

## Mandates

Public Act 17-42 revised the state's high school graduation requirements by assigning credit requirements by academic areas (25 credits within the areas of STEM, Humanities, Physical Education and Wellness, Health and Safety Education, World Languages and Mastery-Based Diploma) aligned with the subject-specific content standards. This approach recognizes the necessity of local school districts having the flexibility to adopt course offerings that meet the state's college and career readiness standards while preparing students for careers and citizenship in the rapidly changing 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The breadth of offerings available within the content standards creates the opportunity for interdisciplinary courses and mastery-based learning within a comprehensive academic framework. This is essential in developing students as critical thinkers and independent learners, and in engaging them as proactive partners in their educational experience.

Despite the progress made by these changes, the General Assembly continues to advance curricular mandates that would return the school curriculum to a rigidly dictated narrow selection of mandated courses. These curricular mandates infringe on the flexibility established in Public Act 17-42. They do a disservice to our students by limiting their ability to design a course of study that best meets their academic interest and needs for future success on their chosen paths. School districts are unique and require locally based decision making. Narrow curricular mandates adopt a one size fits all approach that is a relic of the past and that significantly limits the ability of districts to personalize programs and learning for their students.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Reduce specific curricular mandates and maintain the authority of local boards of education to make curricular determinations.

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### RECOMMENDATIONS (continued)

- Suspend 25 credit mandate under Public Act 17-42 until we meet all education funding commitments, including full funding for ECS as well as explore and define the vision for Connecticut with regard to Career Pathways.
- Consider a change to Public Act 10-15 to allow local boards of education discretion of the 180-day calendar requirement for graduating seniors.

#### TASK FORCE WORK OF INTEREST TO CAPSS

Search & Seizure of Electronic Devices

Fingerprinting Task Force

Social & Emotional Learning Task Force

Agricultural & Science Centers

Student Data Privacy



## PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS for the 2019 Legislative Session



## School/Student Safety and Well-Being

The safety and well-being of students and staff remain the top concern of all educators. The reduction in funding and statewide resources for mental health, social-emotional health and learning, school safety officers, and school climate plans as well as current and proposed legislation, may have an unintended, negative impact on school climate.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Commit adequate funding for school/student safety and well-being supports statewide.
- Examine the impact of increased Department of Children and Families referrals created after the change in mandated reporter legislation.
- Examine the potential impact of proposed classroom safety legislation that would require onerous steps that could limit some students' access to education in a typical classroom setting.
- Ensure local determination of restorative practices/ restorative justice.
- Exempt School Security Officers from retirement eligibility rules of the Municipal Employees Retirement System (MERS).

## Efforts to Promote Regionalism

Efforts to build strong and efficient regional programs have been hampered by legislation that is overly bureaucratic and inefficient. Creating efficient, strong regional programs requires limited bureaucracy, equal relationships among all parties, and flexibility for innovation.

### RECOMMENDATION

- Modify current legislation to encourage the expansion of efficient regional programs by removing inhibitive requirements, establishing opportunities for equal relationships among all parties, and providing opportunities for flexibility and innovation.

## Education

# FUNDING

### 1. Education Cost Sharing (ECS) Funding

ECS should be fully funded. More than half of the districts are scheduled to lose dollars in the upcoming budget cycle. The current foundation of \$11,525 will not be adjusted during the ten-year phase-in of full funding, while the average cost is \$17,000 and increasing. Municipal budgets will be forced to pick up this unsustainable burden.

### 2. Special Education Funding

Special education funding should be separate from ECS and based upon actual enrollments. It should incentivize in-district and regional programs to be both innovative and creative. Funding for districts to work with students using Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI) before they are identified as needing special education services is essential. If the Special Education Cost Cooperative Model brings forward recommendations for implementation, then the model must be voluntary since its only consideration is predictability.

### 3. Alliance Funding

The Alliance Districts educate and provide social and emotional supports to many of Connecticut's most vulnerable students. Current legislation refers to Alliance Districts as the "lowest performing" without acknowledging the significant complexities of the Alliance Districts.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Separate ECS funding from Special Education funding.
  - Meet all education funding commitments, including full funding for ECS.
  - CAPSS opposes the current Connecticut School Finance Project model and any special education cost model that:
    - will result in the increased cost of special education,
    - does not fully fund the excess cost grant,
    - does not remove the current threshold of four and one-half times the district Per Pupil Expenditure,
    - tries to address any one issue in isolation (i.e. predictability), and
    - does not address the increased cost of special education.
  - Provide funding that supports robust in-district and regional special education programs.
  - Sustain commitment to funding the Alliance Districts.
  - Ensure Alliance District funding goes directly to the Board of Education.
- Change the "lowest performing" label in statutes to the "most challenged."

