



LEADERSHIP

FOR THE FUTURE OF LEARNING

**TESTIMONY of the CT ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS
BEFORE THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

IN REFERENCE TO:

HB 6824, AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2017, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATED TO REVENUE.

The CT Association of Public School Superintendents {CAPSS} which represents the Superintendents of CT's Public Schools and over a hundred other school district central office administrators offers the following comments on the HB 6824.

- The proposed budget would continue the nine year old practice of virtually flat funding the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant for every community in the State. This practice during a time when annual education costs have risen on the average of 3% a year has resulted in shifting the burden of paying for public education more and more to local communities, most of which are either unwilling and/or unable to shoulder that burden. The impact of this on the children served by the State's public schools has been:
 - School facilities in which needed maintenance projects have been postponed to the point where further postponement cannot be justified.
 - School facilities that have not been updated to enable the implementation of all of the latest educational enhancements.
 - Extra-curricular programs that have either been eliminated or reduced.
 - Some elimination of relatively under enrolled curricular programs, ones that were particularly important to the engagement of their participants with schooling itself.
 - A gradual increase in class size which has resulted in less individual attention for children.
- Rather than continuing this trend, the state should commit to full funding of ECS as a starting point, enactment of which would increase state funding for virtually every community in the State.

- Enactment of full funding for the ECS would drive state financial aid for education in a manner consistent with the basic purpose of ECS which is to help communities pay for public education in a manner directly related to the community's wealth. Fewer children, therefore, would have their educational program unduly influenced by the wealth of the community in which they live.

CAPSS fully realizes that fully funding the ECS is not all that has to be done to remedy the deficiencies in the manner in which the State of CT funds public education. For example, CT will still have eleven separate programs for funding public education. In addition, the system will still not be based on what it takes financially to provide every child in the State with an adequate educational program.

Fully funding the ECS, nevertheless, would be an important step towards moving CT towards the public education funding system that needs to be in place if we are to insure our future as a state by educating all of our children so that they will be prepared to live decent and productive lives as citizens in a democracy. CAPSS, therefore, looks forward to working with the Legislature, the Governor, relevant state agencies and other organizations interested in improving our educational system to not only to restore the ECS grants to the requisite level but to also continue exploring how to make CT's educational funding system what it should be.