

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] CT [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Governor [REDACTED] Malloy
State [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] OF [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Hartford, CT [REDACTED]

Dear Governor Malloy,

This letter represents my hopes for the next [REDACTED] of Education. These are my personal observations based on [REDACTED] years in public education, the last four as [REDACTED] of the [REDACTED] Public [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] years prior to that in [REDACTED] as [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] School Principal.

I hope the next [REDACTED]

1. Holds a coherent vision for Connecticut's public [REDACTED] based on world class standards.
2. Views this time of severe economic challenge as also a time of great opportunity.
3. Brings courage, creativity, and a fresh set of eyes to the challenges specific to Connecticut; this includes working with a tradition of "local control" that results in districts with widely varying educational values, outcomes, resources, and levels of community support.
4. Utilizes the talents and commitment of educators across the state to work collaboratively and think "outside the box" to address the most intractable challenges.
5. Takes advantage of and contributes to innovative thinking at the national level.
6. Conserves resources and time for only projects and initiatives that positively impact the achievement of students in the schools.
7. Focuses on the [REDACTED] of the public [REDACTED] for the greatest good rather than narrow individual or small-group political and advocacy efforts.

Ideas the [REDACTED] might consider:

1. Ensure consistent early childhood education for all students.
2. Ensure common literacy foundation for all students based on best research-- we really do know how to teach reading.
3. Ensure state assessments reflect rigorous and meaningful standards; ensure depth to our programs and emphasis on critical thinking and collaborative skills.
4. Ensure technology initiatives such as wireless access at all [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and robust data collection systems.
5. Ensure all graduates are prepared for college -- we hear that students aren't ready for college based on freshmen placement tests so perhaps use those same tests in [REDACTED] school to assess readiness.
6. Don't reinvent the wheel on rigorous curriculum -- there are lots of models including IB schools, Great Books curriculum, [REDACTED] courses, UCONN courses, national standards, excellent models in many Connecticut districts, etc.
7. Support revision of the tenure system, hopefully in collaboration with teachers' unions -- look to ideas from other states that are being discussed and/or implemented.

8. Collaborate with teachers' unions on developing model teacher evaluation plans – include student performance measures and student/parent feedback; insist on no-tolerance for poor performers; steal the best aspects of certification plans from the National Board Certification standards and expectations – perhaps differentiate levels of certification and pay.
9. Encourage consistency in state teacher preparation programs using UCONN as the gold standard.
10. Avoid the “one size fits all” approach to initiatives; differentiate based on needs and outcomes of the districts.
11. Ensure the RESCS are centers for the highest quality of affordable ■■■ development.
12. Bring diverse thinkers together to address the achievement gap; learn from other models such as Maryland's success; use a steady, consistent approach over time; implement sustainable practices; build on levels of success in districts; develop partnerships with supporting agencies – commit to the ■■■ haul.
13. Advocate funding for special education that ensure special education needs are met and there is no divide between general education and special education parents at the district level because of scarce resources.
14. Review special education – change the ‘burden of proof’ to the plaintiff. This is not taking advantage of vulnerable students. Instead, it better ensures resources are not manipulated for sometimes quite selfish purposes. If there is a legitimate complaint or concern of a family and student, trust that it will be prevail under the standards for proof used in all the other states.
15. Re-examine funding models and ask the tough questions; insist on consistent state investment in education.
16. Tough questions: Magnet schools, charter ■■■ – How effective? At what scale? How measured? How much money? Where does it go?
17. Tough questions: Do we need statewide testing every year at every grade level? In these economic times, perhaps consider models such as every other year or grade level. How much is gained compared to the amount of money it costs and the loss of instructional time? This would need advocacy at the ■■■ level, given NCLB requirements, but the economic climate might open the door.
18. Consider efforts to regionalize to save costs: transportation and health benefits for starters.
19. Examine the multitude of projects and initiatives underway – there is much good work to build ■■■ but it needs a coherent vision. It also needs, in these economic times especially, a strategic plan for timing and funding.
20. Become a state department of education recognized nationally for excellence, creativity, flexibility, responsiveness and focused priorities in the best interests of all public school students.

These thoughts are solely my personal views. I hope they might provide some ideas and perspective when selecting the next ■■■ of Education.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

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