

Experts discuss federal budget's impact on education in state, U.S.

Senate's proposal rejects cuts pitched in plans by President Trump, House

By Natasha Sokoloff
STAFF WRITER

From federal funding freezes to diversity, equity and inclusion directives, Connecticut education officials have consistently described the Trump administration's actions surrounding K-12 education as fueling uncertainty in schools. Now, educators and of-

ficials are facing a new unknown: how the federal government will fund education across the country and in Connecticut for the next fiscal year. Discussions about the shuttering and downsizing of the U.S. Department of Education, immigration policy impacts, school choice and the federal government's

role in curriculum and instruction have all been looming across Connecticut education circles since President Donald Trump took office, but education funding at both the state and federal level has remained top of mind. With the state budget passed, eyes are now on Congress, which has a Sept. 30 deadline to pass

a fiscal year 2026 budget. The education impacts in Connecticut will depend on what ends up being signed into law, according to experts at a Sept. 12 forum hosted by the state legislature's Education Committee in Hartford. Multiple Connecticut lawmakers, including both Republicans and Democrats, asked state



Arnold Gold/Hearst Connecticut Media
Connecticut Commissioner of Education Charlene M. Russell-Tucker said any education budget reductions from the federal level certainly would be felt across Connecticut.



Dan Haar/Hearst CT Media
UConn Health Board Chairman John Driscoll in Farmington's John Dempsey Hospital emergency room critical care area in March. Driscoll has said that expansion could help the system increase its revenue.

Lawmakers question funding in bid for Waterbury Hospital

By Liese Klein
STAFF WRITER

Concerned about who will take on up to \$500 million in debt, six top Connecticut lawmakers issued a statement late Monday about UConn Health's proposed bid to buy three cash-strapped hospitals,

including one caught up in the bankruptcy of Prospect Medical Holdings. UConn Health would buy Waterbury Hospital from Prospect under a plan that could also include Day Kimball Hospital in Putnam and Bristol Hospital as part of an expanded government-funded health

system in the state. The deal for Waterbury Hospital alone is estimated to cost between \$400 million and \$500 million, according to state lawmakers who viewed documents on the proposal. Leaders of both parties in the state legislature endorsed the

Experts: Allergy seasons getting longer

Climate change could be to blame

By Eric Bedner
STAFF WRITER

As the state sees more mild winters and waits longer for the first winter frost, those with allergies are suffering from symptoms for longer periods of time, with climate change likely a contributing factor, according to experts. "Those who suffer from allergies in recent years can certainly expect that it's just a longer season," said Pamela Sherman, a registered nurse at the University of Connecticut Health's Department of Otolaryngology. Having worked in her department for about eight years, Sherman said she regularly hears from people who have said this has been a particularly bad year for their allergies. "It does seem to gradually have been getting a little worse for people every year," she said. "I think that has a lot to do with our winters being so mild." Warmer winters cause trees to start pollinating earlier, and seasonably warm weather in the fall leads to flourishing ragweed later in the year. A decade ago, pollen more commonly started in April, but now it can be as early as late February due to mild winters, Sherman said. Ragweed tends to peak around mid-September and will last until there is "a really good frost," which could not come until November, she said. "It certainly seems that climate change does factor in," Sherman said.

DARIEN

Construction of 57-unit housing complex set to begin

By Sandra Diamond Fox
STAFF WRITER

DARIEN — Shovels will soon break ground for a three-story, 57-unit housing complex, with six affordable units, at 3 Parklands Drive in Darien. "We're in preparation to, hopefully, start construction in the fall," said Craig Flaherty, an engineer for Redniss & Mead in Stamford, representing the project developer. The work is

expected to take about 22 months to complete. There will be 29 one-bedrooms and 28 two-bedrooms, Flaherty said. The plan originated about four years ago with Bob Gillon, the previous owner and developer of the property, who died in November 2023. The property was sold to a new developer, 3 Parklands, LLC of Greenwich. "The new owner is excited to

start construction this fall and bring another living option to Darien," Flaherty said. A mostly vacant office building was taken down over the summer. A pile of dirt now sits on the site. The developer has been working with the Darien Land Trust and Darien's Parks & Recreation Department on the development's new entrance into Selleck's Woods, a 28-acre nature preserve adjacent to the

site, where 11 parking spaces will be built, he said. This entrance will include a 15-foot-by-15-foot raised boardwalk with built-in benches, he said. It will be accessible. The owner is also working with Darien's fire marshal to get rid of a paved driveway around the east side of the building, he said. "Because of this ... paved surfaces are reduced and landscaped coverage increases," he

said. The new owner has also updated the architecture of the building, Flaherty said about the project, which was discussed most recently at the Sept. 2 Planning & Zoning Commission meeting. "We went from a traditional architecture to a little more contemporary architecture," he said, adding, "the shape of the building is largely the same."

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