

Bobbi Brown
Vice Chair of Bridgeport Board of Education
Bridgeport, CT
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The Appropriations Committee :Governor's FY 2022-2023 proposed budget for Elementary and Secondary Education agencies

Good evening to all of those who are at the sound of my voice. My name is Bobbi Brown, I currently service as the Vice Chair of the Bridgeport Board of Education. Thank you for allowing me to share this evening.

I won't be long but I want to share a few things that are currently supressing my city. Right now in the mist of covid -19 our schools are still in need of major support. Not only do our children and staff have to effectively function during a pandemic, they also have to constantly worry whether or not there will be enough funding to survive throughout the school year. Students are struggling in a digital divide not having access or limited access to WIF, food insecurity, and managing self-wellness in a pandemic.

Bridgeport depends on the majority of its funding from the state. This condition is exacerbated by the inability of districts like Bridgeport to fully collect tax revenue on non-taxable properties like hospitals and colleges. This impact Bridgeport's ability to adequately fund its local portion of the education budget.

I believe education has to find its way to becoming first in everyone eyes who are in control and making these decisions. Flat funding Bridgeport is in essence a budget cut, as the costs of operating the district escalate each year. This proposed cut limits the careers and potential our children can see within their own city. Bridgeport has a 89% minority majority student population.

Let me repeat it again... Bridgeport has a 89% minority majority student population. This means.. students who look like me and are going through the same school system as me, as well as many others will not be afforded the same education opportunities as other students across the district.

Of the 172 school districts only 33 districts are alliance districts, districts in which the great majority of Connecticut's minority population attends school.

I know these are a lot of numbers but understand this.. A Two year budget that freezes ECS formula phase, it disproportionately affects minority and poverty stricken districts. With everything our students face this is another thing added to their plates whether they understand this or not.

Under this two year budget proposal Bridgeport is losing approximately 7 million dollars in promised State aid by the year 2023 ends. Honestly, Bridgeport needs a major win. A win that our community can say.. the state has done the right thing and kept the promise it made in 2017 to increase funding. A win that proves that education and funding matters. A win that says our state is putting our community's FIRST!

So I ask you today.. will you help cities like Bridgeport win or will you be another reason why we are losing and failing our communities.

I stand on the right side of things, I hope you will too.

We deserve better.

We deserve equal opportunities

Thank you