

What will our children lose?

Created by the collaborative efforts of



Public Education Leaders Warn of Damaging Changes to Education Structure in the Vetoed Budget & Call for Bi-Partisan Budget that Equitably Funds All Districts

The What Will Our Children Lose Coalition calls on all parties to come together now to craft a budget that the Governor will sign and that will support our communities and our education system in a thoughtful and sustainable manner.

We recognize that the proposal vetoed by the Governor last week provides substantial State funding for education and towns, and we support that funding. Indeed, without it our communities face crippling budget decisions. However, several of the budget's proposals would also have a significant adverse impact on the quality of the State's public education system.

The budget vetoed by the Governor opens the door to reduced local support for public education by eliminating the minimum budget requirement, and makes ill-considered changes to the fundamental structure of local government and the management of our schools that undermine the foundations of our educational system.

While funding is certainly a necessary condition for success, it alone is not a sufficient condition. We must also ensure that such funding is spent wisely and that the delivery of our educational programs best serves the needs of our students. We simply will not be successful if we finance our schools while eroding the authority of those responsible for their management and oversight. Local School Superintendents, School Business Officials, Administrators and Boards of Education (BOE) are critical to this success in every district.

The budget vetoed by the Governor would erase the legal areas of responsibility between officials responsible for managing the school district and the town, and would impose "one-size-fits-all" requirements regarding the sharing of resources regardless of whether such an arrangement makes economic or practical sense in a particular community. As the individuals with the greatest familiarity with the workings of the district, local elected school board members should have the authority to determine spending priorities for school districts, just as they were elected to do. This should not be dictated by State mandate.

School districts and municipalities already collaborate successfully where such collaboration yields efficiencies and saves money. Moreover, districts, either on their own initiative, or through the Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs), also engage in bi-lateral and regional cooperative arrangements with each other in order to drive efficiencies. While such collaboration should be encouraged, districts and towns are in the best position to determine for themselves when and how to adopt such arrangements for the benefit of their students.

No one prefers implementation of the Governor's Executive Resource Allocation Plan. However, we also cannot embrace the vetoed budget with its fundamental flaws. That is why it is so critical that the legislature come together quickly to adopt a budget that provides adequate funding while also preserving the integrity of the State's public education system.

Our children deserve no less.

###