



A Message from Mary Ellen Flaherty-Ludwig, Norwalk BOE (District E representative)

Now Is Not the Time to Give Our Students Less

I have been grateful to serve on the Norwalk Public Schools Board of Education since 2021 following a more-than 40-year career as an educator.

And with that experience, I know one thing is certain – as students begin to regain a sense of normalcy and belonging following two years of pandemic-induced trauma and interrupted learning, now is not the time to give our students less.

I can appreciate the tightrope that our friends on the city side have to walk between raising taxes – something that could ultimately drive out some of our valued district parents – versus cutting the school budget's request increase.

While this is certainly not an easy decision to make, a significant reduction to our budget leaves numerous talented members of our staff across the district vulnerable. Integral positions such as school counselors, social workers and instructional coaches will be affected. The school district is a people business as is often said. We must meet our staff contractual commitments and our federally special education IEP mandates.

Our request centers on reinstating school counselor and social worker positions back into the local budget that we had previously covered with ESSER funds over the last two years. In addition the federal IDEA Grant and the Medicaid Grant have reduced their funding forcing us to move some of those associated teachers back to the local budget.

Acknowledging that we would all like to give more, not less, this is a moment where the Board of Education can come together with the City of Norwalk to responsibly provide our students and teachers with the most support as is fiscally possible.