



March 3, 2015

Connecticut General Assembly Appropriations
Subcommittee on Elementary & Secondary Education Public Hearing March 3rd, 2015

Senator Bye, Representative Walker, Education Subcommittee Chairs Senator Slossberg and Representative Fleischmann, and esteemed members of the Appropriations Committee:

The Parent Teacher Council of Stamford wishes to thank the committee for the opportunity to submit our concerns with **HB 6824, An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June Thirtieth 2017, and making appropriations therefore and other provisions related to revenue.**

To quote from our CT Department of Education: “Wraparound Services are Collaborative Partnerships. Schools cannot do it alone. In order to achieve maximum success in their education reform efforts, schools need to engage a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources. These partnerships develop a unified focus on academics, services, supports and opportunities that leads to improved student learning, stronger families and healthier communities.”

The proposed budget is an attack on the efforts of the State’s Department of Education to close the Achievement Gap by underfunding our public schools and other agencies that are integral parts of these key “wrap around services”. We specifically object to:

- **Flat funding for Education Cost Sharing (ECS)**-this is basically a cut, since there is no accounting for contractual and inflationary increase. **Stamford only receives 47% of the fully funded, outdated formula, a shortfall of \$11 million dollars.**
- **\$6.4 million cut** to struggling school districts to cover the cost of afterschool programs and summer school to help raise achievement
- **No increase** in the funds allocated under the ECS formula to Alliance districts such as Stamford
- **\$1 million cut** to Department of Public Health School-Based Health clinics
- **\$6 million cut** from the Office of Early Childhood
- **\$61.3 million cut** from Higher education (UCONN, Office of Higher Education, Board of Regents)
- **\$6.3 million cut** from the Department of Social Services
- **\$15.7 million cut** from the Department of Children and Families
- **\$20 million cut** from Voluntary Services, Dept of Developmental Services (programs to children and adolescents who have emotional, behavioral, or mental health needs)

Despite all of these cuts to the fundamental services that our children, young adults and families need and depend on, Governor Malloy was able to find the funds for charter schools, which includes:



- **\$12 million increase** to expand the number of Charter schools statewide
- **\$4 million** to fund the Stamford Charter School For Excellence opening next year
- **\$20 million increase in charter school funding** over the next two years (an increase of almost 34%), while the public schools across the state will see a cut of close to \$70 million dollars.

We strongly oppose these proposed budgets cuts to the ever-shrinking education, social services, and higher education budgets, and the misguided appropriation of limited resources to support charter schools.

The solution is not to funnel money to charter schools that simply do not and cannot serve the majority of CT students. The solution is to reexamine the ECS formula and fully fund local school districts.

We ask you to reconsider the proposed cuts and to impose a moratorium in the expansion of Charter Schools in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Susana Vidan
Co-President PT Council, Stamford

Stephanie O'Shea
Past Co-President of PT Council, Stamford