

*A BLUEPRINT  
TO  
TRANSFORM  
CONNECTICUT'S  
PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS*



The *Blueprint* is

- a plan by the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS), two years in the making, that is unwavering in its goals of greater equity and sufficiency in State funding, as well as greater expectations and accountability for higher student achievement,
- an outgrowth of both old and new ideas,

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The *Blueprint* is

- a plan that goes much deeper than ECS and addresses multiple areas, including categorical grants, teaching & learning, accountability, health issues, technology, and
- a 15-year roadmap with a set of 30 recommendations that should be viewed collectively, as a unit of interlocking pieces, that CAPSS believes will assure every child receives the high-quality teaching and learning they are owed.



# Appendi X D



# CAPSS' Plan for Continuous Improvement in CT Public Schools

## State Share 1.

The State must spend considerably more to meet a goal that the State and towns will equally share K-12 spending.

## ECS Predictability 2.

Prohibit the Governor from making mid-year changes to ECS. The General Assembly will have a May 1 deadline for setting ECS final grant awards for the year beginning next July 1<sup>st</sup>.



# CAPSS' Plan for Continuous Improvement in CT Public Schools

## ECS Improvements 3.

In a fifteen-year plan, ECS will grow by about 2.5% annually. The Foundation will grow each year; annual ECS losses for 95 towns will be eliminated. There will be equity driven phase-in of distributions and hold harmless provisions when appropriate.

## Special Education 4.

Support a two-year phase-in of Excess Cost grant full funding with State scrutiny of growing identification rates and rising costs. The Grant will be paid on a more timely basis with incentives to keep students in district/state.



# CAPSS' Plan for Continuous Improvement in CT Public Schools

## School Construction 5.

Increase reimbursement (for most) to 10%-80% with stricter State project requirements.

## Adult Education 6.

Mandate services be transferred to RESCs; enrichment classes remain where they are.



# CAPSS' Plan for Continuous Improvement in CT Public Schools

## English Language Learners

7.

Require schools to develop plans for ELLs; significant new State funding will be phased in to help pay for programming. Greater use of technology required.

## Early Childhood

8.

Adopt a goal of universal early childhood access for all underserved 3 and 4-year-olds with a first task of determining total level of need in each town. Strengthen the bonds of these early childhood programs with public kindergarten programs.



# CAPSS' Plan for Continuous Improvement in CT Public Schools

## Transportation 9.

Reinstitute over two years a wealth-based reimbursement grant for towns with the greatest (%) public transportation costs.



# Educational Equity, Achievement, and Innovation

## Structural Racism

10.

Directly address structural racism and other forms of discrimination within classrooms, schools and districts and adopt practices that promote diversity. Examine and act upon data on enrollment in higher level courses, Special Education identification rates, discipline patterns, retentions, graduation rates, board and school policies and more with the goal of reducing/eliminating discriminatory practices toward students of color. Use new State funds for minority teacher recruitment, teacher training in and access to proven bias-free curriculum and materials. Importantly, the State and Local governments should convene an advisory committee and agree to a ten-year effort to reduce structural racism.

## Virtual Learning

11.

Rethink virtual learning by radically improving the technology, content, and the use of virtual learning. Assist teachers and families. Expect that some amount of virtual learning will be needed going forward.

# Educational Equity, Achievement, and Innovation

## Student Assessment

12. Seek federal waivers (if required) to drop the grades 4, 6, and 8 assessments; add State paid PSATs. Make statewide Smarter Balance/PSAT/SAT materials available at school and at home.

## SDE Leadership

13. State Department of Education must lead in advancing 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills (such as collaboration, problem solving, and nimblity), portrait of the graduate (with independent learning skills) with suggested, easily available, and aligned curricula and materials.

# Educational Equity, Achievement, and Innovation

## Student Well-Being

14. Provide new State aid for student safety, trauma, mental health and wellbeing, and improved networks of providers and services.

## Disengaged Youth

15. The State must support schools in their outreach to disengaged/disenfranchised youth aimed at high school completion and career pathway programs.

# Educational Equity, Achievement, and Innovation

## Teacher Certification

16.

Eliminate barriers to teacher certification (including a review and updating of legal and regulatory requirements), creating new regional preparation programs for teachers and leaders with a renewed focus on quality preservice (student teaching) experiences. Clarify current requirements for evaluation and professional development.



# Improving Intergovernmental Matters

## 17. Federal Funds

Coordinate an effort to require the federal Department of Education to meet its fiscal promises, such as financing at least 40% of CT's \$2 billion annual Special Education bill.

## 18. Municipal Overburden

Merge, simplify, and financially hold harmless non-State aid to towns.



# Improving Intergovernmental Matters

## 19. State and Local Debt

Require an annual accounting of all State and Local debt along with plans to pay off these debts (capital, pension, and non-pension retirement benefit debts).

## 20. Teacher Retirement System (TRB)

Support continued changes that provide financial relief to the TRB, and consider the possibility of options for a choice of retirement plan for new hires.



# Improving Intergovernmental Matters

## 21. State Grant Elimination

Eliminate eight small grants and repurpose the funding to new School Improvement Grant (see budget at end of this).

## 22. MER (MBR)

Reinstate a minimum expenditure requirement and faithfully execute its implementation.



# Improving Intergovernmental Matters

## 23. Regionalism

Encourage and provide funding to assist the Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs) to facilitate the regionalization of services, especially for Students with Disabilities.

## 24. Waivers

Adopt a process for the Department of Education to waive certain non-health/safety mandates for districts demonstrating high growth, high achieving, and gap closing.





# Accountability for Continuous Improvement

With the merger of five mostly Priority School District grants, (and the repurposing of eight smaller grants), these funds will financially hold harmless approximately half of the Alliance Districts that currently benefit from the PSD grants, and expand to all of the Alliance Districts programs to improve student achievement. (Roughly 30 to 40 districts total)

## 25. School Improvement Grant

Clarify State laws and regulations about the roles/responsibilities of superintendents, and local boards of education, as well as the State Board of Education in the takeover process.

## 26. Governance



# Accountability for Continuous Improvement

Financially maintain high quality schools of choice with possible matching of the ECS Foundation level; acknowledge and address the inequities and long-term funding problems of magnet schools with goal driven solutions.

## **27. Public School Choice**

Commit an annual report on progress reducing inequalities and disparities in expenditures, programs, and achievements.

## **28. Measuring Success**



# Accountability for Continuous Improvement

Related to COVID-19, but also to potential future pandemics, require districts to conduct health and safety audits based on an SDE template and prepare comprehensive plans that show continuous readiness for future pandemics and other interruptions.

## 29. Health and Safety

The State Department of Education should extensively research pupil expenditures related to Special Education and programs for English Learners..

## 30. More Research Needed



Questions?  
More Information?

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