



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



June 28, 2022

Dear Superintendents:

As another school year comes to a close, I cannot miss the opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks and utmost gratitude for everything you do in your role as superintendents to make sure our students are thriving in environments that are safe, healthy, and welcoming. While we continue to experience challenges as a result of the pandemic, I want to take this moment to appreciate and celebrate the many bright spots throughout the year, for which you should be commended.

To begin, you have identified over \$183 million in ARP ESSER funding to address the social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs of your students and staff. This could not be more crucial as we recognize the effect this pandemic has had on our children's mental health. As well, because of your leadership, over 100-million healthy, nutritious meals have been provided to Connecticut's children since the pandemic began. With so many families facing food insecurity, these meals were, and continue to be, a lifeline – both nutritionally and emotionally – for families and are a critical part of ensuring that Connecticut's children are healthy and ready to learn.

Additionally, we were able to make significant strides toward increasing student achievement. You offered in-person instruction all year, implemented numerous innovations with your educational design, and provided timely academic interventions and supports to accelerate learning and advance equity through the use of relief and local funding. You participated in focus groups to share best practices for accelerating learning, remote learning standards, and curricula development, and opened your schools to site visits from CSDE staff and other district partners to see the learning in action.

We are extremely pleased with the high participation in the state summative assessment this spring, so we can know how our students are achieving and progressing academically through the pandemic. To help support you in this work, you and your team members shared your ideas and thoughts, and we listened. Many of you have taken advantage of the certification flexibilities we offered and will continue to offer. Educator evaluation flexibilities were also offered, and current and new initiatives are assisting you with recruiting the best and brightest to your districts.

As leaders, you have juggled many priorities, from the immediate needs of your students, staff, families, and community to the long-term considerations throughout the year and beyond. Collectively, you have prioritized and invested over \$729 million dollars to renew and accelerate the learning of your students. We remain in awe of your dynamic leadership to change the trajectory of student outcomes in your district.

As you can see, there is much work to be proud of and the Department thanks you for your efforts. We look forward to our continued partnership on behalf of the students, educators, school staff, and families in our state. During the school break, please be intentional about attending to your own needs and well-being, and find joy with your families and loved ones.

Sincerely,

Charlene M. Russell Tucker
Commissioner of Education