TESTIMONY
GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATION
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The CT Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) appreciates and is grateful for the increases in state financial support for public education that the Governor has recommended and the legislature has approved over the past three years. CT is one of the few states in the country that has increased funding for public education over that time period.

Within that context, CAPSS offers the following testimony regareding the Governor's public education budget recommendations for fiscal 2015.

SCHOOL SECURITY GRANTS

CAPSS urges the legislature to approve the Governor's recommendation for a second round of grants that would be available to school districts to pay for safety and security alterations to school buildings and grounds. Motivated by the tragic occurrences at Sandy Hook Elementary School on 12/14/12, every school district in CT has reviewed and, if necessary, revised their programs to ensure the safety and security of children and staff members. Many of the steps identified via these processes require the expenditure of funds and in many cases, local communities do not have the financial resources to provide these funds. The Governor's proposal if enacted would provide the funds needed to enhance the safety and security of children and staff members in the school districts of CT. CAPSS urges the legislature to approve this proposal.

ECS Grant

As referenced above, CAPSS appreciates the efforts that have been made over the past three years to increase the funds that the State of CT has provided for school districts in the state. This increase, however, has not been sufficient to restore the buying power of school districts that was lost due to the four consecutive years prior to the last three of flat funding for public education at the state level. CAPSS, therefore, urges the legislature to approve a 3% increase in the Education Cost Sharing Grant (ECS) for fiscal 2015. Such an increase would be commensurate with the increased cost of maintaining next school year present public education programs statewide. Anything less than a 3% increase would result in another year of buying power loss for the public school districts in CT.

Excess Cost Grant

For a number of years, the State of CT has provided some relief for school districts when it came to paying for very expensive programs for some children with special needs. The relief has been provided

via the Excess Special Education Cost Grant. Unfortunately, however, by virtue of capping this grant program, CT has not provided sufficient financial relief in this regard. As a result, CT's school districts have labored under what is in many instances a quite burdensome partially funded state mandate.

CAPSS, therefore, urges the state legislature to remove the cap on the Excess Cost Grant. Such an action would enhance the ability to every CT school district to provide at ;east an adequate educational program for every child served by the district and not require districts to diminish the quality of educational programming for some children because of the mandate to provide an expensive program for other children.

In addition, by virtue of removing the cap on the Excess Cost Grant, the State of CT would be reversing a multi-year trend whereby state mandates increase without a concurrent increase in state funding for public education.

As always, CAPSS representatives are eager to discuss any and all of these matters along with any related issues with any member of the legislature.