

Why are Rising Costs Impacting School Districts?

- As districts face increasing student needs, **their purchasing power has eroded** due to inflation
- The foundation amount (\$11,525 per student) for the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula has **not been adjusted since 2013**
- Since then, **inflation has increased costs by approximately 39%**
- Rising costs are increasingly driving budget decisions that directly **affect students' classroom experiences and educators' working conditions**
- Our interviews with district superintendents and CFOs across Connecticut revealed **consistent cost pressures and common budget cuts**

Where are Districts Experiencing Rising Costs?

- **Staffing and wages:** Increased salary pressures for certified staff and difficulty retaining hourly employees as private-sector wages rise
- **Transportation:** Higher bus costs driven by wages, fuel, insurance, and limited competition
- **Health insurance:** Rising claims and prescription drug costs creating volatile budget growth
- **Facilities and operations:** Increased utility costs, rising prices for supplies and equipment, and significantly higher construction and maintenance expenses

Where are Districts Cutting and How are Cuts Affecting Students and Teachers?

- **Hiring freezes and unfilled teaching and administrator vacancies** → Larger class sizes, reduced instructional support, increased workload for remaining staff
- **Cuts in support staff** → Fewer adults to support student behavior and learning needs
- **Elimination of electives, after-school programs, instructional supplies, and summer learning** → Fewer enrichment opportunities, reduced student engagement, and inequitable access across districts
- **Reduction of advanced course offerings, class sections, and specialists** → Fewer college- and career-readiness opportunities and limited access to art, music, world languages, literacy support, and social-emotional services
- **Deferred maintenance and delayed capital projects** → Deteriorating buildings, safety concerns, and higher long-term repair costs
- **Consolidated bus routes and fewer field trips** → Longer student commutes and reduced access to experiential learning

What Do Districts Need from the State?

- With the phase-in of the ECS formula complete, district leaders consistently emphasized the need for an **annual inflation adjustment to the ECS formula**
- Without an inflation adjustment, districts will **continue to lose purchasing power each year**
- An inflation-adjusted ECS foundation — aligned with the state's spending cap growth — would **provide predictable funding to stabilize staffing, protect core and enrichment programs, and support long-term planning**
- Annually adjusting the ECS formula's foundation for inflation, would **ensure inflation does not continue to undermine classroom learning conditions**