

New Haven Register

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'Train wreck for public education'

State leaders warn Lamont budget leaves schools short

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 without 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 Lamont'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 disappoint-

ment 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 cen-

ter of conversations around education funding this legislative session.

The ECS grant distributes dollars to towns based on a formula designed to provide equal educational opportunity, with a basic foundation amount, and weights that give more aid for poorer districts and schools serving students with higher needs. But that grant foundation has not increased since 2013, lagging far behind inflation.

Though lawmakers have introduced legislation **Budget continues on A4**



Natasha Sokoloff/Hearst Connecticut Media
New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker speaks at the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities press conference in the Legislative Office Building in Hartford on Tuesday. He is among those calling for the state to increase its spending on schools.



Jim Michaud/Hearst Connecticut Media
SummerRanae Bennett, 6, with her mother, Ashlea Bryant, and New Haven Fire Lt. Peter Callan, is all smiles during a ceremony on Wednesday.

Firefighters, AMR medics honored for saving 6-year-old girl

By **Peter Yankowski**
STAFF WRITER

NEW HAVEN — Medics and firefighters who saved the life of 6-year-old SummerRanae Bennett after she suffered a severe asthma attack in December were honored Wednesday.

It was SummerRanae who handed each of the six New Haven firefighters and four employees of American Medi-

cal Response a blue folder containing their unit citation during a ceremony at the Yale New Haven Hospital Center for EMS.

In December, SummerRanae had a "horrible" asthma attack where she "basically passed out" and stopped breathing, her mother, Ashlea Bryant, said afterward. "I think I kind of stepped out of myself at that point, and just tried to remain calm,"

Bryant, who is a certified nursing assistant and former emergency medical responder, began giving her daughter CPR.

At first, 911 didn't answer, Bryant said, but eventually they answered and "they got to her."

"She's a fighter," Bryant said. "She loves Oreos. I think she was thinking about, you know, waking up eating some Oreos."

Bryant said her daughter was diagnosed with asthma when she was approximately 3 years old. She said they're trying different medications and hoping that moving forward they won't have to deal with anything like that ever again.

For her part, SummerRanae was asked by a member of the news media how her day was going on a scale of

Honored continues on A6

It's a yard, but is it a front yard? Wallingford's answer may change property development

By **Brian Zahn**
STAFF WRITER

WALLINGFORD — Town officials adopted a new definition of a front yard Monday after hearing from neighboring

towns and lawyers.

The Planning and Zoning Commission voted to amend its regulations, altering language so corner lots no longer have a "front yard" along more than one street where they have

frontage. Under the amended regulations, the street that bears a property's address will be used to determine what is considered a front yard, with the commission determining which yard is the front yard in

"unique circumstances."

"Over the years there's been at least seven examples of people with corner lots burdened with having two front yards," said Commission Chairman **Yard continues on A6**

WEST HAVEN

Man charged in mother's killing undergoes psychiatric evaluation

By **Ethan Fry**
STAFF WRITER

MILFORD — A defense expert has evaluated the West Haven man accused of killing and dismembering his mother last year and is preparing a psychiatric report, according to his attorney.

The defendant, 28-year-old Theodore Lloyd, appeared briefly Tuesday before Judge Kevin S. Russo in state Superior Court, where he faces charges of murder, tampering with physical evidence and attempted second-degree ar- **Lloyd continues on A4**

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Weather: Breezy with times of clouds and sun.
High: 39. Low: 14. **Page A12**

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