

February 1, 2021

Dear Legislators,

We understand that the House Committee on General, Housing and Military Affairs is making decisions this week regarding two bills proposing changes to the process for statewide collective bargaining for public school employees' health benefits.

We are requesting that this letter be entered into the written testimony of the Committee on General, Housing and Military Affairs on H.81 and posted on the Committee's website.

Rather than H.81, we support H.63 because it balances appropriate access to health care benefits and reasonable cost containment to ensure the financial sustainability of the benefits. Cost containment is needed in order to avoid further jeopardizing educational opportunities for students and maintenance of facilities.

Local examples of the importance of cost containment in health care include:

For FY22, we have dedicated \$466,943 to healthcare expenses in our budget, representing 11.6% of our \$4,028,181 overall budget. The costs of healthcare as a percentage of the average cost of compensation of our teachers is 20%. For our support staff, the average cost of healthcare as a percentage of the average cost of compensation is 28%.

In order to support this substantial increase in healthcare expenses, we have made cost reductions in other areas to level fund our budget. The Canaan School District has struggled to not take away any additional programming and/or positions to stay within the education spending thresholds set by the state.

Please feel free to contact either one of us with any specific questions.

Sincerely,

Daniel Wade, ENSU/Canaan School District Board Chair
Karen Conroy, ENSU Superintendent