



## **A Message from Dr. Alexandra Estrella, Superintendent of Norwalk Public Schools, and Norwalk Board of Education**

### **Response to the Common Council's Establishment of the Budget Cap**

Half a percent. The Norwalk Common Council added half a percent more to the recommended increase for the Norwalk Board of Education operating budget in FY2023-24. The total increase now comes to 4.5 percent, a number that we find absolutely unacceptable if we want to continue providing the same level of service that our students and families have come to expect.

From the beginning, the Norwalk BOE has stated that its FY2023-24 budgetary proposal to the city was for a maintenance budget. We wanted to maintain the resources that give our students interventions in reading and math to boost scores and set up future success.

We wanted to maintain the resources that provide our students with the support they need for their social and emotional well-being. We wanted to maintain the programs that allow students to stay here in Norwalk and not have to attend a school out of district for services they need.

Now to maintain these necessary resources, we will have to cut programming (and the associated personnel) that motivates many students to come to school each day such as music, art, theater, sports and field trips. The individual attention we're able to offer students will be diminished or disappear completely.

We understand the enormous amount of pressure that the Common Council is under to keep tax rates affordable for Norwalk residents. This includes our families and many of our staff members. We also want to ensure the community that the schools are offering the best education possible so the next generation can continue to make Norwalk a wonderful and productive place to live.

As we head toward the Board of Estimate and Taxation budget cap decision, we will continue to advocate for adequate funding for our school district. The 4.5 percent increase set by Common Council will not suffice, but we will do everything with the resources afforded to us to ensure that our students receive the education that they deserve.