

**Connecticut General Assembly  
Appropriations Committee**

**Testimony on Senate Bill 816  
By Superintendent Beth Schiavino-Narvaez  
Hartford Public Schools**

**Thursday, April 02, 2015**

Chairwoman Bye, Chairwoman Walker; Vice Chairs Hartley, Genga and Porter; Ranking Members Kane and Ziobron, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

I am Dr. Beth Schiavino-Narvaez, Superintendent of Hartford Public Schools and I want to thank you for the opportunity to express my district's position on Proposed Senate Bill 816, "An Act Establishing A Minimum Level of Funding Under the Education Cost Sharing Grant."

First of all, I must applaud your leadership and noble efforts in trying to address the need that the underlying bill seeks to address. The changing demographics and needs of our state, and particularly of your respective towns, are clearly the impetus for this bill.

Two-thirds of the budget for Hartford schools is supported through ECS funding. Our dependence on ECS is proportionately higher than any other school district in Connecticut because of Hartford's disproportionate rate of poverty and non-taxable property.

This matter is exacerbated by the fact that ECS has been underfunded for several years. Hartford alone loses \$31.5 million annually due to this historic underfunding. As we entered into this budget season, we were looking to close a gap of \$24.2 million (\$13.1 million in rising costs and \$11.1 million accounted for loss in grant funding).

As you look to remedy the situation we face, I ask that you, please, not do it at the expense of districts like Hartford, which appears to be the effect of SB816, if passed in its present form.

Although incredibly difficult, I urge you to consider adding to the ECS formula so that the needs of our towns are addressed without damaging the learning improvements that we have achieved over the past eight years, under already challenging conditions.

Taking resources away from Hartford Public Schools at this point would prove catastrophic.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted.