

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing as a concerned inner city first grade teacher. I have learned that the Governor has proposed flat funding of ECS while allocating additional monies for Charters and Magnet Schools. I am strongly advocating for some of those additional dollars to be equitably distributed across educational systems with a focus on Priority School Districts. Over the past five years funding for Charters and Magnets have increased by 68% while funding for local public schools have increased by 8% during that same time period. These silos of academic offerings have grown in response to the Sheff settlement with the purpose being to reduce racial, ethnic and socioeconomic isolation. Has it worked? New Britain is viewed as a " suburb" in the context of the Sheff decision. I argue that the principles of Sheff should be viewed as a statewide goal applying to all school districts.

Here are some hard Facts: ECS formula which is suppose to include multiple factors such as student poverty has been frozen at an arbitrary level. In other words - it is not being applied.

In order To maintain a status quo system for next year, we need a \$5.3 million increase. This accounts for contractual increases in both employee salary/benefits and other services as well as facility upkeep/utilities.

In 2013 -14 New Britain was ranked 157 th in per pupil expenditures at \$12,842 - while the State average was \$15,180 and our DRG I average was \$16,027. Within our DRG four cities receive a higher per pupil allocation - Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport and Windham. It is true that the State funds two thirds of our budget - however, our students are among the neediest children in the State. They need more. Equity is not everyone receiving the same ...it is receiving what you need....our children, the majority of whom come from poverty (free/reduced lunch approx.79-80%) need more not less. We must be properly equipped to close the achievement gap (opportunity gap, accessibility gap, resource gap). We need to lower class size, increase support for Tier II and Tier III students, offer more children extended day/extended year and wrap around services.

Putting my plea for an additional \$5.3 million (to fund status quo) in perspective - based on 10,500 students- that dollar amount equates to increasing our expenditures by \$ 476 per student per year or \$2.64 per student per day.

Please don't forget about these students in New Britain. We teachers here in the city are pouring our hearts, souls and money from our personal accounts into our classroom in order to give our students the same opportunities as students whose districts are more affluent or have more funding.

Sincerely

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First Grade Teacher

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