



Bethel Public Schools

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Planning and Development Committee
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: House Bill No. 5096: An Act Concerning Unfunded Mandates

To All Committee Members,

House Bill No. 5096 raises the expectations for a 2/3 majority in both houses of the general legislature to pass any legislation regarding unfunded mandates. On behalf of the administration of the Bethel Public Schools we support this bill. It is our hope that increasing the expectation will require an examination of the impact of unfunded mandates on local school districts.

Over the past three years, the amount of unfunded mandates has increased exponentially in a challenging economic climate. The amount of individual legislative acts and the significant detailed requirements without the resources to support the implementation have been overwhelming to teachers and administrators. The impact of most of the mandates has caused districts to deviate their time and monetary resources to implement the required legislation, taking the focus off teaching and learning. In addition to requiring the 2/3 majority, we urge you to analyze the economic impact of the mandates and the long-term funding to support the implementation of the legislation.

With state funding remaining flat in most areas to suburban districts, the financial burden is on local property tax. With an aging population on fixed incomes and residents who are concerned about the increase in the mill rate. We are constantly battling to maintain our budget at levels to continue to provide quality education to our students and increase student achievement. Every unfunded legislative mandate impacts our ability to do that work.

As a school system, we are not debating some of the purpose or intent of some of the legislative mandates. We need to look at our priorities as a state and understand that not all issues need to be addressed through legislation; we cannot mandate what we cannot afford and we cannot keep revenue from the state level flat and expect the local tax payers to assume that burden.

I urge you to pass House Bill 5096. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Christine Carver, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools

"Our Primary Purpose is to Improve Student Achievement."