



OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN

Michael R. Criss
First Selectman, Town of Harwinton

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

March 3, 2021

Good Afternoon, my name is Michael R. Criss, I am the First Selectman for the Town of Harwinton and I am submitting testimony regarding S.B. 946 "An Act Concerning the Minimum Budget Requirement."

S.B. 946 "An Act Concerning the Minimum Budget Requirement"

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and submit testimony on proposed S.B. 946 "An Act Concerning the Minimum Budget Requirement." The Town of Harwinton supports S.B. 946. This bill extends provisions and revises the Minimum Budget Requirement by excluding from the calculation of a school districts budgeted appropriation for education any funds received or used for COVID-19 related expenses and any funds received for school security improvements.

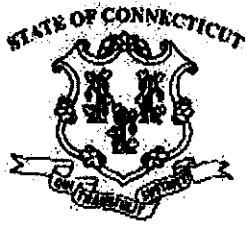
Specifically, the bill would extend provisions passed in the October Special Session by excluding from the MBR calculation costs through fiscal year 2023 associated with COVID-19. This would also include any additional Federal support for education. In these difficult times these specific exclusions in the calculations would be helpful in the future years, hopeful that current health measures associated with COVID-19 need not be necessary. The exclusion of funds to enhance school security measures are typically one-time provisions and should never be considered in the calculation for MBR. Therefore, the Town of Harwinton urges the committee to pass S.B. 946.

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on behalf of the Town of Harwinton. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at any time.

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General Assembly

January Session, 2021

Raised Bill No. 946

LCO No. 3964



Referred to Committee on EDUCATION

Introduced by:
(ED)

AN ACT CONCERNING THE MINIMUM BUDGET REQUIREMENT.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 10-262j of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

3 (a) Except as otherwise provided under the provisions of subsections
4 (c) to (h), inclusive, of this section, for [the] any fiscal year, [ending June
5 30, 2020,] the budgeted appropriation for education shall be not less
6 than the budgeted appropriation for education for the prior fiscal year,
7 [ending June 30, 2019,] plus any aid increase described in subsection (d)
8 of section 10-262i, as amended by this act, except that a town may reduce
9 its budgeted appropriation for education for the fiscal year, [ending
10 June 30, 2020,] by one or more of the following:

11 (1) If a town experiences an aid reduction, as described in subsection
12 (d) of section 10-262i, as amended by this act, such town may reduce its
13 budgeted appropriation for education in an amount equal to the aid
14 reduction;

15 (2) If a district experiences a net reduction in its resident student

16 count during a period that may include any of the five fiscal years
17 immediately prior to the fiscal year for which the budgeted
18 appropriation for education is calculated, such district may reduce its
19 budgeted appropriation for education in an amount equal to the
20 number of such net reduction multiplied by fifty per cent of the net
21 current expenditures per resident student of such district, provided no
22 district may use the resident student count for any fiscal year that was
23 previously used to reduce its budgeted appropriation for education in
24 any calculation of a net reduction of resident students for purposes of
25 reducing its budgeted appropriation for education pursuant to this
26 subdivision for any subsequent fiscal year;

27 (3) Any district (A) that does not maintain a high school and pays
28 tuition to another school district pursuant to section 10-33 for resident
29 students to attend high school in another district, and (B) in which the
30 number of resident students attending high school for such district for
31 October [1, 2018] first of the prior school year, using the data of record
32 as of January [31, 2019] thirty-first of the prior school year, is lower than
33 such district's number of resident students attending high school for
34 October [1, 2017] first of the school year before the prior school year,
35 using the data of record as of January [31, 2019] thirty-first of the school
36 year before the prior school year, may reduce such district's budgeted
37 appropriation for education by the difference in the number of resident
38 students attending high school for such years multiplied by the amount
39 of tuition paid per student pursuant to section 10-33; or

40 (4) Any district that realizes new and documentable savings through
41 (A) increased district efficiencies approved by the Commissioner of
42 Education, including, but not limited to, (i) reductions in costs
43 associated with transportation services, school district administration or
44 contracts that are not the result of collective bargaining or other labor
45 agreements, (ii) an agreement to provide medical or health care benefits
46 pursuant to section 7-464b, (iii) a cooperative agreement relating to the
47 performance of administrative and central office functions, such as
48 business manager functions, for the municipality and the school district
49 pursuant to section 10-241b, (iv) reductions in costs associated with the

50 purchasing or joint purchasing of property insurance, casualty
51 insurance and workers' compensation insurance, following the
52 consultation with the legislative body of the municipality of such district
53 pursuant to section 10-241c, (v) reductions in costs associated with the
54 purchasing of payroll processing or accounts payable software systems,
55 following the consultation with the legislative body of the municipality
56 of such district to determine whether such systems may be purchased
57 or shared on a regional basis pursuant to section 10-241e, (vi)
58 consolidation of information technology services, and (vii) reductions in
59 costs associated with the care and maintenance of athletic fields, or (B)
60 regional collaboration or cooperative arrangements pursuant to section
61 10-158a may reduce such district's budgeted appropriation for
62 education in an amount equal to half of the amount of savings
63 experienced as a result of such district efficiencies, regional
64 collaboration or cooperative arrangement, provided such reduction
65 shall not exceed one-half of one per cent of the district's budgeted
66 appropriation for education for the prior fiscal year, [ending June 30,
67 2019.]

68 [(b) Except as otherwise provided under the provisions of subsections
69 (c) to (h), inclusive, of this section, for the fiscal year ending June 30,
70 2021, a town's budgeted appropriation for education shall be not less
71 than the budgeted appropriation for education for the fiscal year ending
72 June 30, 2020, plus any aid increase received pursuant to subsection (d)
73 of section 10-262i, except that a town may reduce its budgeted
74 appropriation for education for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, by
75 one or more of the following:

76 (1) If a town experiences an aid reduction, as described in subsection
77 (d) of section 10-262i, such town may reduce its budgeted appropriation
78 for education in an amount equal to the aid reduction;

79 (2) If a district experiences a net reduction in its resident student
80 count during a period that may include any of the five fiscal years
81 immediately prior to the fiscal year for which the budgeted
82 appropriation for education is calculated, such district may reduce its

83 budgeted appropriation for education in an amount equal to the
84 number of such net reduction multiplied by fifty per cent of the net
85 current expenditures per resident student of such district, provided no
86 district may use the resident student count for any fiscal year that was
87 previously used to reduce its budgeted appropriation for education in
88 any calculation of a net reduction of resident students for purposes of
89 reducing its budgeted appropriation for education pursuant to this
90 subdivision for any subsequent fiscal year;

91 (3) Any district (A) that does not maintain a high school and pays
92 tuition to another school district pursuant to section 10-33 for resident
93 students to attend high school in another district, and (B) in which the
94 number of resident students attending high school for such district for
95 October 1, 2019, using the data of record as of January 31, 2020, is lower
96 than such district's number of resident students attending high school
97 for October 1, 2018, using the data of record as of January 31, 2020, may
98 reduce such district's budgeted appropriation for education by the
99 difference in the number of resident students attending high school for
100 such years multiplied by the amount of tuition paid per student
101 pursuant to section 10-33; or

102 (4) Any district that realizes new and documentable savings through
103 (A) increased district efficiencies approved by the Commissioner of
104 Education, including, but not limited to, (i) reductions in costs
105 associated with transportation services, school district administration or
106 contracts that are not the result of collective bargaining or other labor
107 agreements, (ii) an agreement to provide medical or health care benefits
108 pursuant to section 7-464b, (iii) a cooperative agreement relating to the
109 performance of administrative and central office functions, such as
110 business manager functions, for the municipality and the school district
111 pursuant to section 10-241b, (iv) reductions in costs associated with the
112 purchasing or joint purchasing of property insurance, casualty
113 insurance and workers' compensation insurance, following the
114 consultation with the legislative body of the municipality of such district
115 pursuant to section 10-241c, (v) reductions in costs associated with the
116 purchasing of payroll processing or accounts payable software systems,

117 following the consultation with the legislative body of the municipality
118 of such district to determine whether such systems may be purchased
119 or shared on a regional basis pursuant to section 10-241e, (vi)
120 consolidation of information technology services, and (vii) reductions in
121 costs associated with the care and maintenance of athletic fields, or (B)
122 regional collaboration or cooperative arrangements pursuant to section
123 10-158a, may reduce such district's budgeted appropriation for
124 education in an amount equal to half of the amount of savings
125 experienced as a result of such district efficiencies, regional
126 collaboration or cooperative arrangement, provided such reduction
127 shall not exceed one-half of one per cent of the district's budgeted
128 appropriation for education for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020.]

129 [(c) For the fiscal years ending June 30, 2020, and June 30, 2021,] (b)
130 For any fiscal year, the Commissioner of Education may permit a town
131 to reduce its budgeted appropriation for education in an amount
132 determined by the commissioner if the school district in such town has
133 permanently ceased operations and closed one or more schools in the
134 school district due to declining enrollment at such closed school or
135 schools in the [fiscal years ending June 30, 2013, to June 30, 2020,
136 inclusive] seven fiscal years immediately prior to the fiscal year for
137 which the budgeted appropriation for education is calculated.

138 [(d)] (c) Except as otherwise provided under the provisions of
139 [subsection (h)] subsections (g) and (h) of this section, [for the fiscal
140 years ending June 30, 2020, and June 30, 2021,] a town designated as an
141 alliance district, as defined in section 10-262u, shall not reduce its
142 budgeted appropriation for education pursuant to this section.

143 [(e) For the fiscal years ending June 30, 2020, and June 30, 2021, the]
144 (d) The provisions of this section shall not apply to any district that is in
145 the top ten per cent of school districts based on the accountability index,
146 as defined in section 10-223e.

147 [(f) For the fiscal years ending June 30, 2020, and June 30, 2021, the]
148 (e) The provisions of this section shall not apply to the member towns

149 of a regional school district during the first full fiscal year following the
150 establishment of the regional school district, provided the budgeted
151 appropriation for education for member towns of such regional school
152 district for each subsequent fiscal year shall be determined in
153 accordance with this section.

154 [(g) For the fiscal years ending June 30, 2020, and June 30, 2021, any]
155 (f) Any district that has (1) elected to act as a self-insurer, pursuant to
156 section 10-236, (2) experienced a loss incurred as a result of one or more
157 catastrophic events, as declared by a nationally recognized catastrophe
158 loss index provider, during the prior fiscal year, and (3) increased its
159 budgeted appropriation for education during said prior fiscal year as a
160 result of such loss, shall not be required to include the amount of such
161 increase in the calculation of such district's budgeted appropriation for
162 education for the subsequent fiscal year.

163 [(h)] (g) For the fiscal years ending June 30, 2020, [and June 30, 2021]
164 to June 30, 2023, inclusive, any district that has received (1) a
165 supplemental appropriation from the board of finance for a town having
166 a board of finance, the board of selectmen for a town having no board
167 of finance or the authority making appropriations for the school district,
168 for the purpose of covering costs associated with COVID-19
169 expenditures because the budgeted appropriation for education for the
170 district was insufficient to cover such costs, or (2) federal funds for the
171 purpose of covering costs associated with COVID-19 expenditures,
172 including, but not limited to, funds received pursuant to the
173 Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, P.L. 116-136, as
174 amended from time to time, and the Coronavirus Response and Relief
175 Supplemental Appropriations Act, P.L. 116-260, as amended from time
176 to time, shall not be required to include the amount of such
177 supplemental appropriation or federal funds in the calculation of such
178 district's budgeted appropriation for education for the subsequent fiscal
179 year. As used in this subsection, "COVID-19" means the respiratory
180 disease designated by the World Health Organization on February 11,
181 2020, as coronavirus 2019, and any related mutation thereof recognized
182 by the World Health Organization as a communicable respiratory

183 disease.

184 (h) For the fiscal years ending June 30, 2022, and June 30, 2023, any
185 district that has been awarded a grant under the school security
186 infrastructure competitive grant program, established pursuant to
187 section 84 of public act 13-3, during the prior fiscal year, shall not be
188 required to include the amount of such grant in the calculation of such
189 district's budgeted appropriation for education for the subsequent fiscal
190 year.

191 Sec. 2. Subsection (d) of section 10-262i of the general statutes is
192 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
193 *2021*):

194 [(d) (1) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, (A) if the amount of
195 the equalization aid grant a town is entitled to pursuant to section 10-
196 262h is greater than such town's equalization aid grant amount for the
197 prior fiscal year, the difference between the amount of such town's
198 equalization aid grant for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, and such
199 town's equalization aid grant amount for the prior fiscal year shall be
200 the aid increase for such town for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020,
201 and (B) if the amount of the equalization aid grant a town is entitled to
202 pursuant to section 10-262h is less than such town's equalization aid
203 grant amount for the prior fiscal year, the difference between such
204 town's equalization aid grant amount for the prior fiscal year and the
205 amount of such town's equalization aid grant for the fiscal year ending
206 June 30, 2020, shall be the aid reduction for such town for the fiscal year
207 ending June 30, 2020.

208 (2) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, (A) if the amount of the
209 equalization aid grant a town is entitled to pursuant to section 10-262h
210 is greater than such town's equalization aid grant amount for the prior
211 fiscal year, the difference between the amount of such town's
212 equalization aid grant for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, and such
213 town's equalization aid grant amount for the prior fiscal year shall be
214 the aid increase for such town for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021,

215 and (B) if the amount of the equalization aid grant a town is entitled to
 216 pursuant to section 10-262h is less than such town's equalization aid
 217 grant amount for the prior fiscal year, the difference between such
 218 town's equalization aid grant amount for the prior fiscal year and the
 219 amount of such town's equalization aid grant for the fiscal year ending
 220 June 30, 2021, shall be the aid reduction for such town for the fiscal year
 221 ending June 30, 2021.] (d) For any fiscal year, (1) if the amount of the
 222 equalization aid grant a town is entitled to pursuant to section 10-262h
 223 is greater than such town's equalization aid grant amount for the prior
 224 fiscal year, the difference between the amount of such town's
 225 equalization aid grant for the fiscal year, and such town's equalization
 226 aid grant amount for the prior fiscal year shall be the aid increase for
 227 such town for the fiscal year, and (2) if the amount of the equalization
 228 aid grant a town is entitled to pursuant to section 10-262h is less than
 229 such town's equalization aid grant amount for the prior fiscal year, the
 230 difference between such town's equalization aid grant amount for the
 231 prior fiscal year and the amount of such town's equalization aid grant
 232 for the fiscal year shall be the aid reduction for such town for the fiscal
 233 year.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2021</i>	10-262j
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2021</i>	10-262i(d)

Statement of Purpose:

To extend the provisions of and make revisions to the minimum budget requirement for school districts by excluding from the calculation of a school district's budgeted appropriation for education any funds received or used for COVID-19 related expenses and funds received for school security improvements.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]