

Series: 2002-2003  
Circular Letter: C-11

TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Theodore S. Sergi, Commissioner of Education

DATE: August 15, 2002

SUBJECT: **August 12, 2002, Education Legislation**

As you know, on Monday, August 12, 2002, the Senate and the House of Representatives passed legislation to implement the budget that the Governor signed on July 1, 2002 (May 9 Special Session, P.A. 02-1) and to authorize state bonding. As of August 13, the Governor had not yet signed the bills adopted on August 12. However, it is expected that he will. Summarized below are the portions of those bills that concern education.

**Senate Bill 701**  
**AN ACT INCREASING CERTAIN BOND AUTHORIZATIONS FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS**

- Reduces state grants for the construction and equipping of **vocational agriculture centers and special education facilities** from 100% of the net eligible costs to 95% of those costs, to be paid through progress payments rather than in a lump sum. This impacts applications made after June 30, 2002 (Secs. 5 and 6, effective July 1, 2002).
- Reduces state grants for the construction and equipping of **interdistrict magnet schools**, but Senate Bill 704, described below, makes further changes to these provisions and contains the final language.
- Amends the provisions regarding when **school construction** applicants must secure **funding authorization for the local share** of project costs, but Senate Bill 704, described below, makes further changes and contains the final language.
- Provides that, for each **school construction priority list** submitted by the Commissioner of Education to the General Assembly in December 2003 and 2004, (1) the total amount requested by the Commissioner for grant commitments shall not exceed **\$1B** and (2) projects are to be listed in order of priority (Sec. 8, effective July 1, 2002).
- Decreases the amount of **bond funds** authorized to finance **school construction** grants and increases the amount of bond funds authorized for interest subsidy grants, to reflect actual payment needs (Secs. 9 and 10, effective July 1, 2002).

### **Senate Bill 702**

#### **AN ACT CONCERNING THE AUTHORIZATION OF BONDS OF THE STATE FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND OTHER PURPOSES**

- For the **wiring of school buildings**, defers \$3M of the \$7.5M previously authorized, but not yet issued, until 2003-04 along with the \$2M of additional proposed funding for 2002-03. This leaves \$4.5M available for 2002-03 and \$5M deferred until 2003-04 (Sec. 24, effective July 1, 2003; Sec. 73, effective July 1, 2002).
- Reduces bond funding for alterations and improvements to buildings and grounds at the **regional vocational-technical schools** from an amount not exceeding \$15M to an amount not exceeding \$10M (Sec. 95, effective July 1, 2002).

### **Senate Bill 704**

#### **AN ACT CONCERNING TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS TO CERTAIN BOND AUTHORIZATIONS FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS, AND INTERDISTRICT MAGNET SCHOOLS**

- Provides that no **application for a school construction** project shall be accepted by the Commissioner of Education on or after July 1, 2002, unless the applicant has secured **funding authorization for the local share** of the project costs prior to application (Sec. 1, amending Sec. 8 of Senate Bill 701, above; effective when signed by the Governor).
- Reduces state grants for the construction and equipping of **interdistrict magnet schools** from 100% of the full reasonable costs to 95% of those costs. This impacts applications made after June 30, 2002, for authorization in 2003-04 (Sec. 2, amending Sec. 7 of Senate Bill 701, above; effective July 1, 2002).

### **House Bill 6004**

#### **AN ACT CONCERNING STATE EXPENDITURES, as amended**

- Postpones until the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2003, the reduction in the local contribution for the **special education excess costs grant** (school district placements) from five times the school district's average per pupil education costs for the prior fiscal year to four and one-half times such costs (Sec. 1, effective when signed by the Governor).
- Provides that for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2003, each town shall receive an education cost sharing (**ECS**) grant that is at least equal to the grant it received for the prior fiscal year (Sec. 2, effective when signed by the Governor).

- Provides for the **proportional reduction of the grants** for the following purposes in order to remain within the reduced appropriations made available in the previously enacted budget (May 9 Special Session, P.A. 02-1): regional educational service centers, school transportation, bilingual education, adult education, health services for children in private schools, and the special education excess costs grant for state agency and LEA placed students (Secs. 3 and 9, effective when signed by the Governor).
- Requires each **regional vocational-technical school** to provide access to directory information and on-campus recruiting opportunities to representatives of the **military** to the extent necessary under federal law to prevent the loss of federal funds to the school or the state (Sec. 4, effective when signed by the Governor).
- Amends the provisions concerning the exemptions of **limited English proficient students** from participation in the **state mastery testing** program (Sec. 5, effective July 1, 2003).
- Requires the Commissioner of Education to prepare a state-wide **education accountability plan** in conformance with the federal No Child Left Behind Act, P.L. 107-110, and provides for a transition from the state's program identifying schools in need of improvement to a program consistent with federal laws and regulations (Secs. 6, 7, and 116, effective when signed by the Governor).
- Provides that **interdistrict magnet schools** that begin operations on or after July 1, 2005, shall (1) restrict the number of **students that enroll** in a school from one participating district to 75% of the total enrollment of the school and (2) maintain school enrollment so that at least 25%, but not more than 75%, of the students enrolled are pupils of racial minorities (Sec. 112, effective when signed by the Governor).
- Provides that in determining whether an application for an **interdistrict magnet school** operating grant is to be approved, the Commissioner shall consider the **proposed operating budget and the sources of funding** for the magnet school (Sec. 112, effective when signed by the Governor).
- Allows the Commissioner, within available appropriations, to provide **supplemental grants** to enhance educational programs in **interdistrict magnet schools** for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2003, and June 30, 2004 (Sec. 112, effective when signed by the Governor).

Please note that the Division of Grants Management will be providing further detailed information about changes to the school construction grant program. For questions regarding that program, please contact David Wedge at (860) 713-6467 or at [david.wedge@po.state.ct.us](mailto:david.wedge@po.state.ct.us). For questions about other grant programs, please contact Brian Mahoney at (860) 713-6465 or at [brian.mahoney@po.state.ct.us](mailto:brian.mahoney@po.state.ct.us). For general questions about this letter, please contact Katherine Nicoletti, Esq., of the Office of Legal and Governmental Affairs at (860) 713-6520 or at [katherine.nicoletti@po.state.ct.us](mailto:katherine.nicoletti@po.state.ct.us).