

Bethel Board of Education Regular Meeting

Thursday, January 29, 2026 7:00 PM

Board of Education Conference Room E, Live Stream:

<http://devos2.bethel.k12.ct.us/show?video=763ff4de0370> Materials can be viewed at: <https://meetings.boardbook.org/Public/Organization/2425> The opportunity for members of the public wishing to make comments can attend and comment in-person or may send public comments to the Board via email or letter and it will be included as part of the record of the meeting., 1 School Street, PO Box 253, Bethel, CT 06801

1. Call to Order	Speaker(s): Policy 9326
1.A. Roll Call for Quorum	
1.B. Pledge of Allegiance	
2. Board Recognition/A Salute to Excellence	Speaker(s): Christine Carver
2.A. Gifts, Grants, & Bequests	
2.A.1. Donation to ROTC - Christmas Tree Fundraiser	
2.A.2. Donation to the BHS Art Department	
2.A.3. Sensory Path	
2.A.4. Donation to Principals Account	
3. BOARD REPORTS - PROGRESS TOWARDS DISTRICT INITIATIVES	
3.A. Superintendent's Proposed 2026-2027 Education Budget Presentation	Speaker(s): Christine Carver
4. Consent Calendar	Speaker(s): Policy 9326
4.A. Approval of Minutes	
4.A.1. December 18, 2025 - Regular Board of Education Meeting	
5. Correspondence	Speaker(s): Policy 9326
6. Public Comment (Please note: The Board welcomes Public Comment and asks that speakers please limit their comments to 2 minutes. Speakers may offer objective comments of school operations and programs that concern them. The Board will not permit any expression of personal complaints or defamatory comments about Board of Education personnel and students, nor against any person connected with the Bethel Public School System.)	Speaker(s): Policy 9326
7. Administrative/Board Member Update	Speaker(s): Policy 9326
7.A. Board Chairperson Update	
7.B. Administrative Update	
7.B.1. 2025-2026 BOE District Data Sheet	

7.B.2. CAPSS - 2026 Connecticut's Priority: Our
Public Schools

8. **Reports to the Board**

9. **Adjourn**



AP Score Reports for K-12 Educators

Data Updated: July 03, 2025
Report Run: January 09, 2026

AP School Honor Roll Progress Report - 2025

Bethel High School (070025)

Progress Summary

Congratulations! Bethel High School has earned Silver recognition on the 2025 AP School Honor Roll.

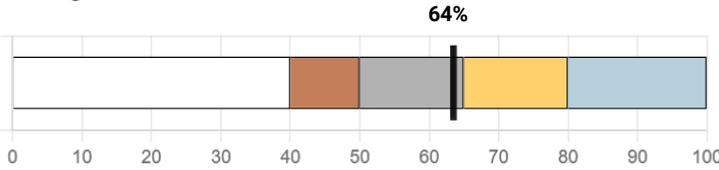
Class of 2025



SILVER

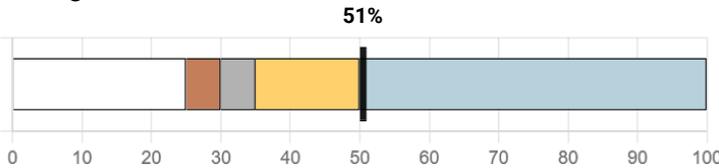
AP 2025 School Honor Roll
Bethel High School

College Culture | SILVER



Your school achieved all criteria to be listed on this year's AP School Honor Roll as a **Silver** school!

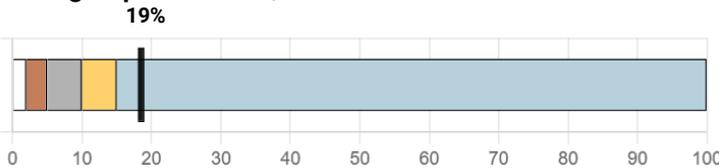
College Credit | PLATINUM



For planning and goal-setting, the three criteria for **GOLD** schools are:

- Expand your school's college culture by enabling **65% of your Class of 2026** to experience 1 AP course before graduating.
- Assist with college affordability by enabling **35% of your Class of 2026** to earn college credit by earning an AP Exam score of 3.
- Optimize student's college readiness by creating opportunities for **10% of your Class of 2026** to take a total of 5 APs across their high school years, with at least 1 taken in 9th or 10th grade.

College Optimization | PLATINUM



To qualify for the 2025 AP School Honor Roll, schools must meet or exceed the criteria for a given recognition level for all three metrics. This report always reflects the most recent data for your organization. Additional information about the AP School Honor Roll can be found on [AP Central](#).



AP Score Reports for K-12 Educators

AP School Honor Roll Progress Report - 2025

Bethel High School (070025)

Data Updated: July 03, 2025
Report Run: January 09, 2026

Honor Roll Criteria

Congratulations! Bethel High School has earned Silver recognition on the 2025 AP School Honor Roll.

Class of 2025

AP School Honor Roll Metrics	Bronze Criteria	Silver Criteria	Gold Criteria	Platinum Criteria	Your School	
					 SILVER Your school achieved all Silver criteria!	
College Culture	40%	50%	65%	80%	64% (185/287)	Silver
College Credit	25%	30%	35%	50%	51% (146/287)	Platinum
College Optimization	2%	5%	10%	15%	19% (55/287)	Platinum

To qualify for the 2025 AP School Honor Roll, schools must meet or exceed the criteria for a given recognition level for all three metrics. This report always reflects the most recent data for your organization. Additional information about the AP School Honor Roll can be found on [AP Central](#).

If 'N/A' is shown this means that the percentage could not be calculated as your school did not provide 12th grade enrollment data for the 2024-25 school year or it was reported as zero.

Your School Enrollment: The school level enrollment data was submitted by your AP Coordinator in AP Registration and Ordering and verified by College Board. Your AP Coordinator should annually check that the correct data is provided in AP Registration and Ordering at the start of the school year.

College Culture: Percent of students in the graduating class who took an AP exam at any point in high school, regardless of score. To avoid pressure on students to take large numbers of APs, only 1 AP exam per student contributes to this indicator.

College Credit: Percent of students in the graduating class who scored 3+ on any AP Exam in high school. To avoid pressure on students to take large numbers of APs, only 1 AP exam score of 3 or higher, per student, contributes to this indicator.

College Optimization: Percent of students in the graduating class who took 5 or more AP Exams in high school, where at least 1 exam was taken in 9th or 10th grade. Because research finds that 6 or more APs do not improve college graduation rates beyond the optimal total of 5 such courses in high school, no exams beyond 5 per student contribute to this indicator. The Honor Roll also recognizes schools that encourage students earlier on their AP journeys so as not to overload them with AP courses their junior and senior years.

RECEIVED

JAN 07 2026

BETHEL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CENTRAL OFFICE

Bethel Public Schools
Bethel, CT

Notification of Receipt of Gifts, Grants, and Bequests Received

Please send a copy of this form to the Superintendent's Office as soon as your school has received a gift, grant, or bequest. The receipt will be announced at the Board of Education's regular meeting. Each school is responsible for sending the donor an acknowledgment for the gift.

Gift, Grant, or Bequest Received:

\$100

How the Gift, Grant, or Bequest Will Be Used:

Donation to ROTC Christmas Tree Fundraiser

Estimated Cash Value of the Gift, Grant, or Bequest:

\$100

Donor's Name and Address:

Anonymous

(NOTE: No Goods or Services were provided by the Bethel Public Schools/Bethel Board of Education in exchange for your contribution.)

Receiving School:

Bethel High School

Gift, Grant, or Bequest Received by (Print Name):

Chris Troetti

Date Received:

January 6, 2026

Copy to: Donor
Principal
Superintendent

(Ref: Board Policy 3280)
Rev: 6/2017

RECEIVED

JAN 07 2026
BETHEL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CENTRAL OFFICE

Form 3280

Bethel Public Schools
Bethel, CT

Notification of Receipt of Gifts, Grants, and Bequests Received

Please send a copy of this form to the Superintendent's Office as soon as your school has received a gift, grant, or bequest. The receipt will be announced at the Board of Education's regular meeting. Each school is responsible for sending the donor an acknowledgment for the gift.

Gift, Grant, or Bequest Received:

\$1,000 check

How the Gift, Grant, or Bequest Will Be Used:

Art Department gift to be used for scholarship program.

Estimated Cash Value of the Gift, Grant, or Bequest:

\$1,000

Donor's Name and Address:

Ann Brecher
3 Ward Drive
Danbury, CT 06810

(NOTE: No Goods or Services were provided by the Bethel Public Schools/Bethel Board of Education in exchange for your contribution.)

Receiving School:

Bethel High School

Gift, Grant, or Bequest Received by (Print Name):

Chris Troetti

Date Received:

January 6, 2026

Copy to: Donor
Principal
Superintendent

(Ref: Board Policy 3280)
Rev: 6/2017

RECEIVED
JAN 12 2026
BETHEL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CENTRAL OFFICE

Bethel Public Schools
Bethel, CT

Notification of Receipt of Gifts, Grants, and Bequests Received

Please send a copy of this form to the Superintendent's Office as soon as your school has received a gift, grant, or bequest. The receipt will be announced at the Board of Education regular meeting. Each school is responsible for sending the donor an acknowledgement for the gift.

Gift, Grant, or Bequest Received:

Sensory Path

How the Gift, Grant, or Bequest will Be Used:

It will be used as a strategic tool to help Berry students regulate their bodies so they are ready to learn.

Estimated Cash Value of the Gift, Grant, or Bequest:

\$1900

Donor's Name and Address

Berry School P.T.O.
200 Whittelsey Dr.
Bethel, CT 06801

(NOTE: No Goods or Services were provided by the Bethel Public Schools/Bethel Board of Education in exchange for your contribution.)

Receiving School:

Berry

Gift, Grant, or Bequest Received by (Print Name):

Beth Gneco

Date Received:

Ordered on 1/9/26 by PTO

Copy to: Donor
Principal

(Ref: Board Policy 3280)
Rev: 6/2017

Superintendent



Grieco, Beth <griecob@bethel.k12.ct.us>

Fwd: Your The Sensory Path order has been received!

Berry PTO <berryppto@gmail.com>

Fri, Jan 9, 2026 at 3:23 PM

To: Beth Grieco <griecob@bethel.k12.ct.us>, Liz DiBiase <dibiasel@bethel.k12.ct.us>, Aimee Bajor <BajorA@bethel.k12.ct.us>, Erica Hughes <hughese@bethel.k12.ct.us>

Ordered!

Begin forwarded message:

From: The Sensory Path <holly@thesensorypath.com>
Date: January 9, 2026 at 13:14:40 GMT-7
To: berryppto@gmail.com
Subject: Your The Sensory Path order has been received!
Reply-To: The Sensory Path <holly@thesensorypath.com>

Thank you for your order

Hi Caryn,

Just to let you know — we've received your order #R-10157, and it is now being processed:

[Order #R-10157] (January 9, 2026)

Product	Quantity	Price
Sight Word Spot Bundle - Pre K-3rd Grade	1	\$500.00
Rainforest Trek Sensory Path™ Package	1	\$1,500.00
Subtotal:		\$2,000.00
Discount:		-\$100.00
Shipping:		Free shipping Full Path Packages
Payment method:		Card - 5415
Total:		\$1,900.00

Billing address

123 Putnam Park Rd
 Bethel CT 06801
 United States (US)
15166470858
 berrypto@gmail.com

Shipping address

Berry PTO
 200 Whittlesey Drive
 Bethel CT 06801
 United States (US)

Thanks for using thesensorypath.com!

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RECEIVED
JAN 13 2026
BETHEL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BETHEL CENTRAL OFFICE

Bethel Public Schools
Bethel, CT

Notification of Receipt of Gifts, Grants, and Bequests Received

Please send a copy of this form to the Superintendent's Office as soon as your school has received a gift, grant, or bequest. The receipt will be announced at the Board of Education's regular meeting. Each school is responsible for sending the donor an acknowledgment for the gift.

Gift, Grant, or Bequest Received:

Check: \$1,111.11

How the Gift, Grant, or Bequest Will Be Used:

Deposited into Principals account

Estimated Cash Value of the Gift, Grant, or Bequest:

\$1,111.11

Donor's Name and Address:

David Rhoads
19761 Quiet Bay Lane
Huntington Beach, CA 92648

(NOTE: No Goods or Services were provided by the Bethel Public Schools/Bethel Board of Education in exchange for your contribution.)

Receiving School:

Bethel High School

Gift, Grant, or Bequest Received by (Print Name):

Chris Troetti

Date Received:

January 13, 2026

Copy to: Donor
Principal
 Superintendent

(Ref: Board Policy 3280)
Rev: 6/2017

Minutes of the Bethel Board of Education Regular Meeting held on Thursday, December 18, 2025, in Board of Education Conference Room E, 1 School Street, PO Box 253 Bethel, CT 06801 and via Live Stream.

Attendance: None

Administrative Attendance: C Carver, K Brooks, J Variale, C Sipala, M Rutledge, L DiBiase, M Stabile

S. Clayton, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Board Members Attendance:

Mr. Scott Clayton:	Present
Mrs. Kara DiBartolo:	Present
Mr. Bill Foster:	Present
Jane Gangi:	Present
Gabriela Hernandez:	Present
Mrs. Jen Larsen:	Present
Mrs. Courtney Martin:	Present
Brenda Reed:	Present
Lauren Shekari:	Present

1. Call to Order

1.A. Roll Call for Quorum

1.B. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Add Executive Session to the Agenda

Move to add Executive Session to the meeting agenda. Passed with a motion by Mr. Scott Clayton and a second by Mrs. Courtney Martin.

Mr. Scott Clayton:	Yea
Mrs. Kara DiBartolo:	Yea
Mr. Bill Foster:	Yea
Ms. Jane Gangi:	Yea
Ms. Gabriela Hernandez:	Yea
Mrs. Jen Larsen:	Yea
Mrs. Courtney Martin:	Yea
Ms. Brenda Reed:	Yea
Ms. Lauren Shekari:	Yea

3. Selection of Temporary Chairperson

Move to nominate Dr. Christine Carver as temporary chairman Passed with a motion by Mr. Scott Clayton and a second by Mrs. Kara DiBartolo.

Mr. Scott Clayton:	Yea
Mrs. Kara DiBartolo:	Yea
Mr. Bill Foster:	Yea
Ms. Jane Gangi:	Yea
Ms. Gabriela Hernandez:	Yea
Mrs. Jen Larsen:	Yea
Mrs. Courtney Martin:	Yea
Ms. Brenda Reed:	Yea
Ms. Lauren Shekari:	Yea

4. Annual Meeting

4.A. Election of Officers

4.A.1. Nominations for Chairman of the Board

Move to nominate Scott Clayton for Chairman of the Board of Education for 2026. Passed with a motion by Mrs. Jen Larsen and a second by Mrs. Kara DiBartolo.

Mr. Scott Clayton:	Yea
Mrs. Kara DiBartolo:	Yea
Mr. Bill Foster:	Yea
Ms. Jane Gangi:	Yea
Ms. Gabriela Hernandez:	Yea
Mrs. Jen Larsen:	Yea
Mrs. Courtney Martin:	Yea
Ms. Brenda Reed:	Yea
Ms. Lauren Shekari:	Yea

Mr. Clayton was elected as the Chairman of the Board of Education for 2026.

4.A.2. Nominations for Vice Chairman of the Board

Move to nominate Lauren Shekari for Vice Chairman of the Board of Education for 2026. Motion by Brenda Reed. No second to the motion.

Move to nominate Jen Larsen for Vice Chairman of the Board of Education for 2026. Motion by Lauren Shekari. No second to the motion.

Mrs. Larsen withdrew her nomination for Vice Chairman of the Board prior to motion being seconded.

Move to nominate Bill Foster for Vice Chairman of the Board of Education for 2026. Passed with a motion by Mrs. Courtney Martin and a second by Mrs. Jen Larsen.

Mr. Scott Clayton:	Yea
Mrs. Kara DiBartolo:	Yea
Mr. Bill Foster:	Yea
Ms. Jane Gangi:	Yea
Ms. Gabriela Hernandez:	Yea
Mrs. Jen Larsen:	Yea
Mrs. Courtney Martin:	Yea
Ms. Brenda Reed:	Yea
Ms. Lauren Shekari:	Yea

Mr. Foster withdrew his nomination for Vice Chairman of the Board of Education for 2026.

Move to nominate Kara DiBartolo for Vice Chairman of the Board of Education for 2026. Passed with a motion by Mrs. Jen Larsen and a second by Gabriela Hernandez.

Mr. Scott Clayton:	Yea
Mrs. Kara DiBartolo:	Yea
Mr. Bill Foster:	Yea
Ms. Jane Gangi:	Yea
Ms. Gabriela Hernandez:	Yea
Mrs. Jen Larsen:	Yea
Mrs. Courtney Martin:	Yea
Ms. Brenda Reed:	Yea
Ms. Lauren Shekari:	Yea

Mrs. DiBartolo was elected as Vice Chairman of the Board of Education for 2026.

4.A.3. Nominations for Secretary of the Board

Move to nominate Jen Larsen for Secretary of the Board of Education for 2026. Passed with a motion by Mrs. Kara DiBartolo and a second by Lauren Shekari.

Mr. Scott Clayton:	Yea
Mrs. Kara DiBartolo:	Yea
Mr. Bill Foster:	Yea
Ms. Jane Gangi:	Yea
Ms. Gabriela Hernandez:	Yea
Mrs. Jen Larsen:	Yea
Mrs. Courtney Martin:	Yea

Ms. Brenda Reed:	Yea
Ms. Lauren Shekari:	Yea

Ms. Larsen was elected as Secretary of the Board of Education for 2026.

4.B. 2026 Proposed Board of Education Meeting Dates

Move to approve the 2026 Board of Education Meeting Dates. Passed with a motion by Mr. Scott Clayton and a second by Mrs. Courtney Martin.

Mr. Scott Clayton:	Yea
Mrs. Kara DiBartolo:	Yea
Mr. Bill Foster:	Yea
Ms. Jane Gangi:	Yea
Ms. Gabriela Hernandez:	Yea
Mrs. Jen Larsen:	Yea
Mrs. Courtney Martin:	Yea
Ms. Brenda Reed:	Yea
Ms. Lauren Shekari:	Yea

4.C. 2026 Proposed Standing Committees Assignments

4.D. Code of Ethics

5. Board Recognition/A Salute to Excellence

5.A. Gifts, Grants, & Bequests

5.A.1. Donation to Families in Need

5.A.2. Science Viewers

5.A.3. STEM Explorers Kits

5.A.4. Books for Rockwell Community Service Project

6. BOARD REPORTS - PROGRESS TOWARDS DISTRICT INITIATIVES

6.A. Special Education Update

Dr. Sipala provided the Board with an update on Special Education services in the district.

7. Consent Calendar

7.A. Approval of Minutes

7.A.1. November 20, 2025 - Regular Board of Education Meeting

Move to approve the minutes of the November 20, 2025 Regular Board Meeting. Passed with a motion by Mr. Scott Clayton and a second by Mrs. Jen Larsen.

Mr. Scott Clayton:	Yea
Mrs. Kara DiBartolo:	Yea
Mr. Bill Foster:	Yea
Ms. Jane Gangi:	Abstain
Ms. Gabriela Hernandez:	Abstain
Mrs. Jen Larsen:	Yea
Mrs. Courtney Martin:	Abstain
Ms. Brenda Reed:	Abstain
Ms. Lauren Shekari:	Abstain

8. Correspondence

Email from Mary Extance - 11/19/25

9. Public Comment

None.

10. Administrative/Board Member Update

10.A. Board Chairperson Update

Mr. Clayton thanked the Board for electing him as Board Chairman for another year. Mr. Clayton welcomed the new Board members, Ms. Jane Gangi, Ms. Brenda Reed, Ms. Lauren Shekari, and Ms. Gabriela Hernandez.

10.B. Administrative Update

Dr. Carver shared with the Board some information about new scoreboards for the high school. This is a new idea that will be explored, and she will share more information with the Board at a later date. Dr. Carver shared an update about health insurance rates, the rate increases are being seen statewide. Dr. Carver shared that they are exploring other options to try and find better rates. Dr. Carver shared that Tyler and Jen will be doing a feasibility study on Bethel Middle School. They will be looking to see if it is better to do individual repairs, or do a full renovation project. Dr. Carver shared that Raghiv Allie-Brennan reached out to see about coming to talk about issues going into the election. Dr. Carver and Kylie will work on a date to set up a time for local legislators to come meet with the Board. Dr. Carver has scheduled a date for the Board of Finance and Board of Selectman to go on a Facilities Tour prior to the budget presentation.

10.B.1. 2025-2026 BOE District Data Sheet

11. Recommend Executive Session

Administrative Attendance: C Carver, K Brooks, J Variale

Board Members Attendance:

Mr. Scott Clayton: Present
Mrs. Kara DiBartolo: Present
Mr. Bill Foster: Present
Jane Gangi: Present
Gabriela Hernandez: Present
Mrs. Jen Larsen: Present
Mrs. Courtney Martin: Present
Brenda Reed: Present
Lauren Shekari: Present

Move to enter into Executive Session at 8:33PM. Passed with a motion by Mr. Scott Clayton and a second by Mrs. Jen Larsen.

Mr. Scott Clayton: Yea
Mrs. Kara DiBartolo: Yea
Mr. Bill Foster: Yea
Ms. Jane Gangi: Yea
Ms. Gabriela Hernandez: Yea
Mrs. Jen Larsen: Yea
Mrs. Courtney Martin: Yea
Ms. Brenda Reed: Yea
Ms. Lauren Shekari: Yea

11.A. Personnel Matter - sick bank

Move to come out of executive session at 8:39PM. Passed with a motion by Mr. Scott Clayton and a second by Mrs. Courtney Martin.

Mr. Scott Clayton: Yea
Mrs. Kara DiBartolo: Yea
Mr. Bill Foster: Yea
Ms. Jane Gangi: Yea
Ms. Gabriela Hernandez: Yea
Mrs. Jen Larsen: Yea
Mrs. Courtney Martin: Yea
Ms. Brenda Reed: Yea
Ms. Lauren Shekari: Yea

Motion requesting for sick bank donation. Passed with a motion by Mr. Scott Clayton and a second by Mrs. Courtney Martin.

Mr. Scott Clayton:	Yea
Mrs. Kara DiBartolo:	Yea
Mr. Bill Foster:	Yea
Ms. Jane Gangi:	Yea
Ms. Gabriela Hernandez:	Yea
Mrs. Jen Larsen:	Yea
Mrs. Courtney Martin:	Yea
Ms. Brenda Reed:	Yea
Ms. Lauren Shekari:	Yea

12. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn at 8:40PM Passed with a motion by Mr. Scott Clayton and a second by Mrs. Courtney Martin.

Mr. Scott Clayton:	Yea
Mrs. Kara DiBartolo:	Yea
Mr. Bill Foster:	Yea
Ms. Jane Gangi:	Yea
Ms. Gabriela Hernandez:	Yea
Mrs. Jen Larsen:	Yea
Mrs. Courtney Martin:	Yea
Ms. Brenda Reed:	Yea
Ms. Lauren Shekari:	Yea

Respectfully submitted,



Kylie D'Arcangelo
Board Recorder



Showing some appreciation for Bethel MS and HS Dance Team for their participation at Woodland Regional HS Dance Competition

4 messages

Emely Abel <eabeltatis@gmail.com>

Sun, Jan 11, 2026 at 1:23 PM

To: boe@bethel.k12.ct.us, Bryan Watson <watsonb@bethel.k12.ct.us>, troettic@bethel.k12.ct.us, lawlorg@bethel.k12.ct.us, lerzm@bethel.k12.ct.us, Shannon Mariconda <maricondas@bethel.k12.ct.us>, Jennie Taranovich <taranovichj@bethel.k12.ct.us>, firstselectman@bethel-ct.gov

Dear First Selectman, BOE, BMS and BHS,

To those of you that do not know me, I am Emely and my daughter, Emma, is in 7th grade at BMS. My daughter is part of BMS Dance Team and they participated on Saturday at Woodland Regional High School Dance Competition titled Dancin in the Woods.

I think the teachers, Diana-Eileen Toland Matos (Coach D) and Amanda Behari, did a wonderful job with all the girls. The girls and the teachers practiced, and spent their time to give their best at this competition in order to represent Bethel Schools. BMS and BHS Dance Teams also did a fundraising, with the hopes of buying new pompoms and or new pieces of uniforms. I think the fundraising was a bit lower than what the teachers hoped for but they figured it out and did what they could with what they had. Many people that were approached to help with the fundraising didn't even know Bethel had a Dance Team.

The Bethel Teams didn't win any awards but they gave their absolute best in representing Bethel.

Saturday competition was a long day that started at 12:45 pm and ended at 8:40 pm. Let's please try to give Coach D and Ms. Amanda some type of shout-out for their effort with the girls in representing Bethel at a Dance Competition that had 32 teams from Middle and High School in Connecticut.

I went to support the girls and recorded the attached two videos which I want to share with you guys. Hopefully the videos will be sent. Looks like I can only send one video at a time. The first video attached to this email is the BMS Dance Team. In a separate email I will send the BHS Dance Team video. I am also attaching 3 pictures in case the videos don't upload.

Want to mention that it was unexpected for me to only see 4 students from Bethel High School in the BHS Dance Team and maybe this is an indication that probably we should support them more by maybe advertising in the school that their is a dance team and if others will like to join.

Also, I think that if the BHS Dance Team has the opportunity to perform in the school in an activity like a basketball game intermission etc...(not sure if this has happened or not) maybe more students will be interested in being part of the team.

The above will be beneficial too for BMS Dance Team. The dancers/students can build more their confidence and improve their overall performance in front of a larger school audience.

Mr. Clayton and First Selectman Carter, I read the message in parent square that said you both are interested in getting to know the perspective of the community to develop a profile for Bethel next Superintendent of Schools. While I wait for the survey, I will like to express that our students represent Bethel at many competitions and our schools should support them in any way possible.

Regards,

Emely Abel-Tatis

Sent from my iPhone

5 attachments



image1.jpeg
336K



image2.jpeg
197K



image3.jpeg
277K

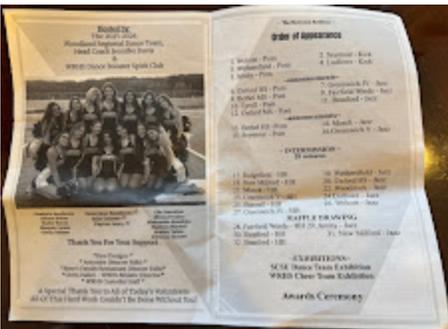


image5.jpeg
2208K

Video.mov
16537K

Emely Abel <eabeltatis@gmail.com> Sun, Jan 11, 2026 at 1:26 PM
To: boe@bethel.k12.ct.us, Bryan Watson <watsonb@bethel.k12.ct.us>, troettic@bethel.k12.ct.us, lawlorg@bethel.k12.ct.us, lerzm@bethel.k12.ct.us, Shannon Mariconda <maricondas@bethel.k12.ct.us>, Jennie Taranovich <taranovichj@bethel.k12.ct.us>, firstselectman@bethel-ct.gov

BHS Dance Team Video performance attached.



January 14, 2026

Dr. Christine Carver
Superintendent, Bethel Public Schools
1 School St., P.O. Box 253
Bethel, CT 06801-0253

Dear Dr. Carver:

As your regional educational service center, we are pleased to work with you, your staff, and students. On behalf of the staff of EdAdvance, I am pleased to send you a copy of your District Data Report for 2024-2025. This report will provide you with an overview of the programs and services we provided to your school district. As a courtesy, I have also sent a copy of our District Data to the chairperson of your Board of Education.

If you would like more information about other EdAdvance's programs and services, please feel free to contact me at (860) 567-0863. We look forward to continuing to provide quality programs and services to your district.

Sincerely,

Jonathan P. Costa, Sr.
Executive Director

Enclosure



How has EdAdvance served **BETHEL** in 2024-2025?

General Membership Resources:

- Customized access to services and programs that support your district goals.
- On-going information targeted to your district's individual needs.
- Capabilities to move forward local and regional programs.
- Quick resource to answer frequent staff questions.
- Links to major state and federal education activities.

Adult & Community Services

EdAdvance delivers statewide professional development for adult education agencies through the **Adult Training & Development Network (ATDN)** and **Digital ATDN**. These sessions are designed for adult education administrators, educators, and staff. Three participants from your district have engaged in a variety of offerings, including live and on-demand training, workshops, curated resources, podcasts, and an annual adults with disabilities conference presented in collaboration with CSDE and EdAdvance.

Direct Services to Districts

Staff from your district attended meetings of EdAdvance's regional **Curriculum Council**. Discussion included issues related to curriculum, assessment, and instruction.

Staff from your district attended meetings of EdAdvance's **Digital Council**. Participants discuss topics related to teaching, learning, and technology.

Staff from your district attended meetings of EdAdvance's regional **Math Council**. Participants shared information related to math instruction and received information on state initiatives including math curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Staff from your district attended meetings of EdAdvance's regional **Social Studies Council**. A representative from the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) provided updates.

Early Childhood Programs & Services

Danbury School Readiness provides quality early childhood education programs for children ages 3-4. Our programs are licensed, accredited, and prepare children for success in school. OEC Quality Enhancement Funds provide professional development opportunities for Early Childhood Education teachers, family childcare providers, caregivers,



and parents of children aged 0-5 in the greater Danbury area. Five administrators, twenty-four staff members, one hundred eighty-five children, and one hundred thirty families from your community received these services.

EdAdvance's **Early Childhood consultants** provided consultation to school districts, early childhood providers, and home visitors in the areas of infant mental health, child development, behavior management, curriculum, health, and classroom environments. Services were delivered through on-site coaching, mentoring, technical assistance, and professional development. Two early childhood administrators and eight staff members from your district received these services.

EdAdvance Birth to Three is a comprehensive early intervention program that provides developmental evaluations, autism evaluations, natural-environment general and autism-specific early intervention services, and family support for children with significant developmental delays. Thirty-six children from your community received these services.

NW Accreditation Quality Improvement Supports (AQIS) is a component of the statewide Accreditation and Quality Improvement System funded by the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood. It provides on-site consultation, technical assistance, and training to support early childhood programs seeking Accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Through office hours, on-site technical assistance to selected sites, administrator forums, support meetings, and PD offerings, AQIS works to elevate the quality of care and education in programs serving infants, toddlers, and preschoolers in our region. Two early childhood administrators and twenty-six staff members from your district received these services.

Staff members from your district attended the **Math Coaches Professional Learning Community**.

EdAdvance's **School Climate Services** department works to ensure the successful implementation of the new school climate legislation. We provide tailored in-district workshops and coaching sessions that equip school leaders and educators with the strategies and resources they need for the successful implementation of the new legislation. Our customized school climate surveys help gather valuable insights, and we assist with data analysis to inform actionable improvements. Further, we offer follow-up workshops and a structured template to guide the development of comprehensive school climate improvement plans. Your district received these services.

One staff member from your district attended the **Teaching the Election** workshop.

Staff members from your district attended **TEAM District Facilitator** meetings. Participants learned about state updates related to induction and shared best practices for supporting beginning teachers and their mentors.



Staff members from your district attended a **TEAM Initial Support Teacher** training. Participants have been selected by their districts to be mentors who will support beginning and student teachers.

Student Programs

ACCESS High School is an educational placement that affords students the support, relationships, and flexibility to engage in learning and personal growth. Each student is assigned to a team of teachers and service providers who help to build stronger foundational skills, foster independence, identify aptitudes, and prepare them for young adulthood. Two students from your district attended this program.

BEAM (Building Motivation & Excellence) Elementary School provides education and interventions for students in grades Kindergarten through 6 who have a complex learning profile. BEAM's whole-child approach provides individualized academic, social, and behavioral instruction with continuous feedback and repeated opportunities to apply new learning. One student from your district attended this program.

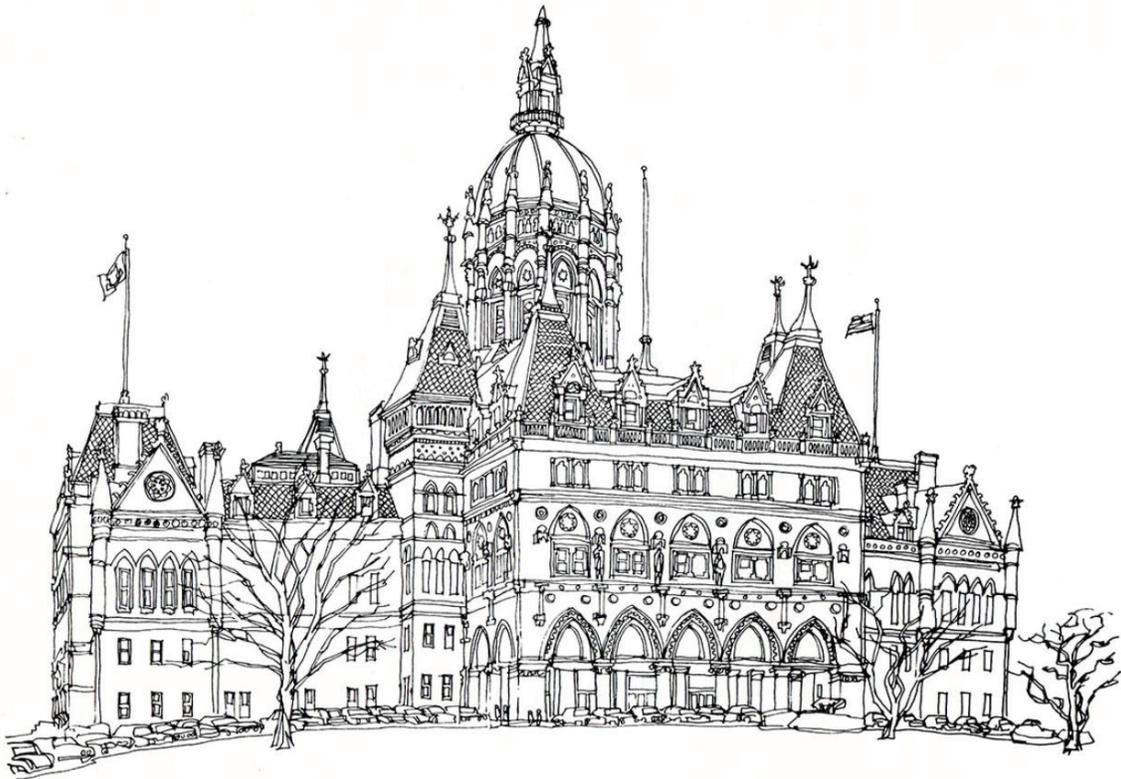
The **Regional Healthcare Shadowing Program** offers high school students the opportunity to participate in healthcare shadowing opportunities designed to explore medical career choices and to learn and start to develop the skills necessary to succeed in the healthcare industry of the 21st century workplace. We have an online program as well with in-person, virtual meetings, and online assignments. Twenty students and two staff members from your district attended this program.

Student Services

Our **Transportation Services** specializes in safe, reliable, and cost-effective transportation for special needs students. In addition to our skilled drivers, highly trained aides accompany students as indicated to support students and ensure their safety. Eleven special needs students from your district received these services.



THE 2026 WHOLE AGENDA



Connecticut Association of Boards of Education

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www.cabe.org

Governance

■ PUBLIC EDUCATION AS A PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITY

CABE believes that all citizens, including board members, the Governor, the Connecticut General Assembly, and the State Board of Education, must make public education a matter of the highest priority of public policy. The state must heed its constitutional mandate under Article Eighth of the Constitution of Connecticut to provide a free and appropriate public education for all of Connecticut's children.

CABE believes that public policy must assist children and their families in maintaining education as a matter of highest priority for children amidst the continuing economic and social pressures of society.

■ LOCAL GOVERNANCE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

CABE believes that local governance of public education through locally elected or appointed community members strengthens the democratic process, provides accountability, and assures strong continuing public support for education.

CABE believes that the state and federal governments must recognize the wide differences among America's public school districts, including those that are urban or suburban, rural or small, by funding the development of school improvement programs that reflect local needs and characteristics.

■ CREATING EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE THROUGH ECONOMIC, RACIAL AND ETHNIC INTEGRATION

CABE believes that each child must have equal access to effective free, public education and to the services of well-educated and skillful teachers. Boards of education, working with state and local leaders and community members, can play a key role in ending systemic racism.

CABE supports efforts by the State of Connecticut to:

1. address and solve the issues of social and economic isolation in the areas of housing, transportation, employment, access to health care and social services; and
2. make the necessary funding available to urban, suburban and rural school districts across the state to develop and sustain:
 - community conversations to build understanding and support for diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.
 - integrated educational programs and exchanges that create educational excellence; and
 - infrastructure that supports safe and healthy environments for learning.
3. promote the development of academic pathways, instructional activities, extracurricular opportunities, and field experiences that provide a richer awareness of cultural and racial diversity, including but not limited to:
 - review of curriculum in grades K-12 through the lens of multicultural and diverse perspectives.
 - the elimination of Indigenous Americans as mascots.

CABE urges all boards of education to:

1. affirm that all children can learn and accept the challenge to educate each child to his/her fullest potential;
2. enter into interdistrict partnerships which create integrated educational excellence and promote social, cultural, ethnic and racial exchange and interaction among diverse groups;
3. facilitate culturally responsive teaching and supervision that promotes understanding of and respect for the many diverse cultures which strengthen our democratic society;
4. continue their efforts to increase the recruitment of qualified individuals who reflect this state's diversity to the teaching profession and administration;
5. make parents as well as the greater community full partners in the education of all children; and
6. recognize their critical role in creating policies, providing training, and maintaining oversight to ensure that students have equal educational opportunities and are treated equitably as provided by the laws of the State of Connecticut, including but not limited to, §10-15c and §46a-58, regardless of, race, color, sex, religion, national origin, alienage, sexual orientation or disability, gender identity or expression.

■ PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE

CABE believes that all public schools should provide a quality education for each student. CABE believes that in meeting local educational needs, locally developed policies and program options which give parents the opportunity to select public schools or

programs for their children should be considered among a variety of possible educational strategies. However, CABE opposes federal or state efforts to mandate choice, including efforts to divert or limit funding intended for existing federal and state programs.

Any program allowing parents to choose schools must assure that:

1. the plan does not foster racial, social, or economic segregation or segregation of children with disabilities;
2. financial and other administrative issues, such as transportation concerns, and the costs for special education and expelled students are addressed;
3. the plan is not part of a federal or state voucher or tuition tax credit program to finance nonpublic education;
4. students be required to make at least a one- year commitment to a school of choice to afford stability of school management;
5. interdistrict transfers must have the consent of both school districts;
6. urban districts are encouraged to develop programs to attract suburban students;
7. student academic achievement must be monitored in all schools receiving public funds; and
8. budgets be made public.

■ CIVILITY

CABE urges public officials at all levels of government to model civil discourse in their deliberations, allowing for the thoughtful, beneficial, and productive exchange of ideas and perspectives.

CABE urges school boards to provide opportunities for students to develop their skills in conflict resolution and

consensus building, and for school board members to model these skills in their own conduct.

■ ANTI-HATE SPEECH

CABE believes that all students deserve to learn in an environment that is safe, affirming, and free of bias and discrimination. CABE denounces the use of words or images that harass and directly attack individuals or groups based on race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender or gender expression, disability, or any other aspect of identity.

CABE believes that when students or adults use explicit hate language at school, it is the responsibility of the school district to actively respond to these incidents.

CABE urges boards to create and foster school climates where differences are appreciated and not used to ridicule, single out, intimidate, disrespect, or exclude different groups. We recognize that these actions can have a negative impact on the educational experience that we provide for each child.

■ SCHOOL CLIMATE, CULTURE, SAFETY AND SECURITY

CABE urges all school boards to:

1. address the influence of violence affecting children using school board policies, parent education programs, peer mediation, student assistance teams, and the school district curriculum to maintain an environment that fosters learning and growth.
2. review and maintain safety plans that address prevention, preparedness, mitigation and emergency response and recovery.
3. maintain policies that reinforce positive school climate.

CABE supports state efforts to study and recommend:

1. best practices for reducing school based arrests for all students.
2. best practices for addressing the higher incidence of school based arrests for students of color.
3. training for staff and students on deescalation techniques and cultural sensitivity.
4. a uniform reporting system for school based arrests so all districts are reporting numbers the same way.

CABE supports state efforts to study and identify:

1. possible grant funding to support accelerated reductions in school based arrests.
2. restorative practices and institute behavioral health supports as foundational and proactive protocols that promote a healthy and collaborative learning environment with the added intentional purpose of minimizing if not eliminating the need for school based arrest.
3. the effects of childhood poverty including instability of housing, food, security and how it affects school climate, challenging behaviors and student achievement.

CABE urges the state and federal government to provide greater and sustained resources for locally determined programs that are critical to school safety, including emergency preparedness and response training, school resource officers, school counseling, and access to mental health services.

■ STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND ASSESSMENT

1. CABE urges boards of education to affirm their commitment to the improvement of student learning to:
 - Openly evaluate data on student achievement indicators;
 - Review/revise district goals to focus on academic and personal development and;
 - Strive to find methods to remove barriers to learning and fosters an excitement for learning.
2. CABE urges boards of education, the State Board of Education and the General Assembly to recognize the broad range of attributes that contribute to student success, including but not limited to academic achievement, critical thinking, community service and integrity.
3. CABE urges the General Assembly to create and fund a system designed to share successful curricula and/or programs enhancing student achievement among school districts using the State Department of Education and Regional Education Service Centers.
4. CABE supports efforts to improve student assessment programs that enhance individual student achievement and are part of a planned program for meeting educational objectives. CABE is opposed to a federal testing program.
5. CABE urges the State Department of Education to provide boards of education with explanatory and instructional materials one full year prior to implementing any new or revised statewide assessments.
6. CABE urges the State Department of Education to increase support and

funding for educational programs supporting the arts.

7. CABE calls on the Governor, General Assembly and State Board of Education and administrators to reexamine public school accountability systems in this state, and to develop a multifaceted assessment system, which:
 - does not require extensive standardized testing;
 - more accurately reflects the broad range of student learning; and
 - is used to support students and improve schools.
8. CABE urges Congress to limit the mandate for student testing to grades 4, 6, 8 and 10 or 11 in the areas of English language arts and mathematics.

■ DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP PROGRAM & ONLINE SAFETY EDUCATION

CABE urges state and federal governments to:

1. recognize both the benefits and risks of digital access and to take proactive steps to recommend digital citizenship resources including, AI awareness, in all grade levels for both students and parents. CABE supports the ongoing study and pilot program by the Connecticut State Department of Education to assess the benefits and drawbacks of AI for student and teacher use and encourages the general assembly to utilize its findings when determining the requirements for digital citizenship education.
2. convene an AI Steering Committee to meet quarterly and review advancements in AI to understand their impact on schools, learning, and overall child development. The committee should be appropriately

funded to enable engagement with guest speakers, academics, medical professionals, and other leaders in the field who can present new research and insights into the technology to best guide how schools should position themselves for optimal learning and student safety.

■ PARENT/FAMILY/SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT POLICY

CABE urges school boards to develop Parent/Family/School Involvement Policy statements recognizing that a child's education is a responsibility shared by the school and the family. Such statements could include:

1. Establishing effective two-way communication with all parents, respecting the diversity and differing needs of families.
2. Developing strategies and programmatic structures at schools to enable parents to participate actively in their children's education.
3. Providing support and coordination for school staff and parents to implement and sustain appropriate parent involvement from Prek-12.
4. Utilizing schools to connect students and families with community resources that provide educational enrichment and support.

■ CHILD NEGLECT

CABE supports efforts by appropriate state authorities along with municipalities and school districts to identify and prevent the abuse and neglect of children and youth.

■ EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION LINKING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

CABE supports:

1. continued efforts by the General Assembly to appropriate sufficient funding to make early care and education programs available to all children in need;
2. local school board flexibility to design, develop and implement early childhood education programs to increase the likelihood of children's school success and decrease special education costs; and
3. state and federal incentive grants, including technical and financial assistance to districts that offer early childhood education programs, full or extended day kindergarten and programs providing for identification of preschool students with special needs and parental involvement programs.

CABE urges school boards to:

1. institute programs for parents which can increase their knowledge of children's social, physical, mental and psychological development, and ultimately increase the likelihood of children's school success, and to encourage parents to take advantage of school services for young children;
2. identify and remove impediments to parental involvement; and
3. review their kindergarten and readiness programs to assure that such programs are designed to provide each child with learning tasks appropriate to the child's developmental level.

■ DRUG, TOBACCO AND ALCOHOL USE

CABE supports efforts on the local, state and federal level to eliminate and address the problems of the inappropriate, unauthorized, illegal use of drugs, tobacco, alcohol and other substances in the school environment.

CABE vigorously supports education about the recreational use of marijuana/cannabis and its negative impact on children, their education and development.

CABE urges all school boards to:

1. work cooperatively with public and private agencies and law enforcement agencies to address the problems of drugs, tobacco, alcohol and other substances;
2. work cooperatively with public and private agencies to provide student-guided extended day school programs for appropriate grade levels during after school hours; and
3. conduct student drug, tobacco, alcohol, and substance use assessment on an ongoing basis.

CABE urges the State of Connecticut to:

1. vigorously enforce the laws concerning the sale, use and possession of drugs, tobacco, alcohol, and other substances to minors;
2. commit adequate resources and create a functioning network of public and private agencies to address the problems of drugs, tobacco, alcohol, and other substances;
3. allow more flexibility in the design and delivery of curriculum to address the use of drugs, tobacco, alcohol, and other substances; and
4. commit resources to support student-guided extended day programs for appropriate grade levels.

CABE urges the federal government to:

1. aggressively enforce the laws in order to halt the flow of illegal drugs into the United States; and
2. commit adequate federal resources to state and local programs that address the problems of drug, tobacco and alcohol abuse.

■ STUDENT SUCCESS

CABE urges local and regional boards of education to:

1. develop innovative, developmentally appropriate curriculum which emphasizes the acquisition of essential skills for all students; and
2. maintain creative school programs, and performance standards for at risk students that develop lifelong learners. Such programs should emphasize essential skills combined with work related projects, work-study programs, school to career, apprenticeships and other alternative program approaches.
3. hold leaders accountable for the necessary funding for arts education and STEM education.

CABE urges the General Assembly to provide the funding and the flexibility necessary to promote student engagement and absenteeism reduction, dropout prevention and student retention.

CABE urges the State Board of Education and the General Assembly to support, through technical assistance and funding, early intervention programs developed by local school districts that involve the interagency coordination of services to students who are habitual truants or at risk of becoming truants.

■ TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND CAREER HIGH SCHOOL SYSTEM

CABE supports a state technical education and career high school system that:

1. ensures both student academic success, and trade/technology mastery;
2. instills a desire for lifelong learning;
3. prepares students for post-secondary education, apprenticeships, and immediate productive employment; and
4. responds to employers' and industries' current and emerging global workforce needs and expectations through business/school partnerships.

■ PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE ENGLISH LEARNERS

CABE urges:

1. the State Department of Education to encourage locally initiated, innovative alternative approaches to educating students who are English learners with the specific goal of attaining English proficiency as rapidly as possible; and
2. the General Assembly to appropriate adequate funding to assist school boards in providing the most effective programs which educate students who are English learners.

■ PUBLIC SCHOOL DESEGREGATION INITIATIVES

CABE urges the General Assembly to develop a task force to study the effectiveness of the racial imbalance law.

■ HEALTH AND WELLNESS EDUCATION

CABE urges each local school district to utilize a developmentally appropriate curriculum which deals with issues affecting family life, child and human growth and development, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning (LGBTQ), to involve the community in this process, including appropriate public and private agencies, and to promote the positive wellbeing of students. Vital health and social issues should be integrated into existing academic subject areas.

■ SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

CABE urges the General Assembly, the State Department of Education and local and regional boards of education to strengthen the support for social and emotional learning through professional development for educators as well as resources for students and parents.

■ LOCAL PROGRAM POLICY DECISIONS

CABE supports the local development of course content requirements, staff resources, and allocations promoting effective and efficient practices that:

1. grow out of local goals and specific local learning objectives based upon local student needs; and
2. result from local policy decisions regarding program, staffing and resource priorities.

■ LOCAL AUTHORITY OVER CURRICULUM PROGRAMS UNDER CGS §10-220(e)

CABE urges state government to refrain from mandating that local boards of education adopt commercial or state-developed curriculum programs in abrogation of CGS §10-220(e). Circumstances deemed by the state to warrant an abrogation of CGS §10-220(e) should be rare and, when deemed important enough to abrogate local authority over curriculum, should be exercised through voluntary incentive programs and not through mandates.

■ GOVERNMENT REGULATION AND DATA ACQUISITION

CABE urges the:

1. state and federal governments to reduce the number and complexity of regulations directed at education, including the administrative burden with implementing laws;
2. state and federal governments to focus on data that is needed to improve student performance and to continue to simplify data collection, eliminate duplication and unnecessary data collection; and
3. state board of education to formally adopt regulations when rules are needed to enforce the statutes and to refrain from applying guidelines as regulations or incorporating guidelines by reference into regulations.

■ DUTIES OF THE SUPERINTENDENTS

CABE urges the Connecticut General Assembly to amend Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-157(a) to make it clear that the attendance of the superintendent as chief executive

officer of the board of education is appropriate in executive session.

■ FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

CABE urges the:

1. establishment of a formalized process, including input from local public agencies, for proposing candidates for membership on the Freedom of Information Commission;
2. modification of the Connecticut Freedom of Information law to more clearly define the individuals' reasonable expectation of privacy and its balance with the public's right to know; and
3. General Assembly to continue to support release of detailed student performance data to parents and guardians as part of the regular education process while it acts to protect against inappropriate use of content and disclosure to others.

■ CERTIFIED EDUCATOR SHORTAGES

CABE urges school boards, higher education institutions, the State Department of Education and the General Assembly to continue to take action to expand the pool of qualified educators for Connecticut's public schools, particularly in areas where shortages have been identified.

CABE supports expanding the alternate route to certification programs, apprenticeship programs, enhancing professional development opportunities, reciprocity between states, encouraging students at an early age to consider the teaching profession and actively recruiting underrepresented groups.

■ CONNECTICUT STATE TEACHERS' RETIREMENT

CABE opposes modification of state statutes to restrict the definition of “salary” for purposes of calculating teachers’ retirement benefits.

CABE urges the:

1. General Assembly to avoid adopting costly changes to the Teacher Retirement Act that shift the burden from the state to the local level and to maintain its responsibility for the Teacher Retirement System;
2. General Assembly to provide greater flexibility to adequately compensate retired educators serving in interim or part-time positions; and
3. Teacher’s Retirement Board to include performance based pay for purposes of teacher’s retirement, in order to preserve more options in compensation systems.

■ EDUCATOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The improvement of instruction relies heavily on the continued or increased competency of existing staff members, especially in periods of stable or declining enrollments. Therefore, CABE supports:

1. local and regional boards of education developing high quality professional development programs for school district staff, alone or in cooperation with other school boards, agencies, or institutions; and
2. teacher preparation institutions and universities upgrading and expanding professional development programs and graduate programs for teachers and administrators.

■ EDUCATOR EVALUATION AND SUPPORT

CABE urges the:

1. State Department of Education through the Educator Evaluation and Support Council (EES) to implement the Educator Evaluation and Support guidelines.
2. State Department of Education and General Assembly to support a strong teacher induction and performance program to improve the retention of new teachers in Connecticut.

■ TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR SALARY SYSTEMS

CABE supports the:

- development by boards of education of teacher and administrator salary systems that are based upon performance skills and knowledge, competence, and levels of responsibility.
- maintenance of teacher and administrator salaries that are competitive with the salaries of persons of comparable skill, quality, educational background, and professional responsibility.

■ THE LEGISLATIVE – SCHOOL BOARD PARTNERSHIP

CABE urges school boards to provide legislators with objective analysis of proposed legislation so that municipal impact is accurate in fiscal notes.

CABE urges the General Assembly to exercise restraint when addressing education issues that impact local operations. Overly prescriptive law or regulation inhibits local capacity to innovate and best serve its public.

■ SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CABE supports a state requirement for an orientation and ongoing professional development for all school board members.

CABE urges boards of education to:

1. develop a policy requiring professional development for new and experienced board members.
2. examine and discuss annually the roles of the board and the superintendent in order to maintain a strong and effective partnership.
3. provide for adequate professional development programs for all school board members and candidates, including participation by all members in area, state and national programs and compliance with orientation for new school board members. Professional development should include the roles and responsibilities of boards, and skills needed to resolve issues in a nonpartisan manner.

■ BOARD OF EDUCATION ETHICS

CABE urges boards of education to incorporate codes of ethics and conflict of interest provisions in their Bylaws.

CABE urges the General Assembly to refrain from imposing financial disclosure provisions for volunteer elected officials.

■ BOARD OF EDUCATION SERVICE

CABE urges local political parties to seek school board candidates who are committed to student achievement and representative of the entire community.

CABE urges employers to support the civic involvement of their employees who serve as school board members.

■ PREVAILING WAGES FOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

CABE urges the General Assembly to raise the dollar threshold for projects subject to the prevailing wage mandate.

■ PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY OF CONTRACTORS WORKING ON PUBLIC CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

CABE urges the General Assembly to hold contractors accountable for their performance on publicly funded building projects by adopting the Department of Administrative Services recommendation that maximum retainage on a project be increased from 2.5 percent to the previous level of 10 percent.

Finance

■ PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

In order to ensure that public funds are used for public education and to improve public education, CAFE urges all citizens and particularly all school board members to:

1. oppose the implementation of voucher systems as methods of financing non-public education with public funds; and
2. oppose tax credits for expenditures for tuition or living expenses at private elementary and secondary schools.

■ THE FEDERAL ROLE IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

CAFE urges the federal government to recognize education as a state and local function, while identifying, promoting and supporting the national interest in public education.

CAFE supports a program of federal support for elementary and secondary public education that provides increased flexibility and funds that go directly to the local level and financial support for all federal mandates.

■ THE SCHOOL FINANCE SYSTEM

The increased burden of the cost of public education, largely as a result of mandates imposed on public school systems by state government, requires a more equitable sharing by state and local funding sources. Therefore, state legislation should recognize:

1. the responsibility of the state government to provide an equitable share of total local school expenses;

2. the primary responsibility for local expenditure determination to remain with the local school board;
3. that local school districts should develop, with state assistance, procedures to ensure fiscal accountability and efficiency and the most effective use of tax dollars;
4. the need to restructure the state spending cap so all federal education funds flow to school districts;
5. the state responsibility to fund court-ordered programs; and
6. the need for financial incentives to foster interdistrict and/or regional interdistrict cooperation.

CAFE supports:

1. continued exploration of more accurate methods of measuring the wealth of each town, the cost of appropriately educating each child - including those children who are economically disadvantaged or have other special needs, the costs associated with participation in public school choice programs, magnet schools and charter schools, and the unique cost burdens borne by poor rural and poor urban school districts;
2. monitoring of the effectiveness of school finance programs to ensure that towns spend an appropriate amount for the education of each student in order to provide substantially equal advantages taking into account differences in local costs based on relevant economic and educational factors and on course offerings of special interest in diverse Connecticut communities;
3. state funding for education provided directly to local and regional boards of education;

4. the creation of a more consistent manner of reporting and calculating per pupil expenditure and use of the most current audited data in any school finance formula;
5. reducing the cost of special education to LEAs and requiring the State to pay its fair share of the costs directly to boards of education;
6. funding for gifted and talented programs;
7. the differential in the cost of operating a secondary only regional school district be factored into the ECS Formula and that the MBR be applied separately to schools in K-6 or districts with designated or regional high schools;
8. financial incentives for school districts operating extended day kindergarten programs, after school and summer remedial programs;
9. adequate support for adult vocational education programs;
10. restoration of the transportation grant;
11. maintaining full ECS funding to all districts including Alliance Districts, and creating separate grants outside of ECS for Alliance District reform efforts;
12. additional state funding for School Based Health Clinics;
13. continued state financial and technical support to Alliance Districts while removing designation for districts who have shown continued improvement;
14. a built-in annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) or inflation-indexing factor for the school share of ECS and /or alliance allocations that reflects actual cost increases in public education operations (for example, linked to the consumer

price index for educational services or a state-determined education cost index); transparent methodology and documentation showing how the inflation or COLA factor is determined, published annually and incorporated into district allocation notifications; and

15. establish a “trigger” law that would release a reserve of state funding to make school districts whole on any reduction made to federal title program funds relative to the 2024-25 school year calculations.

■ PROMOTING STATEWIDE POLICY AND FUNDING FOR MINORITY TEACHER RECRUITMENT

CABE urges the Legislature to:

1. relieve the Alliance school districts from the compounding impact of the fiscal obligations of the language of CGS 10-156gg, the Minority Candidate Certification, Retention or Residency Year Program.
2. provide funding to enable districts to take advantage of opportunities to engage in educator workforce development progress designed to increase educator diversity.

■ PUBLIC EDUCATION FUNDING

CABE urges the General Assembly to ensure that the primary sources of local district funding are protected from erosion in state budgets which maintain grant funding at least at existing levels and avoid imposition of mandates or state tax shifting which might result in the transfer of state obligations to local property taxes.

CABE supports the:

1. concept of full state and federal funding on a current basis for any mandated programs.

2. passage of legislation making state mandates on boards of education unenforceable unless fully funded.

■ **MINIMUM BUDGET REQUIREMENT (MBR)**

CABE urges the General Assembly to remove the statutory reduction in the MBR and encourages the Commissioner of Education to adjust the MBR in situations when a local or regional board of education seeks relief from the MBR due to significant enrollment changes.

■ **PROMOTING EFFICIENCIES AMONG AND BETWEEN DISTRICTS**

CABE urges the General Assembly to remove barriers and implement incentives through which neighboring local educational agencies can develop initiatives to sustain quality of programs and services while entering into mutually beneficial agreements to share and reduce costs.

CABE urges the State Department of Education to substantially support (financially and administratively) cooperative efforts among districts. This support needs to be strategic, long term, and sustainable to realize true regionalism results.

■ **TAX REFORM**

CABE supports comprehensive tax reform in Connecticut that:

1. is balanced and fair and will produce the revenues necessary to support quality public education and other needed public services;
2. reduces reliance on the local property tax, sales tax or other regressive forms of taxation; and

3. assures that distribution of the tax burden is based upon the ability to pay.

CABE opposes a state legislative cap on local property taxes.

■ **MAGNET SCHOOL, CHOICE AND CHARTER FUNDING**

CABE urges the General Assembly to:

1. Identify adequate funding for Open Choice receiving districts to encourage the voluntary efforts of participating districts.
2. Ensure that any charter school funding plan does not compromise local district funding and includes reimbursement to the local school district for any costs associated with ELL supports, special education supports, nursing and health services, transportation and any other expenditures from the school district budget.
3. Provide a comprehensive magnet school funding formula applicable statewide for both host and interdistrict schools, sending and receiving districts.

■ **FUNDING FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS**

CABE urges the General Assembly to:

1. maintain support for school construction grants;
2. increase the school construction grant percentage for new construction equal to the current percentage for renovation as new; and
3. eliminate any space standard reduction percentage when factors beyond the control of the district cause lower than projected enrollment.

CABE supports updating the existing formula covering eligible overall square footage per student to take into consideration space needs such as for cafeterias/kitchens, media centers, reduced class sizes, teaching practices, and technology.

Labor Relations

■ TEACHER NEGOTIATION ACT

As long as compulsory binding arbitration remains as the dispute resolution process under the Teacher Negotiations Act, CABE supports additional modifications of the Act to allow boards of education to carry out their management responsibilities, including the following:

1. There shall be no presumption by arbitrators in favor of retaining contract provisions or continuing past employment practices.
2. Arbitrators shall give the highest priority to the educational interests of the state as such interests relate to the children of the school district.
3. Arbitrators shall give priority consideration to the public interest and the financial capability of the town or towns in the school district. The consideration of financial capability shall include the town's capability as measured by its history of tax increases, personal income trends, declines in state and federal revenues, and the financial impact of state and federal mandates.
4. Establish a requirement that neutral arbitrators participate in training sessions.

CABE opposes granting teachers and administrators the opportunity to strike.

CABE supports the retention of the teacher evaluation process as a permissive subject of bargaining.

Special Education

■ TEACHER TERMINATION HEARINGS

CABE urges the General Assembly to allow the suspension of tenured teachers without pay prior to the completion of the termination hearing process.

■ IMPACT NEGOTIATION

CABE supports the ability of local school boards to change job descriptions unilaterally without the necessity of negotiating the impact of the changes with individual unions.

■ UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

CABE supports the repeal of federal legislation allowing states to grant unemployment compensation to school district employees during vacations and the summer months.

CABE urges the General Assembly to refrain from extending such benefits to school district employees.

CABE supports modification of state statute to specifically provide that notice of intent to layoff at a future point in time, given in compliance with any legal or contractual mandate, shall not give rise to a right to collect unemployment benefits.

■ MANDATED BENEFITS

CABE supports the repeal of statutorily mandated duty-free lunch periods and sick leave. These issues should be negotiated at the local level.

■ FEDERAL SPECIAL EDUCATION ISSUES

CABE urges the federal government to revise and modify due process for students with disabilities. Specifically, CABE recognizes the need to improve on current due process proceedings to make them more effective and expeditious for the purpose of providing students with disabilities with an appropriate educational program.

CABE supports the following changes to special education law and regulations:

That the issue(s) in dispute at a due process hearing be limited to matters pertaining to a proposed IEP; the existing IEP; or any IEP from the current school year or the school year immediately preceding the current year.

That the hearing officer be:

1. authorized and/or required to append to his/her final decision and order a statement detailing the issue on which the respective parties have prevailed, in whole or in part, and summarizing the approximate amount of hearing time spent on each issue.
2. granted the same powers the Federal Courts have to reduce attorney fees if the parent/guardian unreasonably protracted the final resolution of the controversy, if the award unreasonably exceeds the hourly rate prevailing in the community, if the time and legal services furnished were excessive considering the nature of the action, or if the attorney representing the parent/guardian did not provide the school with a description of the

problem relating to the proposed placement change and a proposed resolution. This should be done to insure a more equitable distribution of the financial responsibilities of the due process procedure.

That boards of education be granted more flexibility in the expulsion of special education students involved in criminal activities. Specifically, the federal government should not block states and local and regional boards of education from applying the same disciplinary standards to all students who commit the most serious offenses.

That clarification of the relationship between Section 504 requirements and IDEA be provided.

That IDEA be amended to alleviate the burden placed on school districts with nonresident private school students eligible for special education identification and services.

■ PLACEMENTS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

CABE urges the General Assembly to provide:

1. for the full cost for educating students placed in private and public educational programs through DCF for children in their custody.
2. that DCF pay the full cost for special education for students attending local school districts.

■ SPECIAL EDUCATION EXCESS COST GRANT

CABE urges the General Assembly to fully fund the Excess Cost Reimbursement Grant for all costs in excess of the 3.5 times the district's average per pupil expenditure.

■ LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

CABE encourages the State Department of Education, institutions of Higher Education, the General Assembly, and each local and regional board of education to:

1. consider the needs of the entire class of students when placement decisions are made.
2. examine a variety of placement options to insure that students with special needs be placed in the least restrictive environment.
3. provide pre-service and in-service staff development and sufficient resources for all staff to enable them to provide appropriate support to students with special needs.

■ SPECIAL EDUCATION DUE PROCESS

CABE urges the General Assembly to:

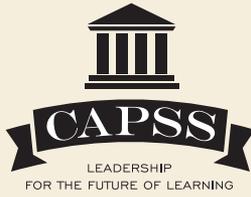
1. Review the method for selection and qualification of due process hearing officers with a view toward increasing the level of professionalism and impartiality.
2. Increase available funding to attract qualified candidates and adequately compensate them for their service.
3. Provide for appellate review of due process decisions.
4. Assign the burden of proof to the party that initiated the special education hearing.

Since 1938, CAFE has been the collective voice of more than 1,300 board of education members across the State. As CAFE has grown, so has our prominence as leaders in shaping public education programs — helping Connecticut prepare for the increasingly competitive 21st Century.

These positions reflect the commitment of board of education members to promote public participation through local lay control of public education, to promote equal opportunity and a high quality education for all Connecticut's public school children and increase public awareness of education issues.



The distinctive line drawing of the Capitol building which appears on the cover was graciously donated to CAFE by the late Richard Welling, a talented Hartford artist. The artwork is a particularly appropriate piece for our 2026 Whole Agenda. We are delighted to be able to feature a work by this very talented artist.



Connecticut's Priority: Our Public Schools



JANUARY 2026

INTRODUCTION

In 2021, the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) published a Blueprint to Transform Connecticut Public Schools – a vision of continuous improvement coupled with a comprehensive, long-term set of recommendations for addressing the educational and fiscal needs of Connecticut’s school districts. Each year since 2021, CAPSS has updated the Blueprint, reported on progress and amended the recommendations to reflect the most current needs and direction for our schools.

This document represents the 2026 update and revisions to the original Blueprint- and suggests that Connecticut’s public elementary and secondary schools should become a much greater priority for both local and state policy makers and education practitioners.

CONNECTICUT’S PRIORITY: OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

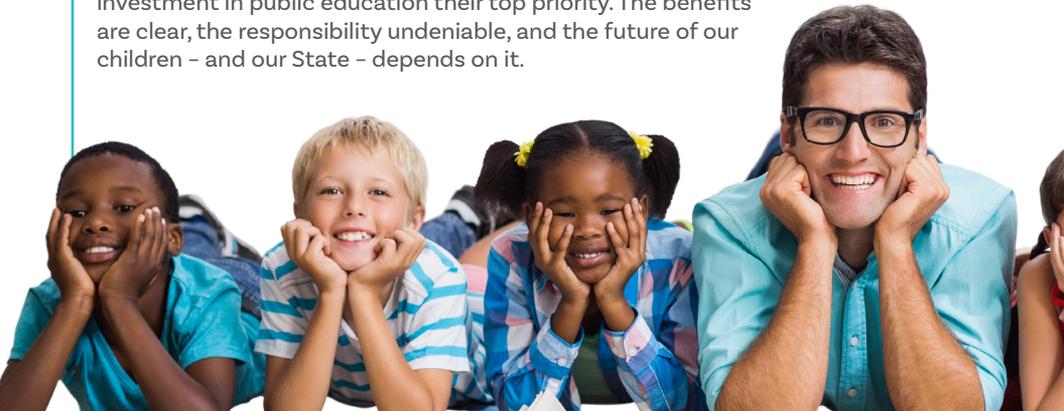
No investment yields greater rewards than public education. CAPSS firmly believes that no other public expenditure drives social and economic progress as powerfully as sustained investment in high-quality public schools.

Education delivers the highest return on every dollar. Every dollar spent on preschool, elementary, and secondary education generates exponential benefits – nurturing young minds early, empowering individuals for life, and dramatically reducing future social and economic costs.

Public education is America’s greatest success story. For nearly 200 years, our public schools have been a cornerstone of opportunity and growth. Compulsory, publicly funded education has propelled millions into better lives, strengthened communities, and fueled the nation’s prosperity. No other institution in history has achieved such transformative impact.

The State’s duty is clear and nonnegotiable. Our Constitution guarantees free public education for every child. Temporary revenue shortfalls or competing budget priorities cannot erase this legal and moral obligation. The State must continue to lead and partner with all 169 towns to uphold this essential commitment.

Invest in the future consistently and courageously. CAPSS urges policymakers to make continuous, sustainable investment in public education their top priority. The benefits are clear, the responsibility undeniable, and the future of our children – and our State – depends on it.



THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION THAT HAS GUIDED CAPSS IN DEFINING ITS PRIORITIES GOING FORWARD IS:

What changes in CT Public Schools are imperative over the next 10 years that will result in greater success for every student?

CAPSS has chosen to focus on five essential areas for the next few years.

1 Elevate the Stature of Connecticut's Public Schools and the Education Profession

2 Increase the State's Share of Education Funding

3 Optimize Special Education

4 Invest Early in All Children

5 Pathways to Possibilities

The rationale for each of these priorities follows ...

In order to sustain the quality of Connecticut Public Education, we know that equal access to high quality instruction and to successful outcomes for all students requires teachers to develop a personal relationship with each student, differentiate instruction to meet individual student's needs and maintain continuous communication with parents and families. Moreover, we know that additional supports are needed for students with special needs, students living in poverty, students whose home and first language is other than English and students who are disengaged from school. Finally, it is essential that towns be able to provide sufficient budgets to enable high-quality professional development and support for staff, both professional and non-certified, and to have the necessary tools and supports to fulfill their assigned roles.

Today's students need to acquire the skills to read, write, speak, compute, innovate, engage in scientific inquiry, and work together to solve complex/real-life problems, but they also must develop a love of learning, an appreciation for the history of this country, a respect for others and the importance of contributing to the betterment of our society. **All those involved in leading public education must stay focused on continuously improving students' learning and achievement, and ensuring that all students are treated equitably and with dignity.**



MOVING FORWARD IN 2026

CAPSS envisions local and state leaders working together to achieve the following goals that elevate Connecticut's public schools and ensure every child benefits from a world-class education.

1

Elevate the Stature of Connecticut's Public Schools and the Education Profession

A. Public Schools

Public education is Connecticut's greatest public asset – and it must be recognized, celebrated, and prioritized. The value, impact, and return on investment of our schools must be publicized and championed.

CAPSS advocates for a multi-year public information initiative to emphasize:

- The critical importance of public education in all aspects of human life and the future;
- The historical success of compulsory schooling with public funding and accountability;
- The need for a strong, equitable and successful system that serves all children with free and appropriate education;
- A continuous reporting of “success stories”, progress, and innovations from Connecticut schools;

There is, presently, no true counter-balance to the daily onslaught of negative information on the problems of schools and young people. All media prefers stories of failure to those of success. The fact is that the vast majority of students are succeeding, every day, in many different ways and are the backbone of the Connecticut and USA success of continuous progress in the social and economic growth.

All schools, institutions, organizations and individuals have a role to play in presenting the facts on Connecticut public schools' success. This will require a renewed focus on engaging families and community leaders and partner organizations in documenting these successes.



B. Education Profession

While all educators face real challenges, they also experience profound joy and meaning in shaping children's lives. That joy deserves equal visibility and must be included in the public information initiative suggested above.

At the heart of any educational enterprise is the continuous, daily teacher-student interaction. Nothing is more important to the future success of public education in Connecticut than the quality of its teaching force. The need for a more diverse workforce is absolutely essential, as is listening to the voices of educators on how to improve and grow the profession.

However, physical and psychological conditions that teachers are often experiencing in our schools is of serious concern.

The salaries of Connecticut public school educators should be increased. The pandemic of 2020-22 helped prove how much education is harmed when there is no continuous, demanding and supportive teaching provided to each student. We are facing a crisis. There is a present shortage of teacher candidates, a projection of even greater shortages over the next 10 years, and a negative salary differentiation between the teaching profession and other bachelor's degree occupations.

Raising total compensation, particularly for starting teachers in every town, must be considered. Connecticut must also address the issues of certification, professional development, student teaching, teacher shortages, teacher evaluation, appropriate use of non-certified staff, the work hours of the day and year, advancement, mentoring, diversity and more. These factors are all part of the "total condition" of the education profession, and every one of them needs clarification and greater expectations.

"Nothing will advance Connecticut public education more than elevating the entire education profession."

A HISTORICAL LENS

Connecticut led the nation in 1986 with a Teacher Salary Enhancement Act (TSEA) that elevated all starting salaries and increased compensation to all teachers. It was also equity-based with greater state funds provided to school districts with the greatest need and the least local capacity to pay. For at least 20 years thereafter, the TSEA helped bring more highly-qualified young people into the public schools as teachers.

After the increase in teacher salaries, college students choosing education as their major had higher SAT scores than previously, and student achievement in Connecticut in the later 1990's, when compared to other states and the nation, was at an all-time high level.

It has been 40 years since the leaders of this state have taken the bold step to demonstrate "We want the best for our children". Today's students can and will do better than we have done if we invest more in their future NOW.

2

Increase the State's Share of Education Funding

Connecticut must rebalance the partnership of state and local education funding to ensure long-term adequacy, equity, and sustainability.

A. ECS

A revised ECS formula is needed with a ten-year plan, with an annual increasing foundation level, with an equal focus on town capacity and need, and a commitment to fund the costs of inflation as well as providing greater equity, and with no reductions for any town.

In order to keep pace with inflation, and continue to reduce spending inequities among towns, the State must be prepared to appropriate roughly \$100 million additional, each year, not the recent historical average of merely \$50 million on the \$2.5 billion ECS appropriation.

The State of Connecticut has made very little progress in the last 20 years in increasing the state's share of the total revenue for public elementary and secondary education. Hovering around 40%, annual increases from the State have barely kept pace with inflation and certainly have not provided for more equalized expenditures among school districts. While a good deal of more equity/fairness exists today than before Horton vs. Meskill (in 1975), the total State funds (from all grants and State funded programs) are not sufficient to accomplish the task of helping the poorest communities, with the most challenged students, to close the expenditure and achievement gaps. (Local funds support roughly 54% and federal funds 6%).

With the full funding of the current Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula and grant to take place in 2025-26, it is time to fix a new target that would move the State's total share of the enterprise to be equal to that paid by the 169 towns of CT. Of course, the annual increase in the ECS grant (or its successor) should be reasonable, sustainable, and of a size in each community so that it will be used appropriately on educational opportunities and NOT on property tax relief.



B. Excess Costs and SEED grant

1. The State must commit to 100% funding of the Special Education Excess Cost grant over the next 2 to 3 years; paying the first payment of the grant – earlier in the school year (no later than October); and expecting an annual increase in this grant, after achieving 100% funding, in the tens of millions.

The single greatest failure of the last 25 years has been the inability or unwillingness to fund the promise of State support for the excess costs of special education students needing significant intervention. Virtually all of the additional costs of special education for the last two-plus decades have been covered by funds from 169 towns. Sufficient funding for special education has been a very broken promise by both the State and Federal governments. This failure has harmed both special and regular education and has eroded the public confidence in the total public education enterprise.

2. The State must make permanent the new SEED grant, and provide the inclusion of regional school districts (who were erroneously omitted).



The State of Connecticut has a legal and moral obligation to appropriately fund its public schools.

The State will reduce inequities in its school funding system and increase student achievement only if it genuinely commits to significantly increasing state aid as a percentage of all revenues for public schools. It is essential to the future of Connecticut Public Education.

“Only the State can counteract the influence of local wealth on education disparities among towns.”

CONNECTICUT CONTINUES TO RANK IN THE BOTTOM QUARTILE OF ALL STATES, IN THE PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL REVENUES PROVIDED BY STATE GOVERNMENT.

3 Optimize Special Education

The growth, over the last two decades, of students needing special education services and the growth in total district expenditures attributed to special education – requires a major study of the causes and impact of that growth.

The Connecticut General Assembly has recognized this need by establishing a new sub-committee, solely dedicated to special education; and the Connecticut State Department of Education has undertaken several initiatives and actions to improve the operation of special education.

Every district must have the conditions necessary to deliver excellent, inclusive instruction for every child.

High-quality classroom instruction must be the norm statewide, supported by consistent and effective interventions for students who need additional support.

Restructuring should emphasize early intervention, capacity building, and accountability, and ensuring that resources drive measurable student success.

There is an urgent need to address: the identification of students for Special Education; the options or choices when students are not identified; the role of outplacements; the need for documenting achievement; the inequities among districts; the growth of costs in Special Education including transportation; the issues of appropriate staffing; the need for standards and controls on private providers; reasonable and necessary limits on unilateral placements by parents; and the long overdue restructuring of the “burden of proof” to achieve balance and fairness to all.



Connecticut's future depends on its commitment to every learner, beginning at the earliest ages.

A. Early Childhood

The State's new and significant transformative investment of \$300 million in an endowment for preschool quality and access – provides opportunities for School Readiness Councils, providers and school districts to grow and improve in every aspect of serving three- and four-year-olds.

CAPSS has supported the growth and integration of programs for three- and four-year-olds for over 60 years, since the beginnings of Head Start in 1965. Moreover, CAPSS agrees with the long-range plan and recommendations of the Connecticut Commissioner of Early Childhood and the Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel, and supports the equitable compensation of early childhood workers as a number one priority. This will necessitate a major infusion of State funds. The state funding of pre-school began in 1997 as one response to Sheff vs. O'Neill, and funding grew for approximately 10 years. Unfortunately, but for federal funds, the State financial commitment to three- and four-year-olds has been relatively frozen for the last 20 years.

CAPSS believes in the continued use of many providers: private and public, Head Start, school systems, etc., but with greater clarity around the role of local leaders, the capacity of local district leadership and greater use of the resources of school districts. In most communities, the "coordinating" role for serving three- and four-year-olds has been the School Readiness Council.

The content of the curricular programs for three- and four-year-olds should be clearly defined by the State in both the outcomes and the experiences for children. CAPSS also believes strongly in serving the whole child and the whole family, and advocates for wraparound programs and year-round approaches that often include Family Resource Centers, School Based Health Clinics and before and after school childcare services.

While Connecticut has been a leader, nationally, in serving an increasing percentage of three- and four-year-olds, it is imperative that the preschool experience be a quality one for every child in Connecticut.

“State policy and leadership should focus its resources on the communities and families with the greatest need for preschool programs.”

CONNECTICUT'S EXPERIENCE AND SIGNIFICANT NATIONAL RESEARCH HAVE ESTABLISHED A DIRECT AND CAUSAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A QUALITY PRE-SCHOOL EXPERIENCE AND LATER STUDENT SUCCESS THROUGHOUT SCHOOL, FURTHER EDUCATION AND LIFE.

B. Early Literacy

The statewide effort to improve early reading outcomes – anchored by the Science of Reading MasterClass – must continue with stronger support for teacher training, evidence-based materials and progress monitoring.

Countless research studies have established the importance of early reading success for every child – at the earliest age possible. This requires: focused instruction, often one-on-one work between a well-trained teacher and student; the use of “Science of Reading” materials; and the partnership of a school and home environment -- with student-chosen reading materials that motivate the child to continue their reading on their own and for pleasure.

Many reading education experts have criticized the fact that those students struggling to acquire these basic reading skills – are not provided the extra time, focus and tutoring needed to succeed. There must be a more relentless pursuit of reading success for each and every student by the end of first grade.



5 Pathways to Possibilities

Connecticut has an opportunity to build a coordinated, statewide **COLLEGE AND CAREER PATHWAYS (CCP)** system that ensures every student, regardless of zip code, has access to high-quality pathways leading to postsecondary success and meaningful employment. Right now, the state's pathways landscape is dependent on individual districts, institutions, and nonprofit partners, resulting in uneven access and inconsistent alignment. CAPSS is calling for a unified, statewide structure that connects PK-12 education, higher education, industry, labor, and government so that pathways are coherent, sustained, equitable, and responsive to Connecticut's workforce needs. Importantly, by taking this step, Connecticut will also remain competitive with other states that have already built robust, statewide pathway systems and are rapidly expanding opportunities for their students and employers.

To support this effort, CAPSS proposes leading the creation and rollout of a comprehensive Statewide CCP Plan whose early work will be grounded in five strategic pillars: broad stakeholder alignment, development of a statewide pathways framework, a clear policy and legislative strategy, full integration of industry and labor, and a robust two-year communications campaign. This work would build a common Connecticut CCP Framework aligned with federal and state priorities, strengthen credit transfer and funding policies, expand work-based learning and apprenticeship opportunities, and elevate public understanding through the "Pathways to Possibility" campaign.

By investing in a coordinated statewide structure, rather than relying on fragmented, local efforts, Connecticut can ensure that all students benefit from seamless, high-quality pathways that connect learning to real opportunity. This approach positions the state to meet current and future workforce demands, remain competitive with states that are moving quickly in this space, deepen partnerships across sectors, and strengthen Connecticut's commitment to preparing every young person for college, careers, and life.



LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

The following recommendations are specific legislative proposals for consideration during the 2026 legislative session.

These proposals serve as an important first step in the longer-range plan for improving public education: **CONNECTICUT'S PRIORITY: OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.**

ELEVATE THE EDUCATION PROFESSION

Connecticut's public education system depends on the ability to attract and retain highly qualified and passionate educators. A statewide effort to elevate the profession, improve working conditions, and rebuild public respect for educators is essential to ensuring every student has access to excellent teachers, leaders and student support staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Launch a statewide public awareness campaign to elevate the image of the profession and encourage new entrants into teaching, administration, and support roles.
- Direct CSDE to develop model policies and communications guidance that protect and support educators and board members from harassment and promote respectful public discourse.
- Place a moratorium on new curricular and professional development mandates and review existing requirements for impact, redundancy, and funding alignment.
- Restore support to educators by reducing legislative decisions (to include universal professional development and curricular mandates) that deprofessionalize the profession while preserving the autonomy of the CSDE.



LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

FUNDING: ECS & SPECIAL EDUCATION

Equitable, timely and predictable funding is essential to ensuring that every child in Connecticut has access to a high-quality education. Funding must reflect true costs of education, fully reimburse special education expenses, and support high-need districts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Revise the ECS foundation rate (unchanged since 2013 at \$11,525) to reflect current costs of education and inflation.
- Fully fund the Special Education Excess Cost Grant and provide earlier disbursements to districts. Promote in-district programs and regional inter-district cooperation by adjusting the Excess Cost Threshold to 2.5x for in-district programs, 3.5x for RESC programs, and retaining the 4.5x threshold for external placements.
- Review and Revise SEED Grant (Special Education Expansion & Development), positioning it as a long-term, flexible funding mechanism for high-need students.
- Monitor impacts of grant consolidation and magnet tuition caps to ensure that funding changes do not unintentionally disadvantage Alliance and high-need districts.
- Incentivize sustainable and scalable programs designed to include multiple LEAS in regional activities and specialized in-house programs.



LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

PROVIDE MANDATE RELIEF

Connecticut's districts and municipalities face a growing number of state requirements without corresponding financial support. Each new mandate diverts resources from classrooms and undermines local decision-making. CAPSS advocates for open collaboration, full funding, and practitioner review of all legislative proposals affecting districts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Improve collaboration among the State, districts, and municipalities to ensure that new education mandates are co-designed with practitioners, focused on student outcomes.
- Place a 2-year moratorium on any new unfunded mandates to allow the Education Mandate Review Advisory Council to make recommendations.
- Require that all new state mandates include full funding for implementation and be vetted by practitioner panels prior to legislative action.
- Consolidate and align existing state training requirements to restore educator time for instruction, collaboration, and student support.
- Provide state funding for electric school bus conversion mandates for districts and municipalities, recognizing the significant fiscal and logistical challenges they face in meeting 2030-2040 compliance goals.

NEW PROCEDURE FOR HOME SCHOOLING

To comply with the statutory requirement for the compulsory schooling for each child, Connecticut should consider new statewide standards and procedures for homeschooling, managed by the Connecticut State Department of Education, with regional follow-up by the RESCs and appropriate state funding and staff.

CAPSS 2026 Legislative Priorities: Strengthening Connecticut's Public Schools

ELEVATE THE EDUCATION PROFESSION



Launch a Statewide Public Awareness Campaign
Aim to improve the profession's image and attract new, qualified educators.



Place a Moratorium on New Mandates
Halt new curricular and professional development requirements to reduce educator burdens.



Protect Educators from Harassment
Develop model policies to ensure respectful discourse and a safe working environment.



Enact a 2-Year Moratorium on Unfunded Mandates
Pause new requirements to allow for review and analysis of their impact.

ADDRESS UNFUNDED MANDATES



SECURE FAIR & PREDICTABLE FUNDING



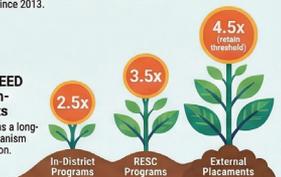
Update the Base Education Funding Rate
Revise the ECS foundation rate of \$11,525, which has been unchanged since 2013.



Fully Fund Special Education Costs
Ensure 100% reimbursement for the Special Education Excess Cost Grant.



Sustain the SEED Grant for High-Need Students
Solidify this grant as a long-term funding mechanism for special education.



Require Full Funding for All New Mandates
Ensure state requirements include the financial support necessary for implementation.



Fund the Electric School Bus Conversion
Provide state aid to help districts meet the expensive 2030-2040 compliance goals.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Connecticut stands at a critical juncture in public education. The challenges ahead demand bold action, thoughtful policy reform and sustained financial commitment to ensure every student has the opportunity to thrive. These priorities are not just about improving educational outcomes; they are also about creating a more equitable, supportive and sustainable system that prepares all students for the future. Thus, CAPSS is recommending:

- Sustainably and annually increasing state funding for public schools,
- Supporting an appropriately compensated teaching profession with working conditions that re-ignite the joy of teaching,
- Serving better all three- and four-year olds through higher quality and more stable pre-school programs, followed by early reading success,
- Strongly supporting the powerful recommendations of Young People First (Dalio Foundation's and CCM's report), particularly improvement in ECS funding, more community schools, and greater coordination among youth services' agencies,
- Supporting a statewide initiative on the broader and deeper dissemination of fact-based information concerning the many successes of Connecticut public schools,
- Supporting a statewide system of Career Pathways that lead students to more successful further education and employment, and
- Ensuring leadership, at every level, is committed to: knowing every student; setting clear and high expectations; assuring accountability for improving achievement; and working passionately to provide fairness for every child.

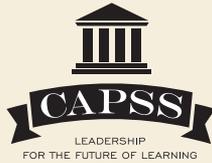


THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW.

By making Connecticut public schools the priority for additional state resources, Connecticut can build on its legacy of excellence and lead the nation in providing a high-quality education for every child.

CAPSS is ever mindful that the decisions we make in the coming years will shape the future of our State, and it is deeply committed to ensuring that the future is one in which every student can succeed, every educator is valued, and every community can flourish.

Let us work together to make this vision a reality, because the success of our public schools will, ultimately, determine the future success of Connecticut itself.



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