

Dear Neighbor,

I’ve worked hard, year on year, to ensure that quality education is available to every Danburian. From pre-school through college, I’ve provided for both school operations and school buildings. That’s hundreds of millions of your state tax dollars brought home for public primary and middle schools, for Danbury High and Henry Abbot Tech, for Naugatuck Valley Community College, and for Western Connecticut State University. You can get a good education in Danbury without leaving home.

I am concerned about two issues. First is the drive by special interests to divert taxpayers dollars to charter schools and for-profit schools. These interests are contributing a lot of campaign “dark money” to influence voters to support their plan to get your dollars, using beguiling ads and misleading arguments. I oppose them.

Second is the drift in the state Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funding to public schools. ECS was created in response to court cases requiring equal access to education as our constitution requires. But over the years, we’ve not kept to the formula, because we haven’t decreased the funding to small, rich towns in order to maintain funding in bigger cities like Danbury. Sadly, Danbury gets about 51% of the formula amount, but Ridgefield 168%! Why does this go on? Because there are more small, rich towns whose legislators won’t “cut” their funding. We must fix this.

This newsletter reports on education funding (which continues to increase for Danbury), education investment in our hometown, and some significant new laws. If you have questions, contact me. Have a great summer!

Bob



Bob standing at the future location of Danbury High School Freshman Academy.

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EXPANDING OUR INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION

I am proud of my commitment to providing every Danbury child with a quality education, from Kindergarten through college, and have worked hard each year to fund our schools and our infrastructure. Danbury schools, and our local colleges, have seen millions of our tax dollars come back to meet the needs to educate our kids. Among some of the most key priorities, Danbury has received:

- \$31,763,025 for the construction of the Freshman Academy at Danbury High School.
- \$2,000,000 for the expansion and upgrade of Naugatuck Valley Community College downtown.
- \$1,710,000 for repairs and upgrades throughout the Danbury Public School System.



Future Downtown home of Naugatuck Valley Community College's Danbury Branch.

MEETING DEMAND AT ABBOTT TECH

Henry Abbott, like our other Technical High Schools, has struggled with teacher shortages from a lack of candidates and a lack of funding. I removed some red tape to empower the Superintendent of Technical High Schools to streamline her budget process. She will report annually about the local workforce needs and the success of graduates in getting jobs. Finally, under this law the superintendent will establish a pilot program to provide manufacturing training for state workers in the Technical High Schools who require additional skills, training or education in their field. *(PA 16-42)*

EXPANDING FINANCIAL AID FOR COLLEGE

Being able to afford sending our children to college should be a goal anyone can reasonably achieve. Federal financial aid is shrinking and the cost of college is rising. I expanded our state’s contribution to the “Roberta B. Willis Scholarship Program” in order to provide more financial aid to full-time and part-time students in need of assistance. I strengthened the criteria for how much to award part-time students and increased the amount of funding for the program available at our community colleges. *(PA 16-179)*

BRINGING DANBURY’S TAX DOLLARS HOME FOR OUR SCHOOLS

Each year, I fight for every dollar of available state funding for Danbury, especially education funding. This chart shows the increase in ECS funding Danbury has received since 1990. Despite the ECS being based on a formula for most of these years, the tax dollars Danbury schools receive hasn’t kept pace with full funding or with our regional counterparts who receive more than their full share. I’ll continue to work to fix it.

ECS Aid to Danbury FY 97 to FY 17 Grant Amount

