

DOCKET NO. HHD-CV05-405-526-S (X07)

CONNECTICUT COALITION FOR JUSTICE IN EDUCATION FUNDING, INC., et al. <i>Plaintiffs</i>	:	SUPERIOR COURT
	:	COMPLEX LITIGATION
	:	DOCKET
v.	:	AT HARTFORD
	:	
RELL, JODI, M. et al. <i>Defendants</i>	:	DECEMBER 31, 2012

AFFIDAVIT OF STEFAN PRYOR

I, Stefan Pryor, having been duly sworn, do depose and say:

1. I am over 18 years of age, reside in the State of Connecticut, and understand the obligation of my oath.
2. I have been working with the Connecticut State Department of Education (SDE) as Commissioner since October 2011. Prior to that I have served in numerous public service roles involving school reform programs and economic, housing, and workforce development. A true and accurate copy of my background is attached hereto as Attachment A.
3. Connecticut has adopted significant educational reforms targeted to improving student performance in low-performing school districts as well as enhancing overall performance. The state has accomplished this not only by dedicating approximately \$92 million to improve the education system of the state, but also by instituting new educational programs, substantially different from what has been in place in prior years.
4. Of this approximately \$92 million, \$50 million in increased education cost sharing grants goes to 136 towns. Eighty percent of that amount is directed to the thirty lowest performing districts, known as the Alliance Districts.

5. A major reform is seen in the conditional educational cost sharing grant increases for the Alliance Districts. The Alliance Districts are not only the thirty lowest performing districts, but they also tend to have the highest poverty. The districts applied to me by setting forth their objectives and performance targets as well as submitting an improvement plan. Release of the additional funds is conditioned on the districts' compliance with the legislation and their meeting the objectives and performance targets in their district improvement plans.

6. The Alliance Districts currently are: New Britain, Windham, Bridgeport, New London, Hartford, East Hartford, New Haven, Waterbury, Norwich, Meriden, Derby, Putnam, East Haven, West Haven, Bloomfield, Naugatuck, East Windsor, Ansonia, Stamford, Manchester, Winchester, Hamden, Windsor Locks, Danbury, Killingly, Vernon, Windsor, Middletown, Norwalk and Bristol. All thirty of the Alliance Districts have approved plans, which can be found on the SDE website at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2683&Q=334402>. A true and accurate copy of the allocated amounts of ECS funds for each district and summaries of their approved plans are attached as Attachment B.

7. Alliance Districts receiving the additional conditional funding must submit annual expenditure reports to the SDE. With regard to any amounts not spent in accordance with the district's approved plan, I must determine whether the district shall repay this amount, or whether the SDE shall reduce the district's grant by that amount in the subsequent year.

8. The creation of the Commissioner's Network, pursuant to section 19 of Public Act 12-116, is one of the significant reforms providing intensive state intervention and support with the goal of turning around performance in up to twenty-five of Connecticut's lowest-performing schools. For the first academic year 2012-2013, I have selected four schools to participate in the Commissioner's Network for FY 2012-13 and the SBE has approved turnaround plans for these

schools: Bridgeport's Curiale Elementary School, Hartford's Core Knowledge Academy at Milner Elementary School, New Haven's High School in the Community, and Norwich's Stanton Elementary School.

9. These four schools, based on prior performance, are schools in need of greatest support, and have been deemed a high-priority, low-performing Turnaround, Focus, or Review school under Connecticut's new system of school classification and accountability. Each of these four schools has previously been designated as "in need of improvement" under No Child Left Behind for four or more years, and each has more than 75% of students who qualify for free or reduced price lunch.

10. Development of each school's turnaround plan was largely guided by a local turnaround committee, with representation from school district administration, parents, teachers, as well as my designee.

11. These four Network schools' turnaround plans propose transformative action leading to greater student achievement in the following turnaround areas: family and community connections, school climate and environment, leadership, teaching and support staff, use of learning time, curriculum and instruction, and use of data to drive decision-making.

12. Bridgeport's Curiale School (K--8th grade) plans to extend instructional time by 300 hours, lengthening the school day by 88 minutes and the school year by five days. Highly rated and dedicated teachers will remain or be recruited to Curiale.

13. Hartford's Milner School (PK-7th grade) will partner with Jumoke Academy, a successful charter organization, to bring Jumoke's model to Milner. To increase instructional time, Milner will extend the school year by 25 days and hold 12 Saturday Academies targeting struggling students.

14. New Haven's High School in the Community ("HSC") (9-12th grade magnet) has been teacher-led since the 1960's and now will be operated in partnership with the New Haven Federation of Teachers. HSC will move from a seat time system of learning to competency based requirements, where students will progress through high school by demonstrating mastery of education skills.

15. Stanton School in Norwich (PK-5th grade) will add 123 instructional hours to the 2012-2013 school year, and such instructional time shall increase over time. As part of its ongoing talent strategy, the school will evaluate teaching candidates based on skills that will advance Stanton's turnaround model.

16. The legislation provides for up to twenty-five low-performing schools to be included in the Commissioner's Network. Each Network school remains in the Network a minimum of three years. Two one year extensions are available if I determine that the school is not ready to transition back to the full control by the local or regional board of education.

17. The SDE conducts operations and instructional audits of each Network school, taking into consideration a multitude of statutory factors and I must submit the audit and turnaround plan to the legislature's Education Committee no later than thirty days after the SBE approves the plan. I must submit annual Network school academic performance reports to the Education and Appropriations Committees as well as a final report for each school when it exits the Network. By January 1, 2020, I must also submit to the Education Committee a report on the Network schools' effect on student achievement and recommend whether the Network should continue.

18. Significant reforms have been introduced that will ensure that the State of Connecticut has the best teachers and administrators, working in a fair system that values skill and

effectiveness. Annual performance evaluations will be required, and a new evaluation system exists based upon the consensus developed by the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC). The results of this process are included in the official documents, true and accurate copies of which are attached hereto as Attachment C. PEAC members include representatives from the following organizations: the SDE, Capitol Region Education Council (a regional education service center or RESC), American Federation of Teachers-CT (AFT), CT Association of Schools (CAS), Sacred Heart University, CT Association of Public School Superintendents, Inc. (CAPSS), the Connecticut Education Association (CEA), the Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR), the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE), EASTCONN (a RESC), and the Connecticut Federation of School Administrators (CFSA).

19. Job-embedded coaching will be the predominant form of training, thereby strengthening professional development. Districts may develop their own teacher and principal evaluation system consistent with Core Requirements and subject to approval by the SDE, or they may adopt the State Model. Excellent teachers will be eligible to be recognized as a “distinguished educator.”

20. Effective teachers will earn tenure and ineffective ones, not merely incompetent ones, will be dismissed pursuant to a fair, speedy, and manageable proceeding. Termination hearings will focus on whether the evaluation ratings are reasonable and in accordance with the new evaluation program. Termination hearings must also occur within tighter time frames and the amount of time allotted for the presentation of evidence and testimony is now limited.

21. Over the 2012-2013 academic year, the new evaluation and support system will be implemented in a pilot group of ten school districts or consortia of districts, followed by state-wide implementation in 2013-2014. The pilot group of districts includes: Bethany; Branford;

Bridgeport; Capitol Region Education Council (CREC); Columbia, Eastford, Franklin, and Sterling; Litchfield and Region 6; Norwalk; Waterford; Windham; Windsor. The pilot group represents a diverse group of rural, suburban, and urban districts with varying student academic performance levels. The University of Connecticut's Neag School of Education will analyze administration and results in the ten pilot districts and report back to the SBE and the General Assembly no later than January 1, 2014.

22. Starting July 1, 2015, pursuant to section 35 of Public Act 12-116, teacher preparation programs shall require that students have classroom clinical, field, or student teaching experience during four semesters of the program. At the request of the Governor, the Educator Preparation Advisory Council, a joint initiative of the SDE and the BOR, was created to advise the SBE in regard to developing a system for the approval, quality, regulation, oversight, and accreditation of Connecticut educator preparation programs. True and accurate copies of my report to the SBE and the resolution adopted by the SBE are attached hereto as Attachment D.

23. In addition, section 10 of Public Act 12-116 provides that starting FY 2014, the SDE will establish a municipal aid for new educators grant program, which will provide grants up to \$200,000 to the local or regional board of education for an education reform district to offer employment to up to five graduating students in the top ten percent of their teacher preparation class on or before March 1 of each year.

24. Starting July 1, 2016, section 36 of Public Act 12-116 will require an applicant for a professional educator certificate to hold a master's degree in a subject appropriate to the person's certification endorsement, as determined by SBE.

25. Section 36 of Public Act 12-116 also provides that professional certificates are now valid for five years and shall be continued every five years upon completion of successful service. In

addition, starting July 1, 2013, all professional certificate holders must participate in professional development activities.

26. Under section 19 of Public Act 12-116, there is a new accountability system which is consistent with federal laws and regulations. The SDE has created a new index for describing school performance: the school performance index (SPI). This index is based on students' weighted performance on statewide mastery tests in reading, writing, and mathematics given in grades 3-8 and 10, and science in grades 5, 8, and 10 and other factors. As part of this new system, schools will be classified into one of the following five classifications: Excelling, Progressing, Transition, Review, and Turnaround. The SDE will recognize schools of distinction and their effective practices will be shared with other schools. Focus schools are those schools that have identified subgroups of students who have historically underperformed academically when compared to all students. Such subgroups may include racial groups, English language learners ("ELL"), those eligible for free or reduced lunch, or students with disabilities. Interventions in Turnaround Schools and in Review Schools (including but not limited to Focus Schools) will begin in 2012 and 2013.

27. With regard to early childhood education opportunities, Public Act 12-116 sections 1 through 5 creates for the Fiscal Year ("FY") 2013 1000 new early education slots in low-income communities, launches a facilities study for the continued expansion of early education, calls for the development of a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by the SDE, and creates a pilot program to enhance literacy for students in K-3 grades.

28. Consistent with section 89 of Public Act 12-116, five elementary schools from the Education Reform Districts (ten lowest performing districts), have been selected to participate in an intensive new reading intervention program for K-3 grade students. These schools are: Anna

E. Norris Elementary School in East Hartford, Latin Studies Academy at Burns School in Hartford, John Barry Elementary School in Meriden, Truman Elementary School in New Haven, and Windham Center Elementary School in Windham. The other five towns that currently comprise the Education Reform Districts are New Britain, Bridgeport, New London, Waterbury, and Norwich.

29. Up to twenty-five positions in educational reform districts are created for the intensive new reading pilot program. One literacy coach and four reading interventionists in each of the five schools will help implement new instructional practices, individualized academic interventions based on student needs, and data monitoring strategies to improve literacy instruction. The literacy coach specialist will provide embedded professional development for one year, supporting the principal and other school personnel in the development of reading instruction best practices. The four interventionists will be deployed to provide intensive, individualized, and data-driven instruction for all students reading below proficiency. Literacy instruction periods will run uninterrupted daily for at least 120 minutes duration.

30. Consistent with section 8 of Public Act 12-116, ten new family resource centers are being established in elementary schools within the Alliance Districts in Connecticut. These family resource centers provide an array of wraparound services for children and their families, including before-and after-school child care and school readiness for children age three and older who are not otherwise enrolled in school. The family resource centers also provide summer camps, child-rearing skills classes, home visitations to screen for child development needs, high school equivalency classes for parents, and English as a Second Language (ESL) programming, among other services.

31. The ten newly selected schools for expanding family resource centers are: J. C. Clark School, Hartford; Fair Haven Elementary School, New Haven; Franklin Mayberry Elementary School, East Hartford; John B. Stanton Elementary School, Norwich; Greene-Hills School, Bristol; Jonathan Reed Elementary School, Waterbury; Ridge Hill School, Hamden; Roger Sherman Elementary School, Meriden; Ross Woodward Classical Studies School, New Haven; and Smith Elementary School, New Britain.

32. In addition to the family resource centers, section 8 of Public Act 12-116 provides for the creation or expansion of twenty school-based health clinics in the Alliance Districts to be selected by the Department of Public Health.

33. Under section 238 of Public Act 12-1 (June Special Session), for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013, I am establishing a school nutritional rating system pilot grant program to be implemented in select school districts, for the school years commencing July 1, 2012 and July 1, 2013. This nutritional rating pilot grant program will provide grants of up to \$50,000 to three to five eligible local or regional boards of education to adopt and implement a nutritional rating system to be used in at least one elementary school, one middle school and one high school in the school district that provides information on the nutritional value of food provided to students in the school cafeteria to guide student food choices at school and assist local and regional boards of education in food service decisions relating to the procurement of food for schools. A nutritional rating grant recipient shall monitor and report to me on whether the nutritional rating system has affected student food purchasing patterns. Not later than October 1, 2014, after consultation with the food service directors for the participating school districts, I must submit a report to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters

relating to education, assessing the nutritional rating system pilot grant program and including any recommendations to expand the program.

34. Additional funding is available to expand high quality school models, including traditional schools, magnet schools, charter schools, and others. More specifically, charter per pupil funding is increased from \$9,400 to \$10,200 for 2012-2013; to \$11,000 for 2013-2014; and to \$11,500 for 2014-2015. Charter schools are now required to submit a recruitment and retention plan detailing efforts to serve priority student populations. The SBE will hold schools accountable for adherence to these plans. The SDE must endeavor to launch two charter schools focused on ELL/dual language programs in the coming years. Almost all of the state charter school students are from Alliance Districts.

35. Starting in the 2013-2014 school year, start-up grants up to \$500,000 and \$3000 per pupil operating grants within available appropriations are offered to low-performing districts to open local charter schools provided that those local boards of education reach agreement with their bargaining unit regarding staffing flexibility and which submit high-quality turnaround plans.

36. Section 12 of Public Act 12-116 provides an additional financial incentive for larger school districts to increase their enrollment of out-of-district students under the Open Choice interdistrict public school attendance program. Districts with more than 4,000 students will receive the highest state Open Choice grant - \$6,000 for each out-of-district student - if the district has increased its Open Choice enrollment by at least 50% by October 1, 2012. The previous version of the statute allowed districts to qualify for the \$6,000 per student grant only if the number of out-of-district students they enrolled equaled or exceeded 3% of their total enrollment.

37. Substantial new funding, around \$6.9 million, will go to increasing per pupil operating grants for non-Sheff magnet schools as well as for funding an additional magnet school and the Edison magnet school.

38. Approximately \$3.3 million is available for Sheff initiatives to reduce racial isolation of Hartford resident minority students.

39. \$1.4 million is targeted for regional agricultural science and technology education centers.

40. The Connecticut Technical High Schools shall receive an increase in funding of \$700,000. In addition, the legislature provided the Connecticut Technical High School System with \$800,000 for (1) trade supplies (\$500,000) and (2) environmental permitting and remediation (\$300,000).

41. Consistent with sections 15 and 16 of Public Act 12-116, the SDE is now developing a uniform system of accounting for school revenues and expenditures that includes a chart of accounts for use at the school and school district level. The law requires that by July 1, 2013, the SDE will submit the chart of accounts to the appropriate joint standing committees of the General Assembly. Starting with FY 2015, each board of education, regional education service center, and state charter school must implement the accounting system and file annual financial reports with me. The Office of Policy and Management is authorized to audit the annual financial reports.

42. Consistent with the Governor's Red Tape Review and Removal Taskforce, initial recommendations to eliminate unnecessarily burdensome state regulations and mandates will be reported to the Governor and me by April 2013. The SDE will begin to streamline data collection practices as part of this effort.

43. In 2010 Connecticut adopted the nation-wide Common Core standards as the new standard for curriculum offered to Connecticut students. The waiver principles endorse college and career ready standards, and hold schools accountable for writing and science, as well as mathematics and reading.

44. In accordance with the state's ESEA Flexibility Request, Connecticut must now support districts, schools, and educators as they transition to the Common Core State Standards. The state will be adopting new assessment tools and enabling new training and professional development.

45. Connecticut is a governing member of the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortia, a consortia of states in the process of designing new assessment tools. These new assessment tools are expected to be implemented in the school year 2014-2015. These new assessment tools will replace the current assessment tools, known as the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT), with a computerized personalized test. A true and accurate guide to the aligned Common Core assessments, updated April 2012, is attached hereto as Attachment E.

46. The ESEA only required students to attain the target of "proficient." New measures of school performance will take into consideration, not only increases from "Basic" to "Proficient" as previously required under the NCLB, but also increases in student scores within and between the levels of performance: Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, Goal/Advanced. This will more accurately reflect growth data with respect to all students. Unlike the NCLB's reliance on measuring high school progress only by standardized test scores, high school progress will now also be measured by graduation rates.

47. Connecticut is one of five states selected to participate in a collaborative effort by state leaders, the Ford Foundation, and the National Center on Time & Learning (NCTL) to develop high-quality and sustainable expanded-time schools. This effort will assist in adding 300 hours of instruction and enrichment to the school year in the following Connecticut schools starting 2013: Thomas S. O'Connell Elementary School in East Hartford, Casimir Pulaski Elementary School (implementation began earlier this school year) and John Barry Elementary School in Meriden, Jennings Elementary School, Winthrop Magnet Elementary School, Nathan Hale Elementary School, and Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School in New London.

48. As Commissioner, I have supported and implemented the Governor's six main reform principles: 1) enhance families' access to early childhood education opportunities; 2) provide state support and intervention in low-performing schools; 3) expand high-quality school models; 4) remove red tape and other barriers to success; 5) develop the very best teachers and principals; and 6) deliver more resources to districts that embrace reform.

49. Connecticut's 2012 legislation and the SDE's Elementary and Secondary Education Act ("ESEA") Flexibility Request embody these reform principles. True and accurate copies of summaries of the 2012 legislation as of September 21, 2012, are attached hereto as Attachments F1, F2, and F3. A true and accurate copy of the ESEA Flexibility Request can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/ct.pdf>.

50. The Connecticut State Board of Education ("SBE") expressed its full support of Connecticut's ESEA Flexibility Request by submitting to Arne Duncan, the U.S. Secretary of Education, a letter of support with a unanimous resolution endorsing the waiver application. A true and accurate copy of the SBE's letter and supporting resolution is attached hereto as Attachment G. The United States Department of Education approved the SDE's ESEA

PROFILE OF STEFAN PRYOR

Stefan Pryor serves as the Commissioner of Education for the State of Connecticut. Pryor was recommended unanimously by the State Board of Education to Governor Dannel P. Malloy for appointment in September 2011. Under the leadership of the Governor and State Board, Pryor and the State Department of Education are taking a series of steps to advance education reform in Connecticut. For example, the Commissioner and Department are:

- Working to implement a substantial education reform legislative package that the Connecticut General Assembly passed in May and June.
- Carrying out the elements of a successful application for flexibility from requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind act; the U.S. Department of Education approved Connecticut's waiver in May.
- Guiding a significant reorganization of the Department.

Pryor previously served for approximately five years as Deputy Mayor for Economic Development in the City of Newark, NJ. In that capacity, he oversaw the City offices responsible for economic development, city planning, housing, workforce development, ex-offender reentry, and sustainability, among other areas. He also led Newark's State and Federal legislative efforts. Pryor co-founded and served as Chairman of the Brick City Development Corporation, Newark's economic development organization.

Before his work in Newark, Pryor was President of the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC). The LMDC was created in the aftermath of September 11th by the State and City of New York to plan and help coordinate the physical rebuilding and economic revitalization of Lower Manhattan. Over approximately five years, Pryor served in a number of leadership capacities at the agency, culminating in his service as the LMDC President.

Pryor previously served as a Vice President at the Partnership for New York City. The Partnership is NYC's leading business organization. At the Partnership from 1998-2001, Pryor led the organization's public education initiatives. The Partnership's education work focused on attracting philanthropic funding to lower-performing NYC public school districts in order to introduce a range of innovations — including performance measurement and compensation, mentor teacher programs, principal signing bonuses for hard-to-staff/ low-performing schools, and low-cost mortgages for educators. After September 11th, Pryor helped coordinate the Partnership's efforts to get downtown businesses up and running again. Pryor helped set up an emergency call center for businesses in the immediate aftermath of the disaster, and he helped found ReStart Central, which matched donated and discounted goods and services with 9/11-affected businesses.

In the mid-1990's, Pryor served as Policy Advisor to the Mayor of New Haven, Connecticut. Pryor is a co-founder and was the first Board President of Amistad Academy, a public charter school in New Haven. Amistad is the flagship of the Achievement First network of schools. Pryor served on the board of Achievement First, which has opened more than 20 schools and academies in four cities in Connecticut and New York.

The child of two former public school teachers, Pryor received his undergraduate and law degrees from Yale University, where he completed the Yale Teacher Preparation Program.