

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

TO: State Board of Education
FROM: Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner of Education
DATE: September 5, 2018
SUBJECT: Update on Students Displaced by Disasters

Executive Summary

Purpose

This presentation will provide an update on the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) efforts and outcomes related to students displaced by the storm-related events in Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Florida, Texas and other affected areas. The CSDE collaborated with local education agencies (LEAs) to ensure immediate school access, school stability and academic success for all students displaced by disasters, including all students experiencing homelessness as defined under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Background Information

It has been almost one year since hurricanes, storms and other natural disasters affected parts of the U.S., Puerto Rico and other areas of the Caribbean. These events displaced more than 2,200 students who subsequently arrived in Connecticut. As children and families began arriving in Connecticut, LEAs responded immediately by enrolling students and addressing their needs. These efforts not only provided access back to the classroom for thousands of children and youth, but also provided needed assistance for children and families in addressing the trauma that they encountered.

Beginning in October 2017, LEAs provided weekly counts of students who were displaced. The reporting assisted the overall state efforts in supporting the work of the Hurricane Relief Evacuee Support Planning Group convened by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection. Having knowledge of the counts and location of students also facilitated the CSDE's ongoing guidance and support to LEAs.

On April 27, 2018, the United States Department of Education (USDE) announced the release of applications and instructions for hurricane and disaster relief funding authorized by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018: the *Temporary Emergency Impact Aid for Displaced Students (Emergency Impact Aid)* program and *Assistance for Homeless Children and Youth* program. The CSDE submitted both applications to the USDE on behalf of LEAs and non-public schools that enrolled students displaced during the 2017-18 school year. Funding for Emergency Impact Aid, \$10,644,625, was recently awarded to Connecticut. To date, no official award notification for the *Assistance for Homeless Children and Youth* program has been received.

Follow-up Activities

The CSDE is currently in the process of distributing the Emergency Impact Aid in alignment with applicable timelines and program requirements. The CSDE will continue to support LEAs' efforts on behalf of all students experiencing homelessness via the strengthening of local McKinney-Vento plans developed in alignment with the Connecticut's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated State Plan.

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CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Update on Students Displaced by Disasters

September 5, 2018

Presentation Focus

- Statewide Context and Efforts
- Federal Response
- Lessons Learned
- Next Steps

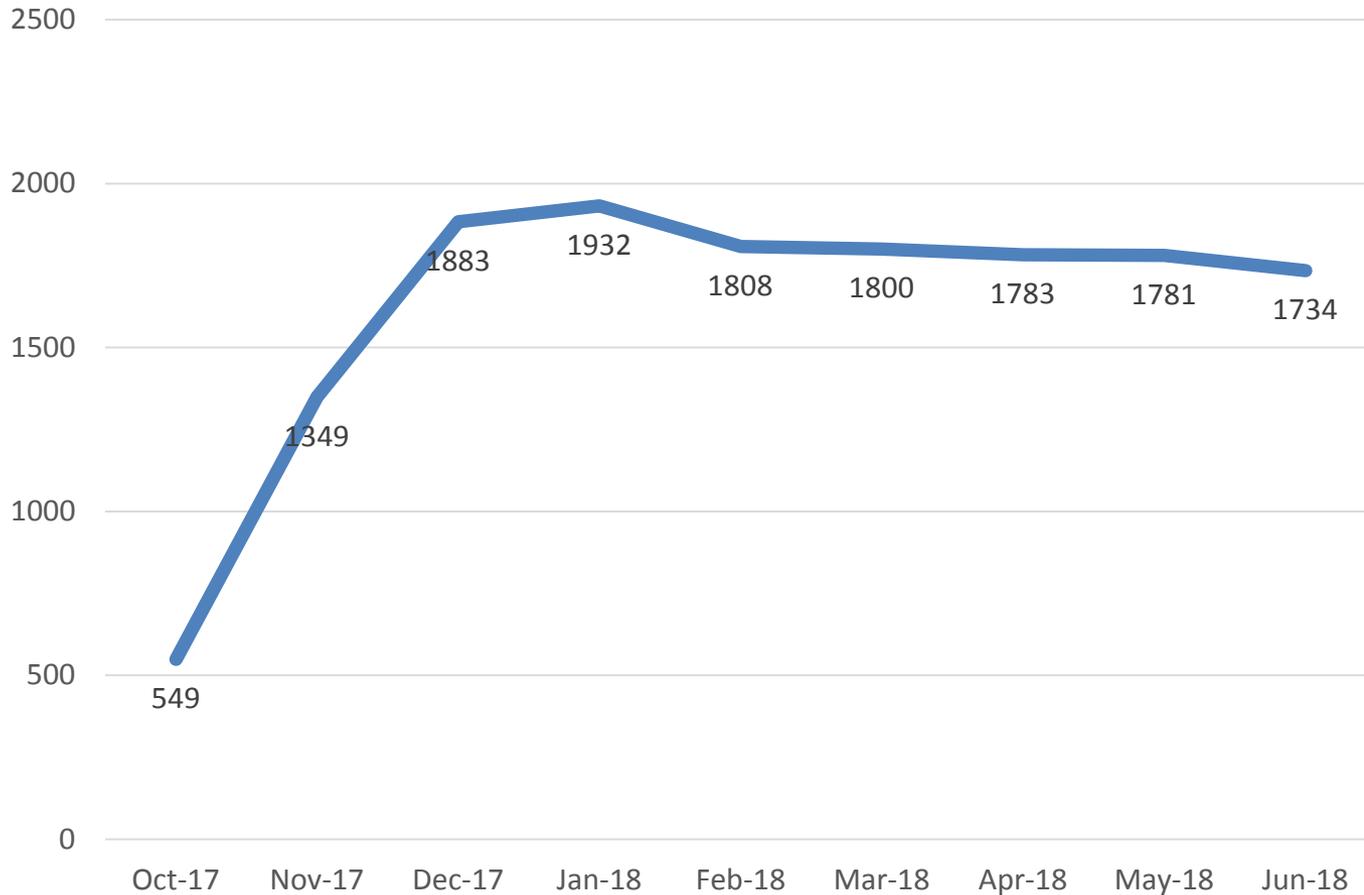


Statewide Efforts

- Governor's Unified Command
- *Hurricane Relief Evacuee Support Planning Group* convened by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection
- Hurricane Relief Evacuee Support Legislative Roundtable
- Congressional Staff Briefing

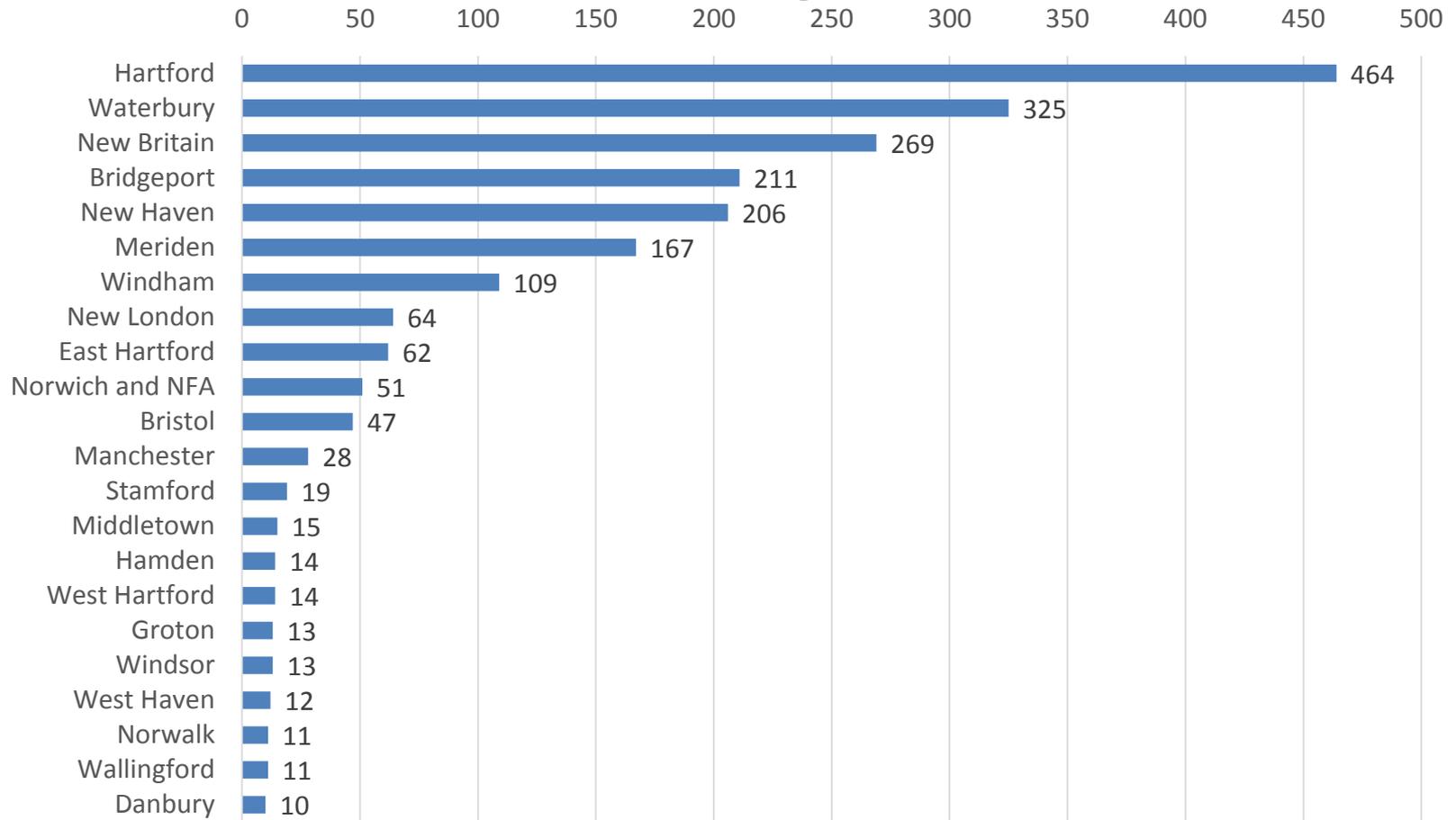


Total Number of Students Displaced – CSDE Weekly Counts

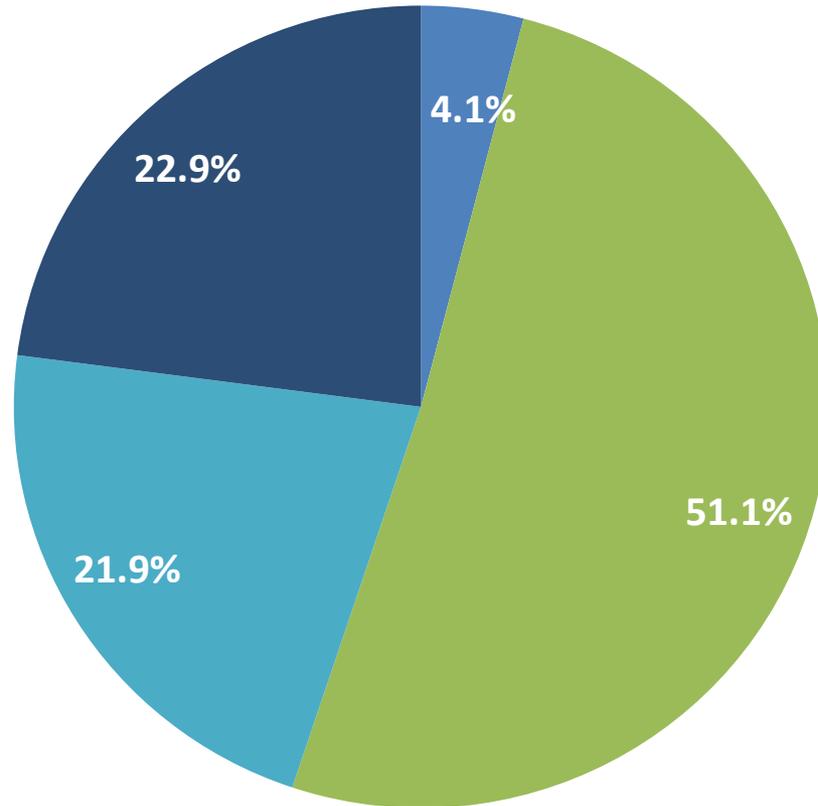


Districts Receiving 10+ Students

CSDE Weekly Counts



Student Enrollment By School Level



■ Pre-K ■ Elementary ■ Middle School ■ High School



CSDE Supports

- Commissioner communications to Superintendents of Schools
- Information packets on the educational rights and meeting the needs of students displaced by disasters
- FEMA registration and services information
- Real time support regarding the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, health assessments, immunizations, and immediate enrollment
- Data collection and advocacy to support funding
- Routine Information sharing to the field and press
- Updates to the CT Association of Public School Superintendents
- Guidance for Educators Displaced by the 2017 Hurricanes (English and Spanish)
- Q&A document regarding grade level advancement and graduation



State Fiscal Support

- \$400,000 to the Department of Education, for Bilingual Education, to be distributed to the top six school districts with the largest concentration of Hurricane Maria evacuees
- FY18 funds remaining from equalization aid grants distributed to districts that received students displaced by Hurricane Maria - per-student basis determined by the highest number of displaced students [\$2.9 million]



Federal Response

- February 9, 2018, *Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018* (P.L. 115-123) under “Hurricane Education Recovery”
- \$2.5 billion for both Emergency Impact Aid (EIA) programs and Immediate Aid to Restart School Operations
 - *CT EIA Application - \$10.6 million awarded to 44 districts*
- \$25 million for Assistance for Homeless Children and Youth program
 - *CT Application - \$600,000 requested (award pending)*



Lessons Learned

- Effective policies and procedures aligned with the McKinney-Vento Act is key
- Students' needs considered individually
- Seek assistance - community leaders, partners and residents
- Recovery takes time



Next Steps

- Specialized training and professional development for McKinney-Vento Liaisons, administrators and other educators
- McKinney-Vento funding aligned locally to support community and State plans to end homelessness
- Partnership with CT Coalition to End Homelessness to:
 - expand the use of School Engagement Packet lesson plan in high schools about rights of/resources to help homeless students
 - foster collaboration between schools, youth providers, and community services to end youth homelessness
- Planned Article for CAFE Journal: Lessons Learned

