



# OLD SAYBROOK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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**TO:** The Appropriations Committee

**FROM:** Jan G. Perruccio, Superintendent  
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CAPSS Legislative Committee Co-Chair

**DATE:** March 9, 2021

Greetings, Chairmen Osten and Walker, Ranking Members Miner and France and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Jan Perruccio, and I am the Superintendent of Old Saybrook Public Schools and Co-Chair of the CAPSS Legislative Committee to speak in **opposition to Governor's Biennial Budget proposal, House Bill 6439, An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June Thirtieth, 2023 and Making Appropriations Therefor.**

CT Schools have struggled through an unprecedented year with the help of federal, state and municipal governments, but the effects of the pandemic and its accompanying challenges will continue to resonate among our students and staff for many years to come. The impact of their experiences has created myriad needs and learning gaps. Some alliance districts stand to lose many millions over two years while other districts, who receive relatively small grants, are level funded at previously reduced levels. There are no winners as the need for additional programming and SEL supports divert dollars needed for all programming. The pie isn't the same size in this scenario it is actually smaller. Federal dollars meant to enlarge the entire source of funding will partially fill the gaps created by the state funding removed from this budget but a state that is committed to excellent education and equity for all students has to consider the uneven impact a budget like this will have. Even more concerning, the cliff that the State will face in 2023, when federal ESSER funds sunset, will exacerbate the concerns we are facing today and anticipate facing into the next few years. The hole will only get deeper.

The [CAPSS Blueprint to Transform CT's Public Schools](#) provides solutions because it provides a well thought out plan that spans a decade and a half and identifies those issues and items that need to be addressed first. In this plan, no town falls below their current Educational Cost Share apportionment and all can anticipate predictable streams of revenue for this grant. In the Governor's budget, special education is level funded, but level funding is typically a deficit in this area in any BOE budget since the most expensive placements typically become more expensive each year. The phase in of this plan, outlined in the CAPSS Blueprint, requests new dollars only over time and collapses grants that are too small to sustainably improve education in any community while still easing the burden on towns and taxpayers.

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*"The mission of the Old Saybrook Public Schools is to educate and prepare students to achieve their highest aspirations, care for others and the environment, and contribute to a global society by working in partnership with families and the community, and by engaging each learner in a rigorous, personalized, and meaningful educational program."*

The **level funding of the State Department of Education budget** will mean that the current level of staffing, which is significantly less than it was a decade ago, will continue to create challenges for the Department and for the districts they support. School districts will need the support of a robust department, particularly in the areas of curriculum and instruction, as we move to address unique learning needs post-pandemic. This will be the time of greatest need for support from our colleagues at the SDE.

Two years of level funding education in Connecticut at this point in our journey to recover from COVID may have long-lasting implications on the academic and social and emotional health of our students and the overall well-being of our school districts.