

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 have served as the Norwalk Board of Education Liaison to Norwalk Acts for four years, and their work has been invaluable to our Norwalk Public Schools students and families. They have done the heavy lifting of bringing stakeholders from every corner of the city to coalesce our energy around specific goals and action steps. 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. Their data work has helped drive initiatives, such as the equity work the Board of Education has been engaged in with Dr. Eddie Fergus of Temple University. The data work has helped the community better respond to the systemic issues that were leading to disparate outcomes for our students. The recent work to bring together stakeholders around Workforce Development has opened up a whole new dimension of possibilities for our students to be College and Career ready. Norwalk Acts has also been integral to our work on SEL, School Climate, Trauma informed training, and our counseling redesign initiative. Because they bring non-profit entities, corporations, city departments and philanthropists together, they create the necessary conditions for us to align and accelerate progress for our students

This important funding allows teams of community and resident leaders in Bridgeport, Waterbury, Stamford and Norwalk to advance strategies that support student and family success and economic mobility, especially for our Black and brown neighbors and for those with lower incomes. State resources also help us to attract additional public and private investment in our communities.

Thank you for your consideration to restore this important funding.

Best regards,
Barbara Meyer-Mitchell
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