

EAST GREENWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

111 PEIRCE STREET, EAST GREENWICH, RI 02818

(401) 398-1201

Victor D. Mercurio, Ed. D.
vmercurio@egsd.net
Superintendent of Schools

November 14, 2018

{Via Electronic Mail and Hand-Delivery}
Suzanne McGee Cienki
President, East Greenwich Town Council
125 Main Street
East Greenwich, RI 02818

Re: Request for Supplemental Appropriation Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws §16-2-21.4(a)

Dear President Cienki:

On June 6, 2018, the East Greenwich Town Council adopted a FY 2019 budget that included a school department appropriation of \$35,077,092 by a vote of 4-1. On June 19, 2018, the East Greenwich School Committee (the "Committee") voted to amend its original request to the Town Council for a final, revised FY 2019 budget of \$38,936,603, inclusive of the Town Council's appropriation of \$35,077,092. Subsequent to the passing and adjustment of the FY 2019 budget by both elected bodies, the Committee hired the law firm of Henneous Carroll Lombardo, LLC to perform an educational audit of the District in response to the Town's failure to adequately fund the School Department's budget for fiscal year 2019. As detailed in the report, a copy of which was forwarded to the entire Town Council upon its receipt, the auditing team found that the failure of the Town Council to adequately fund the School Department has led to, and will continue to lead to, the deterioration of the quality public school system that the Town currently enjoys. Further, the report concludes that the School District is not currently in compliance with the Rhode Island Department of Education's ("RIDE") Basic Education Program ("BEP") and will be unable to maintain a strong public school system with high quality school buildings, strong academic programs and dedicated staff and faculty under its current funding structure.

The audit's analysis revealed that the District is deficient in meeting its legal obligations for the fiscal year 2019 and projects an overall, structural deficit of \$1,222,000. The cause of the deficit is attributable to higher than projected increases in enrollment across the District, buildings and schools that are overcapacity, some as much as 50%, and a recent history by the Town Council of underfunding the District's operations, including its rejection of the School Committee's proposed budget of a 4% increase in its appropriation for FY 2019. On October 25, 2018, the Committee sent a letter to Dr. Ken Wagner, the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary

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Education, to formally request fiscal relief by seeking variances under state law and/or RIDE regulatory requirements for the following based upon the current and anticipated operating deficit position and the district's current inability to deliver the BEP with appropriate fidelity: school bus monitors, the authority to charge for general education transportation, and the authority to charge for athletic participation. In a response received by the Committee within the last ten (10) business days, the Commissioner denied all of the waiver requests sought by the Committee to correct its FY 2019 deficit.

Given that the Committee has not received its requested FY 2019 appropriation request through the formal budget process, and that the School Department is likely to operate in a deficit position for the balance of this fiscal year, as confirmed by the formal programmatic audit, and that the Commissioner has now denied any variances, please accept this correspondence as a formal request by the Committee pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws §16-2-21.4(a) for a supplemental appropriation for FY 2019 in the amount of \$696,000, which is equivalent to the prorated balance of the Committee's original appropriation request of four percent over its FY 2018 appropriation, submitted to the Town Council per R.I. Gen. Laws §16-2-21(d)(vi).

As such, the Committee respectfully and formally requests that the Town Council address and take action on this requested supplemental appropriation at its next scheduled meeting. In the event that the Town Council denies this request, the Committee specifically reserves any and all rights as under Rhode Island law to seek a higher appropriation in an amount consistent with that set forth in the programmatic audit. We look forward to discussing this request in more depth and detail at the Town Council and School Committee's earliest mutual convenience.

Respectfully submitted,



Carolyn Mark, School Committee Chair

C: Victor D. Mercurio, Ed. D., Superintendent
Gayle Corrigan, Town Manager
All Town Councilors
All School Committee Members
Matthew T. Oliverio, Esquire
David D'Agostino, Esquire