



BILL FINCH  
Mayor

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March 3, 2015

Committee on Appropriations  
Connecticut General Assembly  
Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

**RE: GOVERNOR'S PROPOSED BUDGET ON EDUCATION.**

Thank you Senator Bye, Representative Walker, and members of the committee for allowing me to provide testimony on Governor Malloy's proposed education budget.

As the father of four kids – two who attended Bridgeport public schools and two who are currently attending Bridgeport public schools – nobody is more dedicated to ensuring our schools and teachers have the resources they need to give every one of our kids the world-class education they deserve.

In order to do just that, we are giving more children access to high-quality pre-k, and we're building new schools in order to ensure our kids are learning in the right environment. We're also providing more afterschool programs and summer employment opportunities for youth to prepare them for the jobs of tomorrow.

Over the past few years, Governor Malloy and the state legislature have led the charge in improving education for our students. This proposed budget does a number of positive things, including expanding pre-K access.

However, the proposed budget also unfairly shortchanges public school students by flat funding district schools and cutting critical afterschool programs.

Already, the state funds public education in a way that places an unfair burden on Bridgeport taxpayers and hurts Bridgeport students, and flat funding only makes this problem worse.

Despite being the state's largest city and having a very high poverty rate, the education cost sharing formula does not fully fund Bridgeport and we receive less per pupil funding from than the state than many other large cities. It's unfair, and I've been fighting to change our outdated state funding formula for years.

The proposed budget also makes cuts to our award-winning Lighthouse afterschool program in Bridgeport. This program serves thousands of kids across 26 sites in Bridgeport.

Research is clear that the majority of kids who are active in afterschool programs see improvements in test scores and grades, and the kids who are most at risk see the biggest gains in these areas. These programs also help families who work long hours and cannot afford child care. Cutting lighthouse means serving less children and less families.

Therefore, we cannot afford to be flat funded or cut in this budget. We need more money so we can give our teachers and administrators the resources they deserve, and so they can help prepare our kids for college and 21<sup>st</sup> century jobs.

I respectfully ask you to increase education funding to Bridgeport and not cut critical afterschool programs that invest in Bridgeport's future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Finch". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Bill Finch  
Mayor of Bridgeport