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) represents the Superintendents of school districts in Connecticut and members of their cabinets. We deeply appreciate the Governor's commitment to public education in these difficult economic times.

CAPSS particularly supports the following components.

- Continued funding for the Alliance Districts
- Expansion of the Commissioner's Network of Schools
- Support for the implementation of the new teacher and principal evaluation and support system
- Funding for efforts to transform the teaching profession on a voluntary basis by local districts in partnership with the bargaining agents for teachers in those districts.

In short, CAPSS is pleased that the Governor's proposal seeks to continue to momentum towards transforming education in CT that began in 2012.

However, we are concerned that the attempt to "hold harmless" those school districts not in the Alliance or Commissioner's network will be difficult in the face of overall limited funding to municipalities. The elimination or reduction of grants such as PILOT and student transportation will make it difficult to balance local budgets without affecting funding for schools. We are particularly concerned that the recommendations of the ECS Task Force with reference to Agriscience funding have not been included.

State funding for education has now been "flat funded" for four years. As a result, the proportion of local to state support for local education has steadily crept upward. Under the Governor's proposal, local school districts not in the Alliance or Commissioner's network not only will receive little or no ECS increase, but reduced overall municipal funding may lead to an even greater erosion in school funding.

So, what can be done to address these concerns? CAPSS recommends the following.

- **Restore the school transportation grant and remove the cap on that grant**. School transportation is a state mandate and it should be funded by the State.
- **Remove the cap on the special education placement excess cost grant**. Costs for children with special educational needs are unpredictable and should be a responsibility of the state as a whole.
- **Establish a Minimum Budget Requirement that unambiguously protects an increase in the ECS Grant Program for use by the local school system.**

CAPSS makes these recommendations with full knowledge that the Governor and the State Legislature have a daunting challenge before them when it comes to adopting a State budget for FY 2013. We remain prepared to assist the Legislature in any way that it can as the Legislature develops a budget for the next two fiscal years.