



September 16, 2020

The Honorable Ned Lamont
Office of Governor
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Lamont:

The Connecticut AFL-CIO represents more than 220,000 members, many of whom are employed by local and regional boards of education across this state. Thousands more are employed by firms that contract with districts to provide services. They are teachers, but they are also paraeducators, secretaries, cafeteria workers, bus drivers and monitors, school nurses, custodians, and many others who educate, support and serve students every day.

Unlike teachers and administrators who are salaried employees, most non-certified school staff (either employed directly or by contract) are 10-month, hourly employees. Typically, when schools are closed, they do not get paid. When schools closed in March to reduce coronavirus spread, these dedicated workers were uncertain about the future of their jobs and their livelihoods. Thanks to your action, Executive Order 7R ensured sustained education funding to districts and required boards of education to continue employing and paying all school staff as had been budgeted through June 30, 2020. That was an important directive that kept thousands of school employees from losing their jobs and seeking unemployment benefits.

Now, with the 2020-2021 school year underway, districts are operating under various instructional models. Some are operating with traditional in-person instruction, many are providing hybrid instruction and a few are employing full remote learning models. In addition, a number of districts have closed or had to close individual school buildings for short periods of time in order to respond to positive coronavirus cases. We expect that this kind of activity could continue intermittently throughout the school year. We are also aware that if infection rates increase, it may be necessary for all districts to move to full remote models. Under these circumstances, there is no guarantee that 10-month, hourly school staff would be paid or remain employed.

For these reasons, we ask you to quickly issue a new executive order extending the provisions of Executive Order 7R through June 30, 2021. Doing so will provide certainty to districts and staff. In addition, we request that a new executive order broaden the language contained in section 3 of Executive Order 7R to require districts to maintain contracts they hold with all vendors that provide school services, including but not limited to those that provide transportation, special education and janitorial services. Such a swift and comprehensive action will ensure the livelihoods of those who do so much on behalf of our students. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Sal Luciano, President
Connecticut AFL-CIO

CC: Paul Mounds, Chief of Staff
Josh Geballe, Chief Operating Officer
Bob Clark, General Counsel
Jonathan Harris, Senior Advisor
Jonathan Dach, Policy Director