

## ‘Train wreck for public education’

### Officials, advocates say governor’s budget shortchanges schools

By **Natasha Sokoloff**  
STAFF WRITER

The fight for more education funding in the state’s 2026 General Assembly session has put a spotlight on the way that Connecticut funds K-12 education — and on the consequences of going another year with-

out foundational change.

Gov. Ned Lamont’s budget proposal largely maintains funding levels for K-12 education, but it is missing the substantial change to the state’s main way of funding local school systems that advocates say is long overdue.

Despite celebrating La-

mont’s proposals for free school breakfasts and other education initiatives, several local leaders and education advocates said the proposed fiscal year 2027 budget for public education ultimately puts further strain on Connecticut school districts and towns that could lead to staffing cuts,

slashed school programming and higher property taxes.

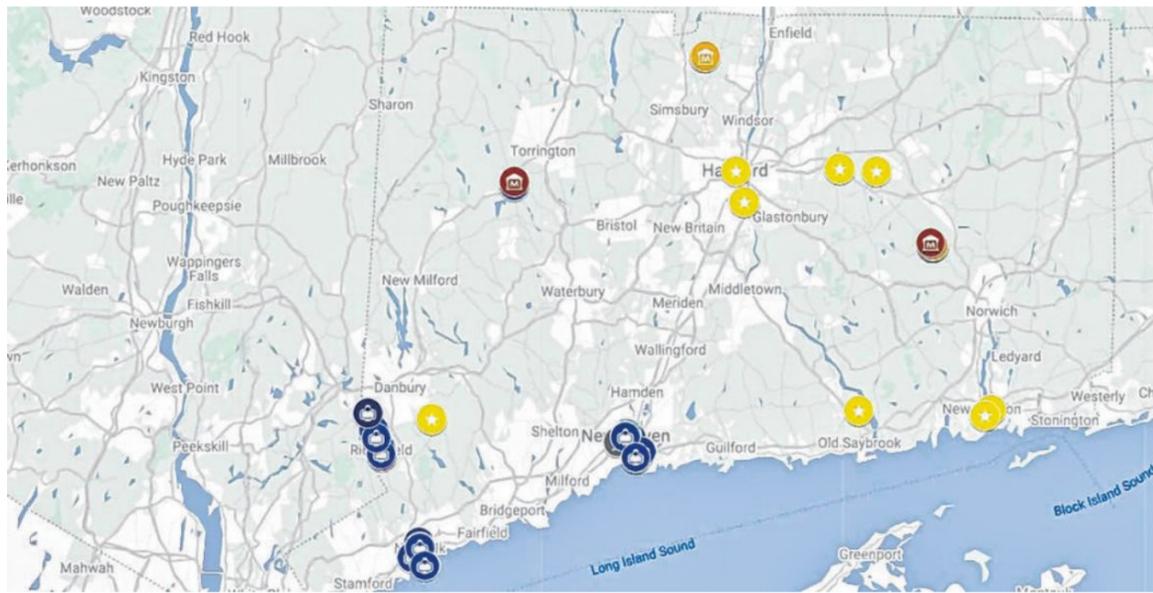
“The governor’s budget is a complete disappointment for public education,” Meriden Public Schools Superintendent Mark Benigni said. “It’s a budget that doesn’t recognize the challenges that public schools are facing, and it just shifts the

tax burden to our property owners and the challenges to our municipalities.”

#### Education Cost Sharing grant

The Education Cost Sharing grant — Connecticut’s primary form of state funding for K-12 education — has emerged at the center of conversations around education funding this

*Education continues on A6*



Images courtesy of CTVets250

CTVets250 is creating a Revolutionary War Trail across Connecticut, marking sites of battles and other important events. The project includes development of an interactive digital map.

## Battle of Norwalk site on digital historic trail

Veterans mark state’s big role in Revolutionary War

By **Jesse Leavenworth**  
STAFF WRITER

Connecticut patriots helped win the Revolutionary War, fighting, spying and provisioning George Washington’s army with every necessity from beef to musket balls forged from King George III’s melted statue.

Now Connecticut veterans are raising money to honor the Provision State’s part in the celebration of America’s 250th birthday. The central project of CTVets250, now in the fundraising stage, is a Revolutionary War Trail featuring a digital, interactive map marking battles and other sites across the state that proved vital in the fight for liberty.

The trail will be “gamified” so that people can visit and mark off each site for re-



The War Office in Lebanon, where patriot Gov. Jonathan Trumbull led planning for the colony’s defense and provisioning of the Continental Army. The building on the Lebanon Green is among sites featured on the CTVets250 Revolutionary War Trail.

wards, such as a discount at a nearby tavern or restaurant, project organizer Christine Pittsley said Thursday. A grand prize will be awarded to those who visit all the sites, said Pittsley, a Navy veteran and Connecticut historian. Organizers hope to roll out the trail platform in

May and have it fully underway by July 4, depending on successful fundraising, she said.

The Revolutionary War Trail includes:

Fort Griswold Battlefield State Park in Groton, preserved site of a fierce battle.

Fort Trumbull State Park, across the Thames River in New London, where traitor and New Haven native Benedict Arnold led British forces in burning the town to the ground in 1781.

The War Office in Lebanon, where Gov. Jonathan

*Trail continues on A4*

## Bridgeport ed board seeks \$106M spending increase

By **Jessica Simms**  
STAFF WRITER

BRIDGEPORT — The Bridgeport Board of Education approved a 2026-27 operating budget request that is asking for a \$106 million increase over the current year’s spending plan.

Originally, Interim Superintendent Royce Avery recommended a \$338.5 million 2026-27 operating budget, which would be \$44 million more than the current year’s budget of \$294.4 million.

This budget plan would not have expanded programs as “it’s about preserving services, meeting contractual obligations and addressing student needs and sustaining operations in a fiscally responsible manner,” Avery said when presenting his recommended budget.

However, at their Monday night meeting, the school board members decided to increase the budget request to about \$400 million in order to bring back staffing and programming that the district

*Bridgeport continues on A4*

## Lamont seeks expansion of state’s vaccine authority

By **Cris Villalonga-Vivoni**  
STAFF WRITER

Gov. Ned Lamont has made it clear that one of his goals during the General Assembly’s “short” session is to better protect the state from major federal changes — including when it comes to vaccines.

One of his proposals seeks to strengthen the state Department of Public Health by requiring it to rely on evidence-based science and existing public health standards to guide immunization practices, notwithstanding

*Vaccines continues on A6*

## Fairfield townhouse project shrinks, drops affordable housing

By **Andreas Yilma**  
STAFF WRITER

FAIRFIELD — A previously approved 10-unit townhouse-style development that included affordable housing is being

scaled back following opposition from nearby residents.

The Town Plan and Zoning Commission approved the 10-unit development at 168 Kings Drive in May. The application

was submitted by John Moranski, trustee for Christopher Cocco and Andrzej Piekarski, as an 8-30g development, which under state statute allows developers to bypass some local zoning regula-

tions if at least 30% of the project’s units are set aside as affordable housing.

Last month, attorneys Adam Blank and Emma Dignati, representing the applicant, presented re-

vised plans reducing the project from 10 units to six. Under the new proposal, no affordable housing units would be included.

The original approval allowed for three build-

ings: one containing four units and two with three units each. Three of the 10 units were designated as below market-rate affordable housing.

The approval came *Fairfield continues on A4*

Advice/puzzles.....**B11**  
Business.....**A10**  
Classified.....**B7**

Comics.....**B12**  
Obituaries.....**A8**  
Opinion.....**B8**

Public notices.....**B7**  
Sports.....**B1-6**  
Television.....**B10**



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Weather: Breezy; clouds and sun. High: 38. Low: 17.  
Page A12



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