



January 30, 2025

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal, US Senator for CT

The Honorable Christopher S. Murphy, US Senator for CT

The Honorable Representative John B. Larson,
1st District of CT

The Honorable Representative Joe Courtney,
2nd District of CT

The Honorable Representative Rosa DeLauro,
3rd District of CT

The Honorable Representative Jim Himes,
4th District of CT

The Honorable Representative Jahana Hayes,
5th District of CT

Dear Connecticut United States Senators and Representatives—

The Ellington Board of Education writes to express our concerns regarding the health and well-being of Connecticut's children, particularly concerning the food served—possibly containing harmful chemicals or being ultra-processed—through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). We seek your assistance in addressing the impact of these health issues on students' academic and social development.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that more than 40% of school-aged children have at least one chronic illness. These chemicals may have detrimental effects on children's health, contributing to chronic illnesses such as obesity, diabetes, and possibly, behavioral disorders. The Ellington Board of Education members are not experts in nutrition and children's health. Yet, we collectively believe that fresh, chemical-free food that is not ultra-processed is essential to optimize academic learning and social development.

On January 15, 2025, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) banned red-colored dye in food (FD&C Red No. 3). In Ellington, we've endorsed the "[Ellington Unplugged](#)" initiative, which promotes a healthier lifestyle amongst staff and students. One tenet, '*Cook From Scratch*,' encourages the preparation of meals with fresh, chemical-free ingredients to foster better health outcomes.

Board's Recommendations

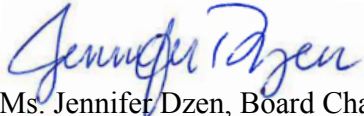
The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) working in concert with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

- 1) Explore regulatory reforms to simplify compliance for schools and suppliers, potentially reducing costs and streamlining testing for contaminants like glyphosate, pesticides, heavy metals, and veterinary hormones, as well as for ultra-processed foods.
- 2) Reevaluate federal subsidies to ensure they contribute to providing affordable, healthier school lunches.

We respectfully request you work with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Health and Human Services, to explore the concerns we have outlined in this letter.

Questions may be directed to Dr. Scott Nicol, Superintendent for the Ellington Public Schools at snicol@ellingtonschools.net and direct messaging via X [@SuperNicol](#).

Sincerely,



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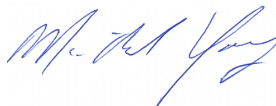
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ELLINGTON UNPLUGGED

Unplug to Connect: *A Healthy Balanced Life*

1 24 EVERY 24
Every 24 hours for at least 24 minutes, have an uninterrupted conversation with those close to you. Developing meaningful relationships that deepen over decades will enhance your life.

Ellington Unplugged is a series of concepts for the Ellington Family - students, staff, family members, and community to consider that may enrich one's life. To unplug is to practice moderation, exercise conscious choice, and help achieve life balance.

'Unplugged' concepts may drive school policy, curriculum, and student activities. Yet, in a family-first town such as Ellington, CT, these concepts have the potential to bring families closer together allowing us to connect by unplugging.

2 LET NATURE NURTURE
Quiet your mind by spending time in nature walking, swimming, reading a book, or simply sitting still. You can be healthier by taking in all of nature's beauty.

3 COOK FROM SCRATCH
Spend time cooking a meal with fresh food, free of chemicals. Enjoy eating together with family or friends free from distractions.

4 PHONE DOWN, EYES UP, HEART OPEN*
Be present and make thoughtful choices on how you spend your time. Media and video games all have their place, however a constant stream of virtual violence and over-sexualization will warp reality and relationships.

*from Peter Anspach, Musician for the band, Goose

5 BE COMPLETELY YOU
Social media gives us a window into the lives of others but often presents an unattainable standard. Take action in your own life, and avoid comparing or focusing on how many "likes" others accumulate.

6 CREATE MORE, CONSUME LESS
Paint, write, invent...solve a problem, play a board game, or build something. Create with your mind and body instead of constantly consuming or relying on artificial intelligence.

7 LIVE WITH HONOR
By following the *Seeds of Civility* you will live with honor, and unplugging will become increasingly effortless, resulting in a life's journey in service to others and filled with love.

