

Malloy Pitches Universal Pre-K

by Christine Stuart | Jun 28, 2010 3:59pm

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Christine Stuart photo

Dan Malloy and his running mate Nancy Wyman

“I want to be measured by the success of making early childhood education available to all the children in the state of Connecticut who could not otherwise afford it,” Dan Malloy, one of two Democrats running for governor, said Monday.

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“It’s something I know, it’s something I know makes a difference, it’s something I know how to do, it’s actually something I’ve done,” Malloy said referring his experience mayor of Stamford.

The proposal for a statewide universal pre-Kindergarten program was part of Malloy's pitch to reform Connecticut's education system.

The universal pre-Kindergarten system would be administered like the School Readiness program, where parents pay daycare centers based on a sliding income scale. Admittedly the program will cost the state money to implement and Malloy said he hasn't priced it out on a statewide basis.

"There is no doubt that this will cost money," Malloy said. But he concluded that it's a relatively cost effective way to lower the achievement gap in the state of Connecticut.

Another part of his [plan](#) included changes to how education is paid for by the taxpayers.

"I am embarrassed that during the last 16 years Connecticut's share of state dollars flowing to local boards of education to support education went from being on par with the national average to being 17 percent below it," Malloy said.

"This problem was ignored in the good times. It should not be ignored in the bad times," Malloy said.

In order to do this he proposed limiting a school districts administrative costs and broadening the tax base that supports education. He said the over reliance on local property taxes has to end. He said he's an advocate for local option hotel taxes and possibly using the state's sales tax to help support education.

He said the state should look at funding 50 percent of the education costs statewide. In order to do that Malloy said "we're going to have to find savings in other parts of the budget, and we're going to have to tackle tax reform."

Restoring education funding will be among the highest priorities of a Malloy administration and the "lynchpin" to reforming the property tax system. And, if elected, he'll face quite a challenge since a portion of the Education Cost Sharing grant was supplanted with federal stimulus dollars.

"It is my intention to find a way to balance the state's budget and hold local communities harmless with respect to that reduction," Malloy said.

Malloy squares off against Greenwich businessman Ned Lamont in the Aug. 10 primary. Lamont has been endorsed by the [largest teachers union in the state](#).

Lamont's campaign declined to comment on Malloy's education plan.

Malloy also called for testing high school juniors to make sure they don't waste their students loans or scholarships on remedial classes when they enter college.

"We have not costed this out. It is meant to be a document that talks about our vision and our willingness to extend ourselves in support of that vision," Malloy said of all the education proposals included in his plan.

The education proposal is the last in a series of public policy proposals Malloy laid out over the past month as part of his campaign.

"We're spending a lot of money in the state of Connecticut, we're not necessarily spending it wisely," Malloy concluded.