

February 18, 2021

Honorable Chair Senator Hartley and Chair Rep. Gibson, and Committee Members:

I write in support of restoring \$100,000 to the Department of Labor budget in support of Connecticut's four 'cradle-to-career' initiatives.

I am a member of the Norwalk Board of Education offering testimony to the impact of their partnership on our students' outcomes. With their support we have:

- Succeeded in ensuring all kids from Birth to K in our city have access to early childhood support and screening to help ensure Kindergarten readiness and balanced classes in Kindergarten.
- Engaged in equity work with Dr. Eddie Fergus of Temple University. Their data work has helped the community better respond to the systemic issues that were leading to disparate outcomes for our students.
- Their Workforce Development initiative has engaged previously untapped community stakeholders in a targeted recruitment of Healthcare, Information Technology, Business Services, and Media companies to join us in supporting workforce readiness.
- Norwalk Acts has also been integral to our work on SEL, School Climate, Trauma informed training, and our counseling redesign initiative.

Thank you for your consideration to restore this important funding.

Best regards,

Erica DePalma

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