

**Testimony to the State of Connecticut Appropriations Committee on Elementary and Secondary Budgets
February 13, 2020**

I am writing to express my deep concerns about the proposed education budget, in particular its effects on schools here in New Haven and other urban centers.

I am a member of the New Haven Board of Education and we are deep into budget planning for the next year. After years of essentially flat and inadequate ECS funding, along with the restrictions on Alliance funds, we operate at a deficit. Each year we cut deeper in all areas of operations and programs, eroding the services needed to educate the whole child. Each year our transportation costs climb, in part due to the free busing we are required to provide for the private and charter schools. Each year we see an increase in underfunded mandates from the state. The proposed 1.5% increase continues this decline and means even less teachers, librarians, technical programs, and reading support, to name just a few areas.

In spite of these challenges, we are making progress. We are seeing increases in academic progress and graduation rates. This is a great trend in the data, and for the individual students this progress is life-changing. We have made large strides in increasing our transparency around our finances, examining all costs, reducing waste, and engaging the community. Increased state funding will not be wasted in New Haven.

These funds are an investment in the youth of a great city—youth that will soon be the economic drivers of the state. As a board member I get to see and hear about so many success, and see where we have so many deep needs. I ask that you invest more through adequate increases in ECS funding and expanded funds for the wrap-around services our students need.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Matthew Wilcox, MA, MSLIS, AHIP
Vice-President, New Haven Board of Education
matt.wilcox@nhboe.net