What will our children lose?

created by the collaborative efforts of

Joint Statement to the
Appropriations Committee
from the
What Will Our Children Lose Coalition

The members of the What Will Our Children Lose Coalition are deeply concerned that provisions in HB 5044, An Act Making Adjustments to State Expenditures for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2017, will leave local and regional boards of education unable to adequately implement the educational interests of the state. As the organizations representing those who are charged with responsibility for delivering a free and appropriate public education within the budgeted appropriation, we are in a unique position to indicate the local impact of some of the budget proposals. While we applaud the commitment to public education demonstrated by the Governor and the Legislature in a time of significant state fiscal constraints, the economic challenges faced at all of levels of government are felt most intensively at the local level – where we are in the middle of the budget development and adoption season. Rising local costs, in addition to the increased expectations to ensure that all students graduate from high school ready for college and career, require at least a stable level of investment in public education.

The proposal to reduce ECS grants by $11.5 million, as well as the reductions in funding for magnet schools, Open Choice, priority school districts, adult education and transportation, will shift the burden to local property taxpayers – or lead to additional program reductions in districts that have had several years of 0% budget increases.

The $8 million proposed reduction in the Special Education Excess Cost grant comes at a time when school districts are facing rising costs in this area. This was the grant designed as the state's safety net for local school districts facing extraordinary individual special education student costs. Increasingly, districts must reduce services to regular education students to fund the special education mandates.

The members of the What Will Our Children Lose Coalition urge the Governor and General Assembly to maintain the current level of support for elementary and secondary education funding to school districts.

The What Will Our Children Lose Coalition consists of the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, the Connecticut Association of School Business Officials, the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents and the Connecticut Association of Schools.

ABOUT THE COALITION
Created by the collaborative efforts of the Connecticut Association of Board of Education, Connecticut School Business Officials and the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents. As advocates for public education, these organizations pledge to provide information to the community and statewide education leaders in order to find attainable results for their school districts.