

VIII.A.

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

TO BE PROPOSED:

November 4, 2020

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education approves the Fiscal Year 2021-22 and Fiscal Year 2022-23 Biennial Budget Reduction, Reallocation and Expansion Options, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved by a vote of _____ this fourth day of November, Two Thousand Twenty.

Signed: _____
Dr. Miguel A. Cardona, Secretary

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Dr. Miguel A. Cardona
Commissioner of Education

DATE: November 4, 2020

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2021-22 and Fiscal Year 2022-23 Biennial Budget Reduction,
Reallocation and Expansion Options

Reduction Options:

The Office of Policy and Management (OPM) has directed agencies to prepare budget options that would result in at least a 10 percent reduction from an agency's Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 baseline budget request, exclusive of formula-based municipal aid. This request has been made based on projected statewide deficits of \$2.5 billion in FY 2022, growing to more than \$3 billion in FY 2023.

Excluding formula-based municipal aid, the Department is submitting reduction options totaling \$81.3 million in FY 2022 and \$86.5 million in FY 2023. Understanding the challenges facing our districts, our submission requests holding critical entitlement grants, such as Excess Cost which provides aid to districts for high-cost special education students, to at least the current year funding levels. We have also prioritized staffing capacity in central office in order to maintain our system of district supports and staffing in the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System.

Reallocation Options:

The Department is requesting two reallocation options. The first is a request to reallocate \$1.26 million of the \$3.2 million currently appropriated for the Bilingual Education entitlement grant to a new account entitled Bilingual Education – District-Level Supports. Section 10-17g of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) limits the Department to granting only \$1.9 million of the \$3.2 million in funds appropriated for the purpose of the Bilingual Education entitlement grant. The balance of the funds are dedicated to carrying out the purposes of C.G.S. Sections 10-17k, 10-17n, and 10-66t. These sections were for activities that were limited to being carried out in FY 2015 and FY 2016.

The Department is proposing to use the \$1.26 million balance for more direct and targeted supports to local school districts for their English language learner student populations. The data collected and analyzed by the Department, and detailed below, show a significant gap in the academic outcomes for these students.

- The English Language Arts (ELA) achievement index of English learners is lower than that of all race/ethnic groups, free meal eligible students, and reduced price meal

eligible students in 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19. The only student group with lower ELA achievement than English learners is the students with disabilities group. Overall, only about 1 in 8 English learners across all grades meets the grade-level expectation in ELA.

- The four-year graduation rate of English learners is lower than that of all race/ethnic groups, free meal eligible students, and reduced price meal eligible students for the cohorts of 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19. Even over a six-year period, 1 in 4 English learners fail to graduate high school.
- Chronic absenteeism rates for English learners exceeds 15 percent; i.e., about 1 in 6 English learners miss at least 10 percent of school days.

The reallocation of these funds would allow the Department to provide more meaningful support to districts for this student population.

Our second request for reallocation is to move \$5.2 million from the Magnet School account to the *Sheff* Transportation account. These funds should have been transferred to the *Sheff* Transportation account at the time of its creation last year but remained in the Magnet School account. The funds are used to pay supplemental transportation costs associated with the magnet programs dedicated to the State's efforts to meet the goals of the current *Sheff* Stipulated Agreement.

Expansion Option/Reallocation Option:

The Department is requesting \$1.26 million in FY 2022 and \$1.89 million in FY 2023 for an expansion of the grade configuration at the Stamford Charter School for Excellence. The school has requested permission to expand from Grades PK-5 to Grades PK-8, incorporating a middle school program for its students. This is a two-step process that will require State Board of Education approval of a material change in its operating plan and budgetary approval of the seats by the legislature in the upcoming budget. With the closure of two charter schools in Stamford over the last two years, we are requesting that a portion of that funding be used for the grade expansion of Stamford Charter School for Excellence.

Prepared by Kathy Demsey, Chief Financial Officer