

March 4, 2021

Re: Governor's Proposed FY 2022-2023 Budget for Elementary and Secondary Education Agencies

Dear Honorable Co-Chairs Osten and Walker and Honorable Vice-Chairs Hartley, Dathan, and Nolan:

We write to you on behalf of Norwalk ACTS and Norwalk community members to raise our concerns about freezing Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funding for two years, which is in the Governor's proposed budget. We stand with the City of Norwalk and the Board of Education of Norwalk in sharing these concerns.

Roughly 75% of Norwalk Public School (NPS) students are students of color, and over 60% of NPS students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Additionally, 17% of NPS students are English Language Learners. COVID-19 has added additional strains on our community, especially for our families of color. A freeze in ECS funding will likewise disproportionately affect children and families of color in Norwalk.

By freezing the Education Cost Sharing grant at FY 2020-21 levels, NPS will not receive the increases promised in the 2017 law when the formula was redesigned. Therefore, NPS will not receive \$419,624 in FY 2021-22, and \$908,600 in FY 2022-23, for a total loss of \$1,328,224 in state funding through the biennial budget.

ECS funding is vital for our students. Freezing ECS funding delays money that was promised to our students over 10 years, and it will delay advances on equitable outcomes by underfunding our students for an additional two years. The current proposal means a child would be able to go through their entire school tenure without ever benefiting from the full funding they should be entitled to.

This proposal is detrimental to our students. We urge you to let the ECS phase-in to proceed as planned and promised. Now more than ever, our students need commitments from our state government that federal funding should be used to supplement COVID-19 recovery and learning loss recovery, not supplant normal operating expenses.

We strongly urge you to reconsider freezing ECS funding.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Barahona, Chief Executive Officer, Norwalk ACTS
9 Mott Avenue, Norwalk CT 06850 / 203-956-0700 / jbarahona@norwalkacts.org

Cosigned by the following 137 people via email confirmation:

Rev. Elizabeth C. Abel
Tamara Abraham, Norwalk Public Schools
Charlie Allred, Norwalk ACTS Board of Directors
Heidi Alterman, Norwalk Public School Parent
Karen Amaker, Norwalk Public Schools
Doreen Maher Anderson
Sharon R. Baanante, Norwalk Women Who Vote
Keta Baker, Norwalk Public School Parent
Lelah Baker-Rabe, Norwalk Public School Parent
Lataya Berry-Middleton, Norwalk Public Schools
Eva R. Beau-Span, Norwalk Public School Parent
Karla Beauregard, Norwalk Public School Parent
Sheryl Berkley, Norwalk Public School Parent
Jennifer J. Bickerton
Carol Bjork, Norwalk Resident
Liana Bloom, Norwalk Public Schools
Jesse Buccolo, Norwalk ACTS
Greg Burnett, Norwalk Common Council Member At-Large
Miranda Boger, Norwalk Public Schools
Amber Bracey
Nathan Brenn, Norwalk Public Schools Alumnus
Sandy Bria, Race & Social Justice Coalition at Saint Paul's
Robert Brickhouse
Vanessa Briones
John Castelluzzo, Norwalk Public Schools
MJ Chironna, Norwalk ACTS
William Chironna, Norwalk Public Schools Parent
Christina Chironna, Norwalk Public Schools Alumna
Debra Costello, Norwalk Public Schools
Susan Cole, Race & Social Justice Coalition at Saint Paul's
Erica DePalma, Norwalk Public School Parent, Norwalk Board of Education Member
Michael DePalma, Norwalk Public School Parent
Melissa Dino
Eric Dino
Lisa Donohue-Olivieri, Norwalk Public School Parent
Angelica Durrell, INTEMPO
Nancy von Euler, Norwalk ACTS Board of Directors
Lucy Evans
Anita Felix, Norwalk Public School Parent
Julia Fleming, Norwalk Public School Parent
Elaine Ganat
Sara Garcia, Norwalk Public School Parent
Jonathan Goldstein
Lauren Goodman
Anthony Gigliotti, Norwalk Public Schools

Daniel Gutierrez, Norwalk Public Schools Alumnus
Nicole Grotheer, Norwalk Public School Parent
Colin Grotheer, Norwalk Public School Parent
Travis Hardy
Celia Herman
David Heuvelman, Common Council District A
Dominique Johnson, Councilmember at-large, Norwalk Common Council
Beth Ann Karlehag, Norwalk Public School Parent
Ginger Katz, Founder of the Courage to Speak Foundation
Kate Kaufman, Norwalk Public School Parent
Patricia Kerschner, Norwalk Resident
Steven Kerschner, Norwalk Resident
Rhonda Kiest, President and CEO, Stepping Stones Museum for Children
Lea Kimball
Daniela Kimmich, Norwalk Public Schools
Basil Kolani
Robert Lasky, Norwalk Public School Parent
Svetlana Lasky, Norwalk Public School Parent
Elaine Lawrence
Mary Kate Locke, Director of Child & Family Development, Family & Children's Agency
Tricia Massucco, Carver Foundation of Norwalk
Lisa Magner
Doreen Maher Anderson
Marissa Mangone, Norwalk Public School Parent
Shiloh Martin-Adam, Norwalk Public School Parent
Wyatt Matthews, Norwalk Public Schools
Justin Matley, Norwalk Public School Parent
Alyssa McElveen
Mary Jo McGonagle, Norwalk Public Schools
Sarah McIntee
Jenn McMurrer
Nicole Merlo-White, Norwalk Public School Parent
Nehemie Moise, Norwalk Public Schools Alumna, Norwalk Resident
Geoff Morrell, Norwalk Public Schools
Anamilena Moreno, Norwalk ACTS
Mallory Moyer, Norwalk Public School Parent
Maryann Murillo, Norwalk Public Schools
Jessica Navarro, Norwalk Public Schools
Eric Niederer, Norwalk Public School Parent
Gloria Niederer, Norwalk Public School Parent
Allyson Noel, Norwalk Public School Parent
Mary Noonan, Norwalk Resident
Sheila Notley, Norwalk Public School Parent
Ben Oatis
Vicki Oatis

Taijah Odoms, Norwalk Public School Parent
Moe Ortiz-Echevarria, Norwalk Public Schools
Luz Palmero, Norwalk Public Schools
Ingrid Pasten
Novelette Peterkin, Carver Foundation of Norwalk
Jasmine Prezzie, Norwalk Public Schools Alumna, Norwalk Resident
Willie Prezzie
Tania Recinos
Colleen Renwick, Norwalk Public School Parent
Leonie Roberts, Norwalk Public School Parent
Andrew Roberts, Norwalk Public School Parent
Renee Rosenbluh, Horizons at Norwalk Community College
Jahronn Ross
Lynn Sadlon, Family Resource Center at Fox Run Elementary School
Steven Salters, Norwalk Public School Parent
Lee Schroder, Norwalk Public School Parent
Diamond Sead, Norwalk Public School Parent
Andrea Servan, Norwalk Public Schools
Mike Sebastian, Norwalk Public School Parent
Daisy Sebastian, Norwalk Public School Parent
Paul Seymour, Norwalk Public Schools
Monique Singleton, Norwalk Public School Parent
LaTisha Singleton, Norwalk Public School Parent
Barbara Smyth, Norwalk Common Council
LaToria Spain, Norwalk Public School Parent
Samuel Spain, Norwalk Public School Parent
Ryan Stewart, Norwalk Public School Parent
Kori Strich, Norwalk Public School Parent
Tawana Taylor
Rafael E. Tejada, Norwalk Public Schools
Lamont Thomas, Race & Social Justice Coalition at Saint Paul's
Michelle Tiani, Norwalk Public School Parent
Will Tiani, Norwalk Public School Parent
Barbara Tiani
Nelson Torres, Norwalk Public School Parent
Beatriz Torres, Norwalk Public School Parent
Robert Townes, Director of Public Affairs, Stepping Stones Museum for Children
Jacquelyn Victoria, Norwalk Public Schools
Margaret Watt, The Norwalk Partnership & Norwalk Public School Parent
Eliza Welfare-Brown
April Wennerstrom
Colleen Wiedmann, Norwalk Public School Parent
Ryan Wiedmann, Norwalk Public School Parent
Lashawnda Williams, Norwalk Public School Parent
Carol Wiltshire-Toth, Norwalk Public Schools

Olga Zargos-Traub, Norwalk Public School Parent
Iliana Zuniga, Latinos Unidos de Norwalk