

Connecticut spends approximately \$3 billion annually on special education services for students.<sup>1</sup> Municipalities are largely required to financially support the expenses necessary to provide special education services for their students with Individualized Education Programs. The Excess Cost grant is Connecticut's method for sharing in the costs associated with educating students with extraordinary special education needs.

Each school district submits its statement of Excess Cost expenditures for reimbursement to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) by December 1st each year. Districts submit their expenditures for reimbursement again by March 1st for expenses for additional students and costs not included in their December filing.

The first filing of Excess Cost expenses provides an opportunity to analyze the grant's current funding level in comparison to the growing needs of students and the increasing costs of providing special education services.

### What is the Excess Cost Grant?

The Excess Cost grant is a three-tiered reimbursement program provided by the State of Connecticut to school districts to assist them in paying for special education expenses for students with extraordinary needs that require high-cost, and often more intensive, services. Local and regional school districts are eligible for partial reimbursement from the State for students who require special education services that cumulatively exceed the school district's "basic contribution," or the portion of a student's education that the school district is responsible for.

The basic contribution is all costs up to 4.5 times the district's average expenditure per student for the prior year.<sup>2</sup> The Excess Cost grant also reimburses school districts for students placed by state agencies.<sup>3</sup> In these cases, the basic contribution is 100% of the school district's net current expenditure per student for the prior year.<sup>4</sup>

In recent years, the funding appropriated by the State to the Excess Cost grant has not kept pace with growing reimbursement requests. This has resulted in the Excess Cost grant being chronically underfunded. Historical underfunding, coupled with inflation-driven rising costs, has added an increased burden on school districts educating students with extraordinary needs and requiring high-cost special education services.

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<sup>1</sup> Connecticut State Department of Education. (n.d.). EdSight: Special Education Expenditures. Retrieved from <https://public-edsight.ct.gov/overview/per-pupil-expenditures-by-function---district/special-education-expenditures>.

<sup>2</sup> Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 165, §§ 10-76g(a)-76g(b).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 165, § 10-76d(e).

## Key Findings from December 1, 2025 Excess Cost Grant Filings<sup>5</sup>

- **For the 2025-26 school year, districts' Excess Cost grant reimbursement requests have increased over the previous year.**
  - Total Excess Cost grant reimbursement requests from districts have grown from \$299,123,458 last year (2024-25 school year) to \$311,912,988 — an increase of approximately \$12.8 million (4.3%).
  - While this growth rate is less than historical trends, the March 1st filing (second of the school year) from school districts is expected to contain further increases in reimbursement requests.
- **The Excess Cost grant remains underfunded.**
  - Since its inception, the Excess Cost grant has failed to fully reimburse districts' requests.
  - An appropriation increase of approximately \$55.6 million is required to fully fund the Excess Cost grant to its statutory minimum tiers.
  - Under the grant's current tiered system, districts should be reimbursed for between 85% and 91% of their total eligible costs. However, due to the underfunding of the Excess Cost grant, districts are projected to be reimbursed for between 70.8% and 75.8% of their eligible costs, far beneath the statutory tiers.
- **The underfunding of the Excess Cost grant puts additional pressure on already limited district budgets.**
  - Special education spending continues to grow faster than general education budgets, shifting resources toward mandated services while leaving fewer dollars for other district needs.

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<sup>5</sup> For more detailed information on the Excess Cost grant, please visit <https://schoolstatefinance.org/hubfs/Reports/Excess%20Cost%20Grant%20FAQs.pdf>.

## Appendix

The table below provides the estimated Excess Cost grant funding (Column 2) and reimbursement requests (Column 1) for each school district for the 2025-26 school year. The table also provides the estimated Excess Cost grant for each district if the grant was funded according to its statutory tiers (Column 3), as well as the shortfall between each district's actual estimated grant and what it should receive under the grant's tiered system (Column 4).

**Table 1: Projected 2025-26 Excess Cost Grants Based on December 1st Filing**

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
District	Total Excess Cost Reimbursement Request	Est. Actual Excess Cost Grant	Est. Tiered Excess Cost Grant	Shortfall Between Tiered Grant and Actual Grant (Column 3 - Column 2)
Ansonia	\$3,143,970	\$2,286,326	\$2,861,013	\$574,687
Ashford	\$224,187	\$163,032	\$204,010	\$40,978
Avon	\$2,016,146	\$1,369,490	\$1,713,724	\$344,234
Barkhamsted	\$51,818	\$36,441	\$45,600	\$9,159
Berlin	\$1,235,297	\$868,704	\$1,087,061	\$218,357
Bethany	-	-	-	-
Bethel	\$2,106,469	\$1,481,343	\$1,853,693	\$372,350
Bloomfield	\$1,128,711	\$793,749	\$993,266	\$199,517
Bolton	\$56,061	\$39,423	\$49,334	\$9,911
Bozrah	\$24,039	\$16,905	\$21,154	\$4,249
Branford	\$1,583,443	\$1,075,573	\$1,345,927	\$270,354
Bridgeport	\$13,524,300	\$9,834,999	\$12,307,113	\$2,472,114
Bristol	\$10,358,379	\$7,532,711	\$9,426,125	\$1,893,414
Brookfield	\$1,886,742	\$1,281,593	\$1,603,731	\$322,138
Brooklyn	\$692,338	\$503,474	\$630,028	\$126,554
Canterbury	\$155,934	\$113,397	\$141,900	\$28,503
Canton	\$1,081,549	\$760,584	\$951,763	\$191,179
Chaplin	-	-	-	-
Cheshire	\$1,707,806	\$1,200,990	\$1,502,869	\$301,879
Chester	\$106,446	\$74,858	\$93,672	\$18,814
Clinton	\$849,956	\$597,720	\$747,961	\$150,241
Colchester	\$1,168,985	\$850,097	\$1,063,776	\$213,679
Columbia	\$56,442	\$39,691	\$49,669	\$9,978
Coventry	\$589,537	\$414,584	\$518,793	\$104,209
Cromwell	\$1,673,736	\$1,177,032	\$1,472,888	\$295,856

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District	Total Excess Cost Reimbursement Request	Est. Actual Excess Cost Grant	Est. Tiered Excess Cost Grant	Shortfall Between Tiered Grant and Actual Grant (Column 3 - Column 2)
Danbury	\$2,870,628	\$2,087,548	\$2,612,271	\$524,723
Darien	\$3,500,781	\$2,377,946	\$2,975,664	\$597,718
Deep River	-	-	-	-
Derby	\$948,487	\$689,748	\$863,123	\$173,375
East Granby	\$649,279	\$456,597	\$571,366	\$114,769
East Haddam	\$620,202	\$436,148	\$545,778	\$109,630
East Hampton	\$956,971	\$672,976	\$842,134	\$169,158
East Hartford	\$2,161,391	\$1,571,784	\$1,966,866	\$395,082
East Haven	\$2,764,662	\$2,010,487	\$2,515,842	\$505,355
East Lyme	\$955,995	\$672,290	\$841,276	\$168,986
East Windsor	\$479,557	\$337,241	\$422,010	\$84,769
Easton	\$25,933	\$17,614	\$22,043	\$4,429
Ellington	\$972,221	\$683,700	\$855,554	\$171,854
Enfield	\$2,746,612	\$1,997,362	\$2,499,417	\$502,055
Essex	\$52,685	\$35,786	\$44,782	\$8,996
Fairfield	\$3,679,942	\$2,499,644	\$3,127,951	\$628,307
Farmington	\$2,098,317	\$1,425,305	\$1,783,569	\$358,264
Franklin	\$86,373	\$60,739	\$76,008	\$15,269
Glastonbury	\$3,545,408	\$2,408,260	\$3,013,597	\$605,337
Granby	\$1,004,886	\$706,672	\$884,300	\$177,628
Greenwich	\$2,436,613	\$1,655,097	\$2,071,121	\$416,024
Griswold	\$1,814,898	\$1,319,811	\$1,651,557	\$331,746
Groton	\$1,315,347	\$924,999	\$1,157,505	\$232,506
Guilford	\$1,096,494	\$744,807	\$932,020	\$187,213
Hamden	\$6,811,888	\$4,953,669	\$6,198,818	\$1,245,149
Hartford	\$17,130,049	\$12,457,135	\$15,588,345	\$3,131,210
Hartland	\$40,312	\$28,350	\$35,475	\$7,125
Hebron	\$216,062	\$151,942	\$190,135	\$38,193
Killingly	\$1,523,291	\$1,107,753	\$1,386,195	\$278,442
Lebanon	\$411,411	\$289,320	\$362,042	\$72,722
Ledyard	\$791,691	\$575,725	\$720,439	\$144,714
Lisbon	\$575,241	\$418,321	\$523,469	\$105,148
Madison	\$1,223,327	\$830,959	\$1,039,828	\$208,869
Manchester	\$5,780,310	\$4,203,496	\$5,260,082	\$1,056,586

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District	Total Excess Cost Reimbursement Request	Est. Actual Excess Cost Grant	Est. Tiered Excess Cost Grant	Shortfall Between Tiered Grant and Actual Grant (Column 3 - Column 2)
Mansfield	\$91,294	\$66,391	\$83,078	\$16,687
Meriden	\$7,904,889	\$5,748,511	\$7,193,449	\$1,444,938
Middletown	\$2,757,472	\$2,005,260	\$2,509,300	\$504,040
Milford	\$2,897,859	\$1,968,404	\$2,463,180	\$494,776
Monroe	\$2,013,055	\$1,367,391	\$1,711,097	\$343,706
Montville	\$1,285,270	\$934,660	\$1,169,596	\$234,936
Naugatuck	\$3,389,072	\$2,464,566	\$3,084,056	\$619,490
New Britain	\$17,904,425	\$13,020,269	\$16,293,027	\$3,272,758
New Canaan	\$1,005,084	\$682,714	\$854,321	\$171,607
New Fairfield	\$1,978,782	\$1,344,112	\$1,681,965	\$337,853
New Hartford	\$95,169	\$66,926	\$83,749	\$16,823
New Haven	\$13,117,945	\$9,539,494	\$11,937,330	\$2,397,836
New London	\$1,440,433	\$1,047,498	\$1,310,794	\$263,296
New Milford	\$3,054,362	\$2,147,935	\$2,687,839	\$539,904
Newington	\$2,432,198	\$1,710,408	\$2,140,334	\$429,926
Newtown	\$2,938,799	\$1,996,214	\$2,497,979	\$501,765
Norfolk	-	-	-	-
North Branford	\$643,507	\$452,537	\$566,286	\$113,749
North Haven	\$1,255,669	\$852,928	\$1,067,319	\$214,391
North Stonington	\$43,859	\$30,844	\$38,596	\$7,752
Norwalk	\$7,699,148	\$5,229,735	\$6,544,276	\$1,314,541
Norwich	\$3,519,284	\$2,559,256	\$3,202,548	\$643,292
Old Saybrook	\$153,219	\$104,077	\$130,236	\$26,159
Orange	\$295,922	\$201,009	\$251,534	\$50,525
Oxford	\$1,081,259	\$734,458	\$919,070	\$184,612
Plainfield	\$609,006	\$442,874	\$554,195	\$111,321
Plainville	\$1,104,873	\$803,474	\$1,005,434	\$201,960
Plymouth	\$754,819	\$548,912	\$686,885	\$137,973
Pomfret	\$637,204	\$448,106	\$560,740	\$112,634
Portland	\$695,069	\$505,460	\$632,513	\$127,053
Preston	\$268,085	\$188,527	\$235,915	\$47,388
Putnam	\$1,198,953	\$871,891	\$1,091,047	\$219,156
Redding	\$336,950	\$228,877	\$286,408	\$57,531
Region #1	\$260,910	\$177,228	\$221,774	\$44,546

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Region #4	\$289,788	\$196,843	\$246,320	\$49,477
Region #5	\$1,402,461	\$952,637	\$1,192,092	\$239,455
Region #7	\$488,618	\$343,614	\$429,984	\$86,370
Region #8	\$568,657	\$399,900	\$500,418	\$100,518
Region #9	\$992,219	\$673,975	\$843,386	\$169,411
Region #10	\$1,726,178	\$1,213,910	\$1,519,037	\$305,127
Region #11	\$100,564	\$73,131	\$91,513	\$18,382
Region #12	\$6,018	\$3,083	\$5,115	\$2,032
Region #13	\$929,300	\$653,517	\$817,784	\$164,267
Region #14	\$678,759	\$461,055	\$576,945	\$115,890
Region #15	\$3,230,565	\$2,194,399	\$2,745,980	\$551,581
Region #16	\$950,658	\$668,536	\$836,579	\$168,043
Region #17	\$1,289,579	\$875,962	\$1,096,142	\$220,180
Region #18	\$493,200	\$335,012	\$419,220	\$84,208
Region #19	\$158,966	\$115,601	\$144,659	\$29,058
Region #20	\$190,022	\$129,074	\$161,519	\$32,445
Ridgefield	\$1,794,897	\$1,219,204	\$1,525,662	\$306,458
Rocky Hill	\$1,884,172	\$1,325,016	\$1,658,071	\$333,055
Salem	\$75,508	\$53,100	\$66,447	\$13,347
Salisbury	\$10,292	\$6,992	\$8,748	\$1,756
Seymour	\$1,342,695	\$976,421	\$1,221,852	\$245,431
Shelton	\$3,068,737	\$2,158,045	\$2,700,489	\$542,444
Sherman	\$116,518	\$79,145	\$99,040	\$19,895
Simsbury	\$3,560,128	\$2,418,259	\$3,026,109	\$607,850
Somers	\$451,235	\$328,142	\$410,624	\$82,482
South Windsor	\$2,284,810	\$1,551,984	\$1,942,089	\$390,105
Southington	\$4,745,277	\$3,337,047	\$4,175,844	\$838,797
Sprague	\$394,683	\$287,018	\$359,162	\$72,144
Stafford	\$661,491	\$481,042	\$601,957	\$120,915
Stamford	\$10,940,068	\$7,431,168	\$9,299,058	\$1,867,890
Sterling	\$425,299	\$309,282	\$387,022	\$77,740
Stonington	\$476,468	\$323,646	\$404,998	\$81,352
Stratford	\$4,875,291	\$3,428,478	\$4,290,256	\$861,778
Suffield	\$2,062,599	\$1,450,493	\$1,815,087	\$364,594

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Thomaston	\$541,623	\$393,874	\$492,877	\$99,003
Thompson	\$135,470	\$98,516	\$123,278	\$24,762
Tolland	\$1,570,299	\$1,104,290	\$1,381,863	\$277,573
Torrington	\$4,254,074	\$3,093,603	\$3,871,207	\$777,604
Trumbull	\$3,133,578	\$2,203,644	\$2,757,549	\$553,905
Vernon	\$1,679,405	\$1,221,280	\$1,528,259	\$306,979
Voluntown	\$16,160	\$11,753	\$14,706	\$2,953
Wallingford	\$3,045,537	\$2,141,731	\$2,680,073	\$538,342
Waterbury	\$6,660,471	\$4,843,558	\$6,061,029	\$1,217,471
Waterford	\$1,219,681	\$828,483	\$1,036,729	\$208,246
Watertown	\$2,190,590	\$1,593,018	\$1,993,437	\$400,419
West Hartford	\$9,653,040	\$6,556,940	\$8,205,084	\$1,648,144
West Haven	\$7,744,221	\$5,631,671	\$7,047,241	\$1,415,570
Westbrook	\$53,715	\$36,487	\$45,658	\$9,171
Weston	\$854,373	\$580,342	\$726,217	\$145,875
Westport	\$1,531,975	\$1,040,612	\$1,302,179	\$261,567
Wethersfield	\$2,893,421	\$2,034,755	\$2,546,210	\$511,455
Willington	\$497,682	\$361,920	\$452,891	\$90,971
Wilton	\$2,452,545	\$1,665,919	\$2,084,663	\$418,744
Winchester	\$1,686,309	\$1,226,299	\$1,534,541	\$308,242
Windham	\$1,268,416	\$922,406	\$1,154,259	\$231,853
Windsor	\$1,568,362	\$1,102,928	\$1,380,159	\$277,231
Windsor Locks	\$662,440	\$465,851	\$582,947	\$117,096
Wolcott	\$1,683,848	\$1,224,511	\$1,532,302	\$307,791
Woodbridge	\$207,824	\$141,167	\$176,650	\$35,483
Woodstock	\$468,810	\$329,683	\$412,553	\$82,870