



March 12, 2026

Mayor Passero, President Satti and Members of the New London City Council:

This letter accompanies the presentation of the New London Board of Education's budget request for fiscal year 2027. It paints a pretty dismal picture. We have long anticipated that the loss of grant revenues, coupled with the failure to sufficiently fund public education to at least match COLA, would result in this fiscal cliff which we now face.

The Board of Education began its budget development process in early November. We directed the administration to prepare a "same services" budget. Dr. Ritchie and her team did as was asked and presented a budget that reflected a shortfall of approximately \$7.4 million dollars. That gap was fairly evenly split between increased costs and lost or reduced revenue. That budget was labeled "Plan A". The administration provided two proposed alternatives, known as "Plan B" and "Plan C".

Plan A was later revised by the Board of Education by approximately \$1.4MM in reductions, resulting in a remaining gap of \$6MM. We believe this plan reflects what is necessary to open our schools in August with the same programs and services we now provide.

Centered on expectations for \$800,000 in new revenue to be given to the Board by the City, (as was suggested in the discussion of the Joint budget Task Force committee meetings) Plan B would have forced us to gut whole programs in every school. The most egregious budget reduction under this plan would have been \$1.9MM from our high school. Central Office and all other schools would have faced similar reductions. The Board was unanimous in opposition to Plan B as it created an untenable environment in which to maintain free and appropriate education for our youth, as mandated by State law.

The Board recognizes the limitations of what the City can do to fund our public schools. Plan C reflects this. Under Plan C the Board would close one elementary school, reduce our magnet pathways from three to two, and enroll all New London students in a magnet pathway. We believe this will provide more than \$4.1 million in combined savings and additional magnet grant revenue from the state. Additionally, we think this plan will provide stability and consistency as we project forward, by adjusting to the current fiscal reality in New London, while acknowledging population trends in our city, state and country. It will also allow us to expand program offerings in our two mature, successful and nationally awarded magnet pathways, STEM and Visual and Performing Arts, and build on the successes of each. Plan C still leaves a gap of \$1.9 million if it were to pass as currently drawn, with full approval from the state.

Plan C is far from a done deal. We need approval from the state to collapse our magnet pathways from three to two. A revised Magnet Operations Plan was submitted to the state's Magnet Office on March 2. We are currently awaiting a decision. Included in that revised plan was our proposal to enroll all resident students into a magnet pathway; we await a decision on that as well. It is possible that the state's Magnet Office approves one part of our plan and denies another. In addition, the City may incur a penalty for closing a school built largely with state construction grants within twenty years of its opening. We leave it to City officials to determine any such penalty. In short, there are a great many unknowns.

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And adding to this uncertainty is the fate of some potential \$1.1MM in additional ECS grant money that may come our way if the legislature passes and the Governor supports Senate and House bills that aim to start to address increasing the foundation amount of ECS.

This is a year like no other. The Board of Education is prepared to carefully navigate and, if necessary, change course as more information becomes known, and as the state's Magnet Office responds to our proposals. It is for this reason that we have taken the unusual action of sending *two spending plans* to you. Plan A presents the worst-case scenario; Plan C presents the best case. Both require additional City financial support. Plan C requires various CT State Department approvals.

Attached to this cover letter you will find budget detail regarding these two requests. Please know the administration has been asked not to update our Proposed SY27 Budget Book until the final plan is known. At that time, all the needed revisions will be made, and the final Board of Education Budget Book will be republished. The specific budget details for Plans A and C are attached below.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our proposals. The Board of Education stands ready, willing and able to work with the City to chart a course that is in the best interests of our students and families, and which will provide stability for the next few years.

Sincerely,

Elaine Maynard-Adams,
President, New London Board of Education