Understanding the ECS Formula

The Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula was designed as a way for the State of Connecticut to figure out how to equitably distribute state education funding to local public school districts.

First, the formula figures out how much it would cost to educate each student in the district.

Here's how it's calculated:

Foundation Amount + Student need weights

TOTAL AMOUNT OF $$ NEEDED TO EDUCATE STUDENTS IN THE DISTRICT

Let's break this down.

$11,525 The Foundation Amount:
a.k.a. the estimated cost to educate the average student

This is the cost we start off with for every student.
However, there are some students with additional learning needs, or who are in different learning environments.

Additional Learning Needs

For students who have additional learning needs, we add a little more to the Foundation Amount to make sure they're getting the education they need.

$2,881 for students who are Multilingual Learners

$3,457 for students who are Economically Disadvantaged

$1,729 for students living in Concentrated Poverty

*If a student has multiple learning needs, all of their needs are considered in the final calculation
**these numbers are calculated using the following weighted percentages: ML: 25%; Econ. Disadv. 30%, Conc. Pov: 15%

After figuring out how much it will cost to educate all the students in the district, the formula calculates how much the district's town can afford to pay. This is called the Base Aid Ratio.

70% based on total amount of taxable property/person

30% based on median household income

Why do we have a Base Aid Ratio?

The State uses the Base Aid Ratio as a way to help equitably distribute state funding across districts. If a town has a lot of taxable property and a higher median household income, it has the ability to fund its schools better than towns that have less taxable property and a lower median household income.

Now that we know how much it's going to cost and how much of this cost the district's town could manage to pay, we know how much state aid the district needs in order to fund its students.

This aid will be phased in for districts that need more than they get right now, and phased out for districts that need less than they get right now.

Let's Do Some Math!

There are 300 students in the Constitution School District. 55 of them are multilingual learners and 115 of them are economically disadvantaged. How much would it cost the district to educate them?

Step 1: Foundation Amount

___300___ x $11,525 = $___3,457,000___

Step 2: Student Need Amount

$158,455 $397,555 $0
(___55___ x $2,881) + (___115___ x $3,457) + (___0___ x $1,729)

= $___556,010___

Step 3: Add Foundation & Student Need

$___3,457,000___ + $___556,010___ = ___4,013,010___

The Constitution District can afford to pay 47% of this cost. How much state aid will they need?

$1,886,114.70

$___4,013,010___ – ($___4,013,010___ x 0.47)= $___2,126,895.30___

Of course, it's a little more complicated when there are thousands of students in a district.
But this basic calculation process is the same

THE ECS FORMULA + EQUITY

The ECS Formula is not perfect, nor does it address every aspect of inequity present in Connecticut's public schools. While its creation in 2017 was a huge step forward to creating a more equitable education system, more work still remains to ensure all students have the resources they need to succeed.