

Year end summary of Status of Education Funding in Connecticut

Here's a summary of what transpired at the Capitol during the final weeks of 2009 with respect to the looming budget deficit for the current fiscal year, specifically its impact on education funding.

November 5 - The governor implemented a \$31.6 million package of recissions, \$972,000 of which came from the State Department of Education budget. The largest of these was a \$300,000 cut to Family Resource Centers, which could affect our centers at Charter Oak and Smith, and a \$336,000 reduction in Head Start.

November 24 - The governor proposed a deficit mitigation package that included the 11/5 recissions, plus another \$2.2 million in SDE reductions within her authority--\$1.7 million eliminating the Adult Ed LPN program at the technical high schools and \$500,000 from the American School for the Deaf. The remainder of her proposed education cuts totalled \$13 million and required legislative approval. The largest of these, at \$5 million, was suspension of the After School Program that serves the state's neediest schools. (This package also included an \$84 million cut to non-education municipal aid.)

December 21 - The Legislature passed a Democrat-sponsored deficit mitigation package that included only \$1.1 million in education cuts, the largest of which was \$1 million from inter-district cooperation. (It did not cut municipal aid, but did include elimination of a pending reduction in the estate tax.)

December 28 - The governor vetoed both bills comprising the Democrats' package.

So where do we stand now? The only education cuts in place are those within the governor's authority--\$972,000 from 11/5 and \$2.2 million from 11/24, none of which directly affect West Hartford's school budget. The controller is projecting a year-end deficit somewhat smaller than she projected a month ago. The governor and legislative leaders appear to be at an impasse, and no plans have been announced for convening the General Assembly to deal with the deficit before the regular session begins February 3.

Submitted by Kathy Wilson, LWVCT Education Finance