



**Ned Lamont**  
GOVERNOR  
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

June 2, 2020

Barbara Brittingham, Ph.D.  
President, New England Commission of Higher Education  
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100  
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

Dear Dr. Brittingham and Members of the New England Commission of Higher Education,

I write to express my strong support for the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities' (CSCU) plan to merge the state's 12 community colleges into a single accredited institution known as the Connecticut State Community College. Recognizing that, by all key performance indicators, student success measures at the community colleges are unsatisfactory while the financial condition of the system continues to deteriorate, the Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) has undertaken an ambitious set of reforms known as Students First. Aimed at improving student outcomes and putting the new college on a path to fiscal sustainability, Students First eliminates duplicative functions through shared services while investing in the supports necessary for students to succeed.

With significant budgetary challenges to higher education institutions and systems in Connecticut and around the country, which will only be compounded by Covid-19, innovative solutions like Students First are necessary to ensure continued access to our community colleges.

Indeed – particularly on the shared services front – Students First is consistent with my administration's wider efforts to streamline the ways in which we deliver government services. I am also optimistic that the regional approach will find efficiencies in the college's operations while leveraging resources and expertise across campuses to respond to the individual workforce needs of businesses throughout the state.

The information contained in the report CSCU submits today is a realistic roadmap of the remaining work necessary before the launch of Connecticut State Community College in 2023. While much remains to be done, Students First is the only viable path forward for Connecticut's community colleges. I applaud President Ojakian, Chair Fleury, and the BOR for this thoughtful and innovative approach, and I urge the Commission's support.

Sincerely,

Ned Lamont  
Governor