

Testimony Regarding the Proposed Budget for the Department of Education and the Educational Cost Sharing Grant

H.B. No. 6350: An Act Concerning The Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2015, And Other Provisions Relating To Revenue

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Education Committee

February 21, 2013

Senator Harp, Representative Walker, and distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee:

I am testifying today on behalf of Connecticut Voices for Children, a research-based public education and advocacy organization that works statewide to promote the well-being of Connecticut's children, youth, and families. **Connecticut Voices for Children supports a well-funded, accurate, transparent, and equitable finance formula to determine the Education Cost Sharing grant.**

The Governor's bill No. 6350 includes a proposed increase in the *appropriation* for the ECS grant for both fiscal years 2014 and 2015.¹ Education equalization grants would increase from its current funding in 2013 to \$2.1 and \$2.2 billion dollars in fiscal years 2014 and 2015, respectively.²

However, we have concerns about the proposed method of funding the ECS increase. The Governor's bill H.B. 6357 proposes to divert municipal payments in lieu of taxes and reduce services or programs, such as school transportation and school-based health centers.³ Reducing the PILOT and other state aid that supports public safety, parks and recreation, education, and other services in municipalities could diminish the very same communities that the ECS grant increases intend to help.⁴

A number of aspects of the budget proposal for the ECS funds are unclear. An undetermined amount of ECS grant funding would be for the purpose of conditional grants, when districts must agree to state-mandated policy and spending changes to their public schools, rather than formula-based equalization grants.⁵ It is also unclear if new ECS funds would be required to be spent on education or if municipalities would have the option of shifting new ECS funds to non-educational purposes.

Additionally, part of the proposed increase to the ECS grant would include the channeling of funds to charter schools via ECS.⁶ When considering charter school funding, it is important to note the intent of ECS is to "...equalize state education funding to towns by taking into account a town's wealth and ability to raise property taxes to pay for education."⁷ Currently, towns do not fund charter schools. The mixing of charter and local school education monies in the ECS formula fiscally combines equalization and choice; potentially resulting in unknown, and undesirable, consequences.

Taken together, these proposals, without modification, are likely to result in an inequitable method of determining and funding the educational equalization grants.⁸

In the long term, there are a number of risks with continuing to allocate ECS funds in this way. There is a potential for inter-generational conflict if the state does not assume a greater burden for K-12 education costs. Second, there is a fundamental inequity of holding towns harmless and never cutting funding to upper income towns with declining enrollments, while making lower income towns subject to conditions for increases in ECS funding.

Flat funding of the Excess Cost - Student Based grant for special education costs will require districts to assume a greater share of any additional costs for special education.⁹

Reductions in transportation aid could limit children's access to programs that foster diversity and enriched educational opportunities.¹⁰ Reduced transportation funds may make it more difficult for districts to support children's access to out-of-district schools and for those schools to maintain diverse, regional student populations¹¹

Alternatively, we propose a more modest, yet progressive increase in ECS funding for equalization grants, rather than conditional funding. Such an increase should not come at the expense of town municipal aid such as PILOT funds.

Second, changing the mastery test schedule could save millions of dollars. This funding could instead be used to increase the ECS grant, school based health centers, or other educational programs.¹² We estimate that up to \$10 million dollars could be saved in fiscal years 2014 and 2015 by changing the state's standardized testing schedule to only grades four (4), six (6), eight (8), and ten (10), rather than all grades three to eight and ten.¹³

Finally, in response to the unknown fiscal and educational impact of the "Common Core State (*sic*) Standards" on districts and the State¹⁴, the education committee might consider commissioning a pilot or cost study and/or delay implementation of the "Common Core."¹⁵

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or need additional information.

¹¹ See Governor's Bill No. 6357, Sec 1(2)(A)-(B) for "Base Aid Ratio" and Sec. 2(6)(U)-(V) The bill states, "Subdivision (6) of subsection (a) of section 10-262h of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2013*):

(U) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2014, (i) for a town not designated as an alliance district, as defined in section 10-262u, as amended by this act, a grant in an amount equal to the sum of (I) the greater of (a) the grant the town received for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013, or (b) the sum of the town's base aid and one one-hundredths per cent of the difference between the town's fully funded grant and the town's base aid, and (II) the amount the town received for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013, as part of the state grant in lieu of taxes under the provisions of subsections (a) to (c), inclusive, and (c) of section 12-19a, sections 12-19b, 12-19c, 4b-39 and 32-666, and (ii) for a town designated as an alliance district, a grant in an amount equal to the sum of (I) the greater of (a) the grant the town received for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013, or (b) the sum of the town's base aid and ten one-hundredths per cent of the difference between the town's fully funded grant and the town's base aid, and (II) the amount the town received for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013, as part of the state grant in lieu of taxes under the provisions of subsections (a) to (c), inclusive, and (c) of section 12-19a, sections 12-19b, 12-19c, 4b-39 and 32-666. (V) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015, (i) for a town not designated as an alliance district, as defined in section 10-262u, as amended by this act, a grant in an amount equal to the sum of (I) the greater of (a) the grant the town received for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013, or (b) the sum of the town's base aid and two one-hundredths per cent of the difference between the town's fully funded grant and the town's base aid, and (II) the amount the town received for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013, as part of the state

grant in lieu of taxes under the provisions of subsections (a) to (c), inclusive, and (e) of section 12-19a, sections 12-19b, 12-19c, 4b-39 and 32-666, and (ii) for a town designated as an alliance district, a grant in an amount equal to the sum of (I) the greater of (a) the grant the town received for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013, or (b) the sum of the town's base aid and twenty one-hundredths per cent of the difference between the town's fully funded grant and the town's base aid, and (II) the amount the town received for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013, as part of the state grant in lieu of taxes under the provisions of subsections (a) to (c), inclusive, and (e) of section 12-19a, sections 12-19b, 12-19c, 4b-39 and 32-666;"

² See The Governor's Bill H.B. 6350, Sec. 1, T454. LCO 2943, January 2013.

<http://www.cga.ct.gov/2013/TOB/H/2013HB-06350-R00-HB.htm>

³ See Malloy, Governor Dannel P. "Connecticut FY 2014 – FY 2015 Biennium Governor's Budget Summary." Section B, Department of Education. <http://www.ct.gov/opm/cwp/view.asp?a=2958&Q=518400&PM=1>. For example, \$73.6 million dollars of the proposed increase to the ECS grant would be funded through a proposal to divert the payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) grant away from municipalities.

⁴ See Malloy, Governor Dannel P. "Connecticut FY 2014 – FY 2015 Biennium Governor's Budget Summary." Both the Department of Education and the municipal aid section, as well as the budget bill Sec. 2(6)(U)-(V) identify a diversion of PILOT aid from municipalities to the ECS grant. Towns and cities with the greatest amount of PILOT funding will get the greatest increases in ECS funding. This also means that districts with higher reliance on PILOT will lose a key source of discretionary tax revenue in equal proportion to (possible) increases to ECS funding.

⁵ See Governor's Bill No. 6357, Sec. 4(c)(1)(A)-(B). The section states, "Sec. 4. Subsections (c) and (d) of section 10-262u of the general statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2013*):

(c) (1) (A) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013, [and each fiscal year thereafter,] the Comptroller shall withhold from a town designated as an alliance district any increase in funds received over the amount the town received for the prior fiscal year pursuant to section 10-262h, as amended by this act. The Comptroller shall transfer such funds to the Commissioner of Education. (B) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2014, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Comptroller shall withhold from a town designated as an alliance district any increase in funds received over the amount the town received for the prior fiscal year pursuant to subsection (a) of section 10-262i, as amended by this act. The Comptroller shall transfer such funds to the Commissioner of Education.

⁶ See Malloy, Governor Dannel P. "Connecticut FY 2014 – FY 2015 Biennium Governor's Budget in Details" page 373 on "Education." http://www.ct.gov/opm/lib/opm/budget/2014_2015_biennial_budget/budgetindetail/education.pdf. The line item for charter schools is collapsed and instead rolled into the "Education Equalization Grant" line item. The totals for new charters and seats are as follows:

Add Funding for New State Charter Schools 2014-1,785,000 2015-8,415,000 2016-12,155,000

Funding will allow the State Department of Education to approve one additional state charter school in FY 2014 and three more in FY 2015. This funding is included in the ECS line item. (author's emphasis)

Add Funding for New Local Charter Schools 2014-110,000 2015-710,000 2016-1,275,000

Funding will allow the State Department of Education to approve two new local charter schools in FY 2014 and three more in FY 2015. This funding is included in a new account called School

⁷ See Task Force to Study State Education Funding Interim Report. January 19, 2012, p.3,

<http://www.cga.ct.gov/ed/CostSharing/Documents/ECS%20Interim%20Report%20Final%201-19.pdf>

⁸ These methods of determining and funding an increase to the ECS grants will disproportionately impact the communities that rely on state aid and have lower income populations. In particular, communities that have larger free lunch student populations and that most rely on state payments in lieu of taxes to fund their municipalities, transportation aid, and the ECS grants to fund public schools.

⁹ See The Governor's Bill H.B. 6350, Sec. 1, T460 for "Excess Cost - Student Based" which will be funded at \$139,805,731 for FYs 2014 and 2015

¹⁰ See H.B. 6350 Sec. 1 T451 for "Transportation of School Children" which is reduced to \$5 million. The Governor's education budget bill proposes cuts to state reimbursements for transportation and replaces this aid with a competitive grant program. See Malloy, Governor Dannel P. "Connecticut FY 2014 – FY 2015 Biennium Governor's Budget Summary." Section B, Department of Education. <http://www.ct.gov/opm/cwp/view.asp?a=2958&Q=518400&PM=1>. Also see Governor's Bill No. 6357, Sec. 13, Sec. 14(a)-(d), Sec. 15(a)-(d), Sec. 16(f), Sec. 17(a)-(c), Sec. 18, Sec. 19(d). The sections state:

Sec. 13. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2013*) The Commissioner of Education shall, within available appropriations, establish a regional transportation grant program that awards grants to local and regional boards of education that coordinate and share the provision of public school transportation services. The local or regional boards of education that agree to coordinate and share public school transportation services may apply to the commissioner, at such time and in such manner as the commissioner prescribes, for a grant under this section. The section states:

Sec. 14. Section 10-97 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2013*):

(a) The board of education of any town or, where the boards of education of constituent towns have so agreed, any regional school district shall provide the reasonable and necessary transportation, except as provided in section 10-233c, for any student under twenty-one years of age who is not a graduate of a high school or technical high school and who resides with a parent or guardian in such town or regional school district or who belongs to such town, and who attends a state or state-approved technical high school within such local or regional school district as a regular all-day student or as a high school cooperative student, and for any such student who attends any such school in a town other than the town of his residence. [When the cost of such transportation out-of-town would exceed the sum of two hundred dollars per year, said board of education may elect to maintain such student in the town where he or she attends such technical high school and for the cost of such maintenance the local or regional school district shall be reimbursed in the same manner and to the same extent as in the case of payment for transportation. Each such board's reimbursement percentage pursuant to section 10-266m for expenditures in excess of eight hundred dollars per pupil incurred in the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1987, and in each fiscal year thereafter, shall be increased by an additional twenty percentage points.]

(b) Any local or regional board of education which does not furnish agricultural science and technology education approved by the State Board of Education shall designate a school or schools having such a course approved by the State Board of Education as the school which any person may attend who has completed an elementary school course through the eighth grade. The board of education shall pay the tuition and reasonable and necessary cost of transportation of any person under twenty-one years of age who is not a graduate of a high school or technical high school and who attends the designated school, provided transportation services may be suspended in accordance with the provisions of section 10-233c. [Each such board's reimbursement percentage pursuant to section 10-266m for expenditures in excess of eight hundred dollars per pupil incurred in the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1987, and in each fiscal year thereafter, shall be increased by an additional twenty percentage points.]

[(c) Any local or regional board of education which transports students to a state or state-approved technical high school, or school furnishing agricultural science and technology education shall be reimbursed for a portion of such pupil transportation annually in accordance with the provisions of section 10-266m, and the provisions of subsections (a) and (b) of this section relating to reimbursement percentages, provided the reimbursement for transportation costs to a school furnishing vocational agricultural training shall not exceed an amount equal to such reimbursement of the costs of transporting such pupils to the school furnishing a full program of vocational agricultural training nearest to the sending school district at the time of the pupil's initial enrollment in the program. Application for such reimbursement shall be made by the board of education to the State Board of Education at such time and in such manner as said state board prescribes. The provisions of this section shall apply to a veteran who served in time of war, as defined by section 27-103, without regard to age or whether or not such veteran resides with a parent or guardian provided such veteran is attending a state or state-approved vocational secondary school.]

[(d) (c) The parents or guardian of any student or any veteran over twenty-one who is denied the reasonable and necessary transportation required in this section may appeal such lack of transportation in the same manner as is provided in sections 10-186 and 10-187.

[(e) (d) For purposes of this section, a local or regional board of education shall not be required to expend for transporting a student to a technical high school or an agricultural science and technology education center an amount greater than six thousand dollars, except that a board of education shall continue to pay the reasonable and necessary costs of transporting a student who is enrolled in such a school or center on July 1, 1996, until such student completes the program at such school or center.

Sec. 15. Section 10-277 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2013*):

(a) For the purposes of this section, "high school" means any public high school or public junior high school approved by the State Board of Education.

(b) Any town or regional school district which does not maintain a high school shall pay the reasonable and necessary cost of transportation of any pupil under twenty-one years of age who resides with such pupil's parents or guardian in such school district and who, with the written consent of the board of education, attends any high school approved by the State Board of Education. The town or regional board of education may, upon request, enter into a written agreement with the parents of any high school pupil permitting such pupil to attend an approved public high school other than that to which transportation is furnished by the school district and each may pay such costs of transportation as may be agreed upon. Such necessary and reasonable cost of transportation shall be paid by the town treasurer or the regional school district treasurer upon order of the superintendent of schools, as authorized by the board of education. The board of education may also, at its discretion, provide additional transportation for any pupil attending such high

school to and from the point of embarkation in the town in which the pupil resides. [Annually, on or before September first, the superintendent of schools of each school district so transporting pupils to high school shall certify under oath to the State Board of Education the names of the towns to which such pupils were transported together with the total cost to the town of such transportation. Upon application to the State Board of Education, any town or regional school district which so provides transportation for high school pupils enrolled in a school not maintained by such district pursuant to this section shall, annually, be reimbursed by the state for such transportation in accordance with the provisions of sections 10-97 and 10-266m.]

(c) Any town or regional school district which is transporting students to a high school, shall have the authority, at its discretion, to furnish similar transportation to nonpublic high schools or junior high schools located within the same town to which the town or regional school district is transporting students in accordance with subsection (b) of this section, or to nonpublic high schools or junior high schools located in a town adjacent to the transporting town or regional school district, or to a town adjacent to the town in which is located the public high school or junior high school to which the students are transported. [If such town or regional school district does provide such transportation, it shall be reimbursed in the same manner and amounts as provided in subsection (b) of this section.]

(d) Any town or regional school district which provides transportation services pursuant to the provisions of this section may suspend such services in accordance with the provisions of section 10-233c.

Sec. 16. Subsection (f) of section 10-66ee of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2013*):

(f) The local or regional board of education of the school district in which the charter school is located shall provide transportation services for students of the charter school who reside in such school district pursuant to section 10-273a unless the charter school makes other arrangements for such transportation. Any local or regional board of education may provide transportation services to a student attending a charter school outside of the district in which [the] such student resides. [and, if it elects to provide such transportation, shall be reimbursed pursuant to section 10-266m for the reasonable costs of such transportation.] Any local or regional board of education providing transportation services under this subsection may suspend such services in accordance with the provisions of section 10-233c. The parent or guardian of any student denied the transportation services required to be provided pursuant to this subsection may appeal such denial in the manner provided in sections 10-186 and 10-187.

Sec. 17. Section 10-158a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2013*):

(a) Any two or more boards of education may, in writing, agree to establish cooperative arrangements to provide school accommodations services, programs or activities, special education services or health care services to enable such boards to carry out the duties specified in the general statutes. Such arrangements may include the establishment of a committee to supervise such programs, the membership of the committee to be determined by the agreement of the cooperating boards. Such committee shall have the power, in accordance with the terms of the agreement, to (1) apply for, receive directly and expend on behalf of the school districts which have designated the committee an agent for such purpose any state or federal grants which may be allocated to school districts for specified programs, the supervision of which has been delegated to such committee, provided such grants are payable before implementation of any such program or are to reimburse the committee pursuant to subsection (d) of this section for transportation provided to a school operated by a cooperative arrangement; (2) receive and disburse funds appropriated to the use of such committee by the cooperating school districts, the state or the United States, or given to the committee by individuals or private corporations; (3) hold title to real or personal property in trust, or as otherwise agreed to by the parties, for the appointing boards; (4) employ personnel; (5) enter into contracts; and (6) otherwise provide the specified programs, services and activities. Teachers employed by any such committee shall be subject to the provisions of the general statutes applicable to teachers employed by the board of education of any town or regional school district. For purposes of this section, the term "teacher" shall include each professional employee of a committee below the rank of superintendent who holds a regular certificate issued by the State Board of Education and who is in a position requiring such certification.

(b) Subject to the provisions of subsection (c) of this section, any board of education may withdraw from any agreement entered into under subsection (a) of this section if, at least one year prior to the date of the proposed withdrawal, it gives written notice of its intent to do so to each of the other boards. Upon withdrawal by one or more boards of education, two or more boards of education may continue their commitment to the agreement. If two or more boards of education continue the arrangement, then such committee established within the arrangement may continue to hold title to any real or personal property given to or purchased by the committee in trust for all the boards of education which entered the agreement, unless otherwise provided in the agreement or by law or by the grantor or donor of such property. Upon dissolution of the committee, any property held in trust shall be distributed in accordance with the agreement, if such distribution is not contrary to law.

(c) If a cooperative arrangement receives a grant for a school building project pursuant to chapter 173, the cooperative arrangement shall use the building for which the grant was provided for a period of not less than twenty years after completion of such project. If the cooperative arrangement ceases to use the building for the purpose for which the grant was provided, the Commissioner of Education shall determine whether (1) title to the building and any legal interest in appurtenant land reverts to the state or (2) the cooperative arrangement reimburses the state an amount equal to ten per cent of the eligible school building project costs of the project.

[(d) Any cooperative arrangement established pursuant to this section, or any local or regional board of education which is a member of such a cooperative arrangement which transports students to a school operated by such cooperative arrangement shall be reimbursed in accordance with the provisions of section 10-266m. At the end of each school year, any such cooperative arrangement or local or regional board of education which provides such transportation shall file an application for reimbursement on a form provided by the Department of Education.]

Sec. 18. Section 10-53 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2013*):

All provisions of the general statutes relating to public education, including those providing state grants-in-aid, shall apply to each town belonging to a regional school district. [, provided, if the board of education of any regional school district provides transportation to a regional school, such district shall be reimbursed by the state as provided in section 10-54.]

Sec. 19. Subsection (d) of section 10-64 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2013*):

(d) Any local or regional board of education which does not furnish agricultural science and technology education approved by the State Board of Education shall designate a school or schools having such a course approved by the State Board of Education as the school which any person may attend who has completed an elementary school course through the eighth grade. The board of education shall pay the tuition and reasonable and necessary cost of transportation of any person under twenty-one years of age who is not a graduate of a high school or technical high school or an agricultural science and technology education center and who attends the designated school, provided transportation services may be suspended in accordance with the provisions of section 10-233c. [Each such board's reimbursement percentage pursuant to section 10-266m for expenditures in excess of eight hundred dollars per pupil incurred in the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2004, and in each fiscal year thereafter, shall be increased by an additional twenty percentage points.]

¹¹ In particular, this could reduce the access of children of various racial and ethnic groups and economically disadvantaged children if they are required to get their own transportation to out-of-district programs. *See* Cotto, Jr. Robert. "Apples and Oranges: Comparing Charters, Magnets, and Towns." Connecticut Voices for Children. <http://www.ctvoices.org/blog/20120426/apples-and-oranges-comparing-charters-magnets-and-towns>. Data from the State Department of Education suggest that elective, or choice, programs in the state tend to serve smaller percentages of English Language Learner (ELL) students, students with disabilities (SWD), and students eligible for free meals in the National School Lunch Program when compared to the town districts where they are located. Therefore, comparing charters and magnets with local districts can be like comparing "apples with oranges." *See* Frankenberg, Erica and Siegel-Hawley, Genevieve. "A Segregating Choice? An Overview of Charter School Policy, Enrollment Trends, and Segregation." *Educational Delusion? Why Choice Can Deepen Inequality and How to Make Schools Fair*. eds. Gary Orfield and Erika Frankenberg and Associates: University of California Press; Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, pp. 129-144. Reducing transportation aid to towns for these programs could also exacerbate the exclusion of these children. Frankenberg and Siegel-Hawley state that, "Charter legislation related to location, district type, transportation, and funding may indirectly related to racial diversity. If charters are incentivized or require to locate in predominantly poor, non-white area—some states only permit the establishment of charter schools in central city districts—they are likely to disproportionately serve disadvantaged populations, especially if free transportation is not available."

¹² *See* Malloy 2012 "Connecticut FY 2014 – FY 2015 Biennium Governor's Budget Summary." Section B, Department of Education. The recommended budget proposes reductions to school transportation aid, school-based health centers; and proposes increase in ECS funding and various choice programs.

¹³ *See* Malloy, Governor Dannel P. "Connecticut FY 2014 – FY 2015 Biennium Governor's Budget Summary." Section B, Department of Education. <http://www.ct.gov/opm/cwp/view.asp?a=2958&Q=518400&PM=1>. On page B-98, the Governor's budget estimates \$19,050,559 for "Develop of Mastery Exams Grades 4, 6 & 8" in FY 2013 and lists \$20,148,978 in "Current Services" for FY 2014. This line item would be reduced into a line item called "School Improvement" in 2014 according to the Governor's budget proposal. In order to comply with the No Child Left Behind Act, Connecticut began giving tests to all children in grades three through eight and ten. Because the number of children that were required to take standardized tests doubled, the amount of money spent to develop the tests more than doubled from \$5.3 to \$13.4 million from 2005 to 2006. We estimate a reduction of testing by roughly half the number of children could reduce the amount of money spent for the mastery test budget by half, or roughly \$10 million dollars per

year. The evidence demonstrates that changing the testing schedule could open up time and others resources available towards teaching and learning, while not losing important information produced by the CMT and CAPT such as the performance of subgroups.

¹⁴ Connecticut State Department of Education. "Department of Education Legislative Proposal - 2013 Session: Changes to Assessment Statutes to Enable Smarter Balanced Assessments." 25 Jan. 2013. The proposal to change statute to allow the "Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium tests" based on the Common Core State (sic) Standards. The proposal background states, "The State's adoption of the Common Core State Standards necessitates a corresponding shift to a new assessment system. The Smarter Balanced assessments will be piloted in the 2013-14 school year, and implemented statewide in the 2014-15 school year. This legislation authorizes the state to require administration of these assessments." However, the state writes that the fiscal impact is "To be determined"; and about the municipal impact the state says, "Districts have considerable new responsibilities to modify curricula and train personnel in light of the shift to the Common Core. The CSDE is assisting districts with these tasks." Also *see* Rabe Thomas, Jacqueline and Pazniokas, Mark. "The repercussions of national education standards." *CT Mirror*. 5 Dec. 2012. <http://ctmirror.com/story/18354/repercussion-national-education-standards>.

¹⁵ The Governor's recommended budget encourages any additional state funding be used for preparation for the "Common Core State Standards" and associated tests. It is particularly important to review the state's spending on testing because at this time the Department of Education does not know the financial impact of the battery of tests associated with the Common Core Standards. *See* Governor's Bill No. 6357, Sec. 3(h) and Sec. 4(c)-(d). The sections state:

Sec. 3. Section 10-262i of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2013*):

(h) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2014, and each fiscal year thereafter, the amount paid to a town pursuant to subsection (a) of this section minus the amount paid to such town under said subsection for the prior fiscal year shall be included in the calculation of the aid increase for such town. The aid increase paid to the town may be used to cover costs incurred in the implementation of teacher evaluation and support programs, pursuant to section 10-151b, and the common core state standards.

Sec. 4. Subsections (c) and (d) of section 10-262u of the general statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2013*):

(c) (1) (A) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013, [and each fiscal year thereafter,] the Comptroller shall withhold from a town designated as an alliance district any increase in funds received over the amount the town received for the prior fiscal year pursuant to section 10-262h, as amended by this act. The Comptroller shall transfer such funds to the Commissioner of Education. (B) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2014, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Comptroller shall withhold from a town designated as an alliance district any increase in funds received over the amount the town received for the prior fiscal year pursuant to subsection (a) of section 10-262i, as amended by this act. The Comptroller shall transfer such funds to the Commissioner of Education.

(2) Upon receipt of an application pursuant to subsection (d) of this section, the Commissioner of Education may pay such funds to the town designated as an alliance district and such town shall pay such funds to the local or regional board of education for such town on the condition that such funds shall be expended in accordance with the plan described in subsection (d) of this section and any guidelines developed by the State Board of Education for such funds. Such funds shall be used to improve student achievement in such alliance district and to offset any other local education costs approved by the commissioner.

(d) The local or regional board of education for a town designated as an alliance district may apply to the Commissioner of Education, at such time and in such manner as the commissioner prescribes, to receive any increase in funds received over the amount the town received for the prior fiscal year pursuant to [section 10-262h] subsection (a) of section 10-262i, as amended by this act. Applications pursuant to this subsection shall include objectives and performance targets and a plan that may include, but not be limited to, the following: (1) A tiered system of interventions for the schools under the jurisdiction of such board based on the needs of such schools, (2) ways to strengthen the foundational programs in reading to ensure reading mastery in kindergarten to grade three, inclusive, with a focus on standards and instruction, proper use of data, intervention strategies, current information for teachers, parental engagement, and teacher professional development, (3) additional learning time, including extended school day or school year programming administered by school personnel or external partners, (4) a talent strategy that includes, but is not limited to, teacher and school leader recruitment and assignment, career ladder policies that draw upon guidelines for a model teacher evaluation program adopted by the State Board of Education, pursuant to section 10-151b, and adopted by each local or regional board of education. Such talent strategy may include provisions that demonstrate increased ability to attract, retain, promote and bolster the performance of staff in accordance with performance evaluation findings and, in the case of new personnel, other indicators of effectiveness, (5) training for school leaders and other staff on new teacher evaluation models, (6) provisions for the cooperation and coordination with early childhood education providers

to ensure alignment with district expectations for student entry into kindergarten, including funding for an existing local Head Start program, (7) provisions for the cooperation and coordination with other governmental and community programs to ensure that students receive adequate support and wraparound services, including community school models, (8) provisions for implementing and furthering the common core state standards and all activities and initiatives associated with the common core state standards, and [(8)] (9) any additional categories or goals as determined by the commissioner. Such plan shall demonstrate collaboration with key stakeholders, as identified by the commissioner, with the goal of achieving efficiencies and the alignment of intent and practice of current programs with conditional programs identified in this subsection. The commissioner may require changes in any plan submitted by a local or regional board of education before the commissioner approves an application under this subsection.