

NEWS

Connecticut Department of Education

Dr. Mark K. McQuillan
Commissioner



For Immediate Release:

Monday, June 7, 2010

Contact: Tom Murphy 860.713.6525

State Education Commissioner Asks Congressional Delegation to Come to the Aid of Local Schools with Stimulus Legislation

State Education Commissioner Mark K. McQuillan has written to Connecticut's Congressional Delegation to urge their support for legislation that would provide fiscal stability next year to the state's 166 school districts when federal stimulus funding runs out in FY2011-12.

"Congress had the good sense to provide emergency federal stimulus funding to state and local governments last year through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to help to stave off major local budget crises, teacher layoffs, and reductions of services in our 166 school districts and 1100 public schools. Title I, IDEA and State Stabilization grants provided important resources to our local communities at a critical time," wrote McQuillan. "However, these funds are set to run out in July of 2011. Without action by Congress to continue its support of our schools, we face dire consequences at the local level."

"While the total allocation to education under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act was a small fraction of the federal TARP funding that went to Wall Street, funds awarded to local school districts had a tremendous stabilizing effect on our local communities that kept local property taxes stable, teachers teaching and our classrooms functioning."

"School superintendents and local boards of education throughout Connecticut have been very concerned about FY 2011-12 when the ARRA funding comes to an end. Along with Governor M. Jodi Rell, I urge you to support the Keep Our Educators Working Act that will help the communities continue providing quality educational services to the children of our state."

Congress is considering legislation proposed by U.S. Senator Tom Harkin, (D-Iowa) that would provide a new \$23 billion stimulus package to help public schools across the country avert widespread layoffs, as did the \$53 billion ARRA economic stimulus law that helped to sustain state and local budgets for the past year. Harkin is chairman of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions and is chairman of the appropriations subcommittee on education. The House late last year approved similar legislation to help save education jobs, but it stalled in the Senate.

Federal education officials have estimated that layoffs of teachers and other school personnel could exceed 200,000 the next school year nationwide. Several school districts in Connecticut have already announced staff layoffs.

Attached is Commissioner McQuillan's letter to Connecticut's Congressional Delegation.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

P.O. Box 2219, Hartford, Connecticut 06106

June 7, 2010

The Honorable Christopher Murphy
United States Congressman
5th District, Connecticut
412 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Murphy,

I am writing to urge your support for pending legislation that would provide fiscal stability to the state's 166 school districts next year when federal stimulus funding runs out in FY2011-12.

Congress had the good sense to provide emergency federal stimulus funding to state and local governments last year through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to help to stave off major local budget crises, teacher layoffs, and reductions of services in our 166 school districts and 1,100 public schools. Title I, IDEA and State Stabilization grants provided important resources to our local communities at a critical time. However, these funds are set to run out in July of 2011. Without action by Congress to continue its support of our schools, we face dire consequences at the local level.

As you know, Congress is now considering legislation to create the Education Jobs Fund providing \$23 billion to help public schools across the country avert widespread layoffs, as did the \$53 billion ARRA economic stimulus law that helped to sustain state and local budgets for the past year. While the total allocation to education under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act was a small fraction of the federal TARP funding that went to Wall Street, funds awarded to local school districts had a tremendous stabilizing effect on our local communities that kept local property taxes stable, teachers teaching and our classrooms functioning.

School superintendents and local boards of education throughout Connecticut have been very concerned about FY 2011-12 when the ARRA funding comes to an end. I urge you to support legislation that will help the communities you represent to continue to provide quality educational services to the children of our state.

Federal education officials have estimated that layoffs of teachers and other school personnel could exceed 200,000 the next school year nationwide if federal help is not forthcoming. Several school districts in Connecticut have already announced hundreds of staff layoffs.

I therefore urge that you direct your full support to this legislative effort and come to the aid of our public schools at a time when they need it most.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at 860.713.6500.

Sincerely,

Mark K. McQuillan
Commissioner of Education