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Winifred Hamilton, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools

March 3, 2015

Randy Collins
CAPSS

Via email: randallcollins@mac.com

Re: March 3, 2015 hearing on HB 6824 Education Revenue – Stamford ECS funding

Dear Randy:

I am employed by the Stamford Public Schools and also reside in the city of Stamford. Due to other obligations, the superintendent of schools will be unable to attend tonight, and has asked me to contact you to present information on HB6824. Because of the latest weather predictions, I will also be unable to attend the public hearing but would like to present information about two areas of the proposed budget which have underfunded revenues to the district and have a major effect on education in the city: Education Equalization (ECS) funding shown on page 40 of HB 6824 and the Excess Cost-Student Based shown in the bill under item T31.

Item T1030 of the bill keeps the Stamford Education Equalization (ECS) funding at the same level for 2016-17 and 2017-18 as it is today. In addition to no allowance for growth of students in Stamford (currently averaging 1.2% per year), there has been no revision to the ECS formula which greatly underfunds education revenue to the City of Stamford. Because of clauses in the ECS formula which weight city grand list values far more than “ability to pay” the district is receiving approximately \$32m less than it should. The property grand list (AENGLC) values in the City of Stamford are valued highly for two reasons: proximity to New York City and Corporate Office buildings which may have located to the city based on promises of low or no taxes leaving most of the responsibility for taxes to the homeowners. If you were to look at the demographics, Stamford is similar to Danbury and Meriden in percent of students on free or reduced price lunch, non-English speaking homes and minority percentage yet the ECS grant pays Stamford \$10,605,319 (\$684 per student), Danbury \$29,554,523 (\$2,755 per student) and Meriden \$59,964,898 (\$6,610 per student). If the Stamford ECS grant were to increase to the same grant amount as Danbury (\$2,755 per pupil), which I am in favor of doing, the ECS funding to the district would increase to \$42,677,705.

I would also like to point out that the current ECS formula disproportionately allocates funding north and east of Hartford and discriminates against Fairfield County districts. I have attached a chart with 2013-14 information that illustrates my point.

I would also like to speak about item T31 “Excess Cost – Student Based” which is used to help fund the high cost of special education students in the district and is being flat funded. Annually, due to caps in the grant, the district payout is reduced by 25% or \$1.2-\$1.4 million. The special education cost

in the Stamford Public School budget is growing 3.5 times the rate of inflation and by level funding this grant, more obligation is placed on the school district and city of Stamford to fund the high cost of special education. I would request that the caps on the Excess Cost – Student Based be eliminated.

I would like to thank you for your assistance in forwarding this to the proper committee members and also applaud the work done by the elected officials to assist Stamford in correcting inconsistencies with the ECS formula and grant caps that have a huge effect in providing educational services in the city.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Hugh Murphy".

Hugh Murphy, Executive Director of Finance
65 Bedford Street
Stamford, CT 06901

Table 1: ECS Revenue Comparison

Town#	Town	DRG	2012-13 Pupils*	2013-14 ECS \$	2012-13 Cost per pupil	ECS per pupil	% of total cost	% free and reduced	% non-Eng homes	% minority
2	Ansonia	H	2,629	\$16,106,868	\$13,040	\$6,127	47.0%	67.2%	3.0%	52.1%
15	Bridgeport	I	20,485	\$173,724,236	\$13,665	\$8,481	62.1%	100.0%	13.8%	91.2%
17	Bristol	G	8,503	\$44,153,337	\$12,478	\$5,193	41.6%	36.8%	4.1%	32.3%
34	Danbury	H	10,727	\$27,294,245	\$11,933	\$2,544	21.3%	51.5%	20.2%	58.1%
37	Derby	H	1,613	\$7,535,221	\$12,292	\$4,672	38.0%	53.2%	6.6%	45.8%
43	East Hartford	H	8,034	\$46,063,573	\$12,176	\$5,734	47.1%	60.9%	8.2%	83.0%
64	Hartford	I	21,658	\$196,929,178	\$17,929	\$9,093	50.7%	85.3%	18.2%	88.8%
69	Killingly	G	2,487	\$15,760,281	\$14,593	\$6,337	43.4%	42.6%	2.2%	15.6%
80	Meriden	H	9,071	\$57,915,330	\$12,378	\$6,385	51.6%	69.8%	12.3%	65.6%
83	Middletown	G	5,216	\$18,617,109	\$14,055	\$3,569	25.4%	44.2%	3.4%	46.2%
93	New Haven	I	18,412	\$150,438,559	\$16,805	\$8,171	48.6%	78.1%	13.8%	85.0%
103	Norwalk	H	11,241	\$10,999,197	\$15,640	\$978	6.3%	47.3%	12.0%	64.2%
104	Norwich	H	5,413	\$34,694,767	\$14,552	\$6,410	44.0%	69.8%	12.5%	63.0%
116	Putnam	G	1,222	\$8,333,085	\$15,252	\$6,819	44.7%	56.8%	2.6%	13.3%
135	Stamford	H	15,491	\$9,834,019	\$16,457	\$635	3.9%	50.1%	12.8%	65.6%
156	West Haven	H	7,223	\$44,209,129	\$12,087	\$6,121	50.6%	51.1%	11.3%	60.6%

Towns highlighted in yellow are DRG H.

