



STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Connecticut General Assembly Appropriations Committee Testimony of Commissioner Miguel A. Cardona February 13, 2020

Thank you Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Formica, Representative Lavielle and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Miguel Cardona, and I am the Commissioner of Education. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss Governor Lamont's proposed midterm budget adjustments, as pertaining to the State Department of Education (SDE).

I would like to start by thanking Governor Lamont for maintaining the state's commitment to education by fully funding the increase to ECS formula, and to the Legislature for continuing to make education a priority. While our state's economy and budget are improving, we continue to live in fiscally challenging times. The decisions that you make as legislators are seldom easy, but I know you have the best interests of our students in mind, and I am committed to working with you and with Governor Lamont on behalf of the Department for as long as I am fortunate enough to serve in this role.

Governor Lamont has made K-12 education, workforce development and diversifying the teaching profession top priorities, as he outlined in his budget address last week. Creating the best-trained, best-educated workforce in the world takes talented teachers and robust, culturally competent curriculum, which is why I am particularly pleased that the Governor included funding for two curriculum development positions within our Academic Office.

The Governor has said in the past that education is the opportunity engine for all of our young people. Education is the great equalizer. There is likely nothing more crucial to setting a child up for success than that child's education. For these reasons, it is important that we remain child-centered throughout the rest of the session as we engage in discussions that pertain to education, because our adult decisions directly impact the lives of our children.

We understand the ongoing need for fiscal prudence, and we stand ready to do our part, while continuing to implement policies that work toward closing achievement gaps, supporting teachers, diversifying the workforce, elevating learning, and acting in the best interests of the children of the State of Connecticut.

The Governor's State of the State address marked the start of a three-month process. As we move forward, the Department is prepared to work with the legislature to provide you with whatever guidance or information you will need to make informed decisions to ensure equity and excellence in education for all students. Again, I appreciate being given the opportunity to testify before you today, I look forward to working with you and the Governor this session, and while I may have more formal responses at a later date after I confer with my team, I am happy to answer any questions you may have.