

District Reference Groups (DRGs)

Key Findings

- **Mismatch between student needs and funding:** Districts serving students with greater learning needs tend to spend less per student, resulting in inadequate resources to meet student needs.
- **Student Performance:** The mismatch between student needs and funding negatively impacts student performance.
- **Segregation:** Despite an almost equal number of white and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) students throughout the state, school districts do not reflect this diversity, and students of color are disproportionately higher-need and lower-resourced.

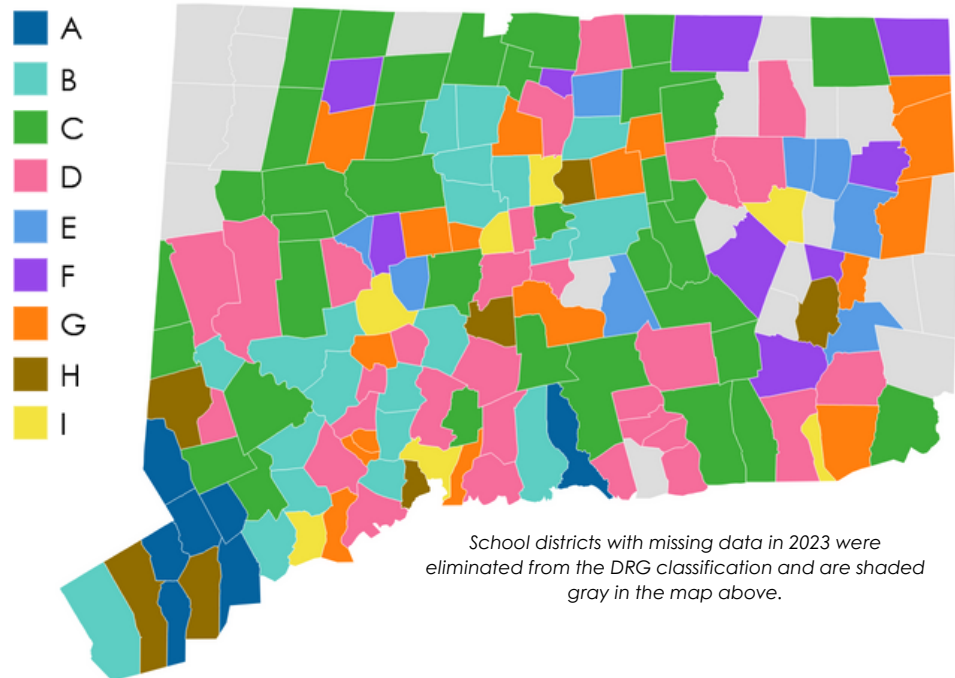
SCHOOL + STATE
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District Reference Groups (DRGs) are a classification system that groups local and regional public school districts together based on the similar socioeconomic characteristics and status of their students.

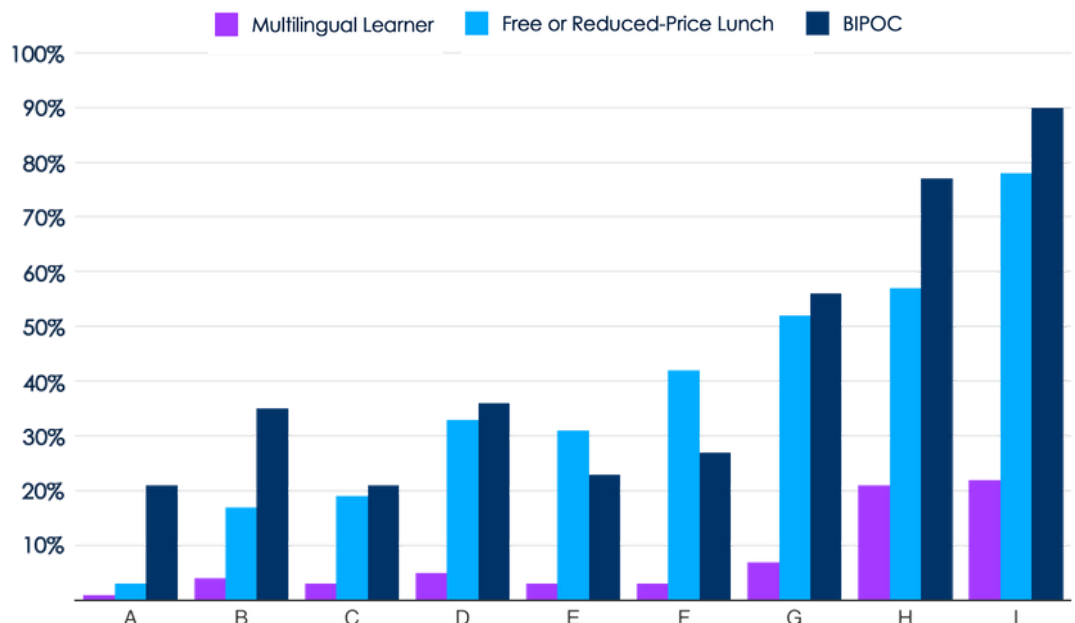
While useful for comparing districts and providing helpful context for district leaders and policymakers when they're making resource decisions, **the DRGs are not intended for ranking, evaluating, or indicating school quality.**

Developed by the Connecticut State Department of Education, the DRGs have not been officially updated since they were first released in 2006. **Although not for official use, the School and State Finance Project has replicated the DRGs using updated data and the same methodology and variables as the original DRGs.**

2023 Connecticut Districts by DRG



Student Demographics by DRG



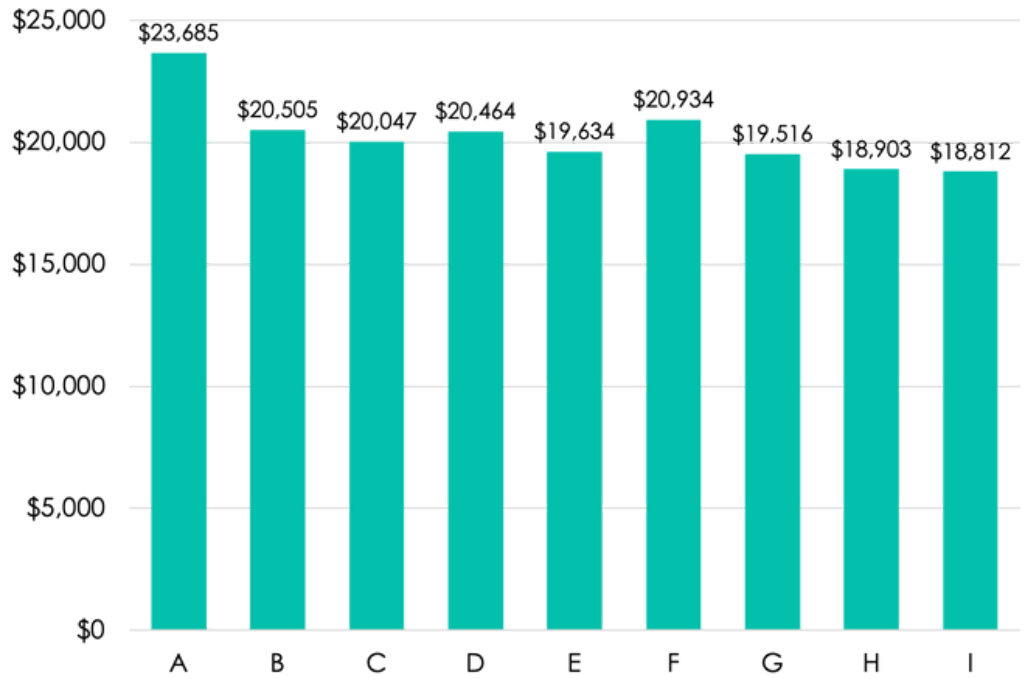
DRG "I" has the highest percentages of students who need greater resources, but spends the least per student.

The mismatch between district spending and student needs directly impacts student performance.

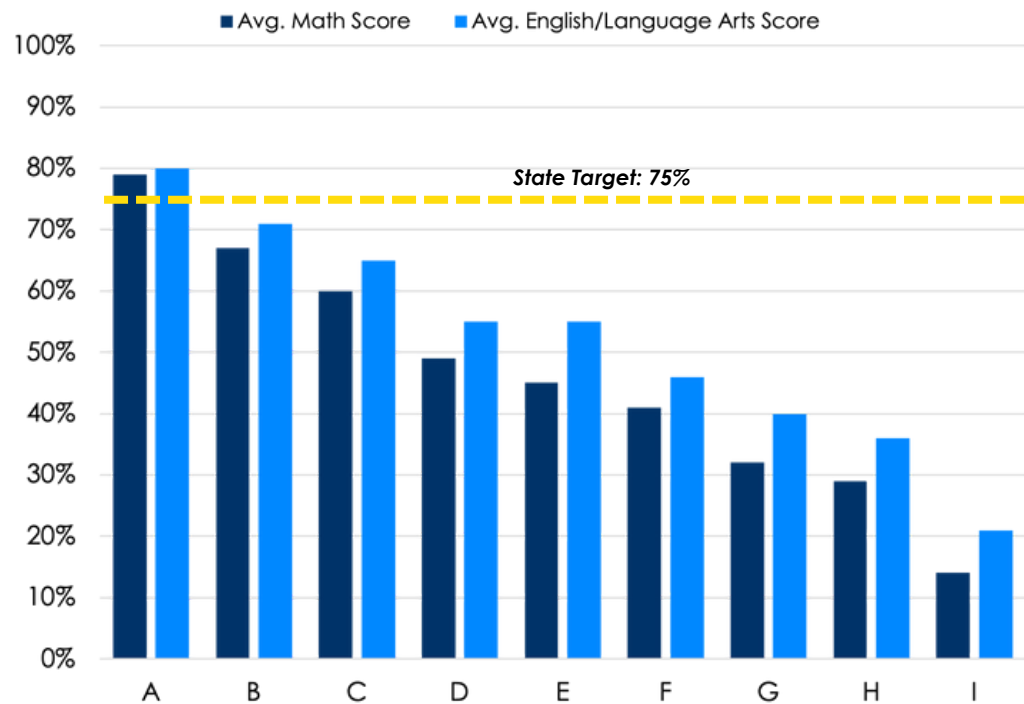
Variables Used to Determine the DRGs:

Income
Education
Occupation
Family Structure
Poverty
Home Language
District Enrollment

Per-Student Spending by DRG



Avg. Student Performance by DRG



Based on performance on standardized tests including the SBAC, CT Alternate Assessment, and SAT.

It's important to note, DRGs are only part of the picture in understanding education in Connecticut and must be complemented with an understanding of property taxes, segregation, resources, staffing, and outcomes.

To learn more about the DRGs, visit our website or scan the QR code on this page.



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