THE CONNECTICUT URBAN EDUCATION AGENDA

This document is intended to be a working document that serves as the impetus for discussion, strategizing and action-planning by those who are interested in improving outcomes for students in urban districts throughout Connecticut. It was developed by the Connecticut Association of Urban Superintendents (CAUS), in consultation with members of urban Boards of Education. It is not exhaustive in covering all challenges of urban education, nor is it comprehensive in addressing the specifics of every issue. Rather, it is meant to focus our collective efforts towards a unified goal of improving every urban classroom in Connecticut and thereby ensuring that all students in urban Connecticut graduate ready for college and the 21st century. The State must fully fund each of these items.

The following items are not in priority order and may require a legislative and/or regulatory solution.

1. Robust leadership from the State Department of Education, including the establishment of:
    a. State-wide teacher and student data systems that are readily available within timelines that align with district decision making processes and allow for the sharing of information across districts for the purpose of improved analysis.
    b. State-wide curriculum and common assessments mapped to common core, international and national professional organization (e.g., NCTM) standards.
    c. A state-wide data system that enables districts to develop value-added analysis of student achievement, including the linking of student performance to individual teachers if a district chooses to do so.
2. Elimination of preparation gaps, including:
    a. Universal PreK beginning at age four, including comprehensive efforts to identify and intervene with students who exhibit special needs starting at the age of three.
    b. Accountability for higher education institutes that do not adequately prepare teachers to teach in the 21st century classroom.
    c. State-wide focus on preparing, developing and supporting effective school and district leadership.
3. Alignment of educator evaluation and placement systems with student achievement data (based on multiple measures) and school/district reform needs.
4. A school funding system that establishes adequacy and equity, including fully funding all mandates. In the short-term, this includes avoiding the reduction of ECS funding created by the expiration of ARRA and other federal stimulus monies.
5. Districts should have the ability to assign staff based on factors other than seniority, if they so choose. Performance, experience, training and qualifications should be taken into account, in addition to seniority.
6. More instructional time, including a longer school day and school year and increased access to on-line learning opportunities.
7. Governance structures that reflect the best practices in urban school district governance.