

SCHOOL + STATE
FINANCE PROJECT

www.schoolstatefinance.org

SCHOOL FINANCE 101

How Connecticut Funds
Education

Colchester Edition

Contact Us

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To learn more about the School and State Finance Project, visit us at:

www.schoolstatefinance.org

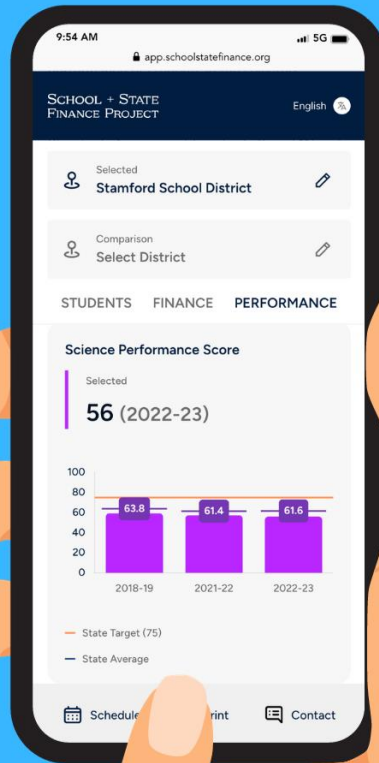
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 app.schoolstatefinance.org



 **student performance**

 **school finance**

 **demographics**

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About Us



Statewide
organization
founded in 2015



Nonprofit,
nonpartisan policy
organization



Trusted resource that
works **collaboratively**
with policymakers,
school district
officials, community
leaders, and all
individuals



Develops data-
driven solutions to
ensure **ALL public
school** students
receive **equitable
education funding**
that supports their
learning needs

Our Priorities



Students



Schools



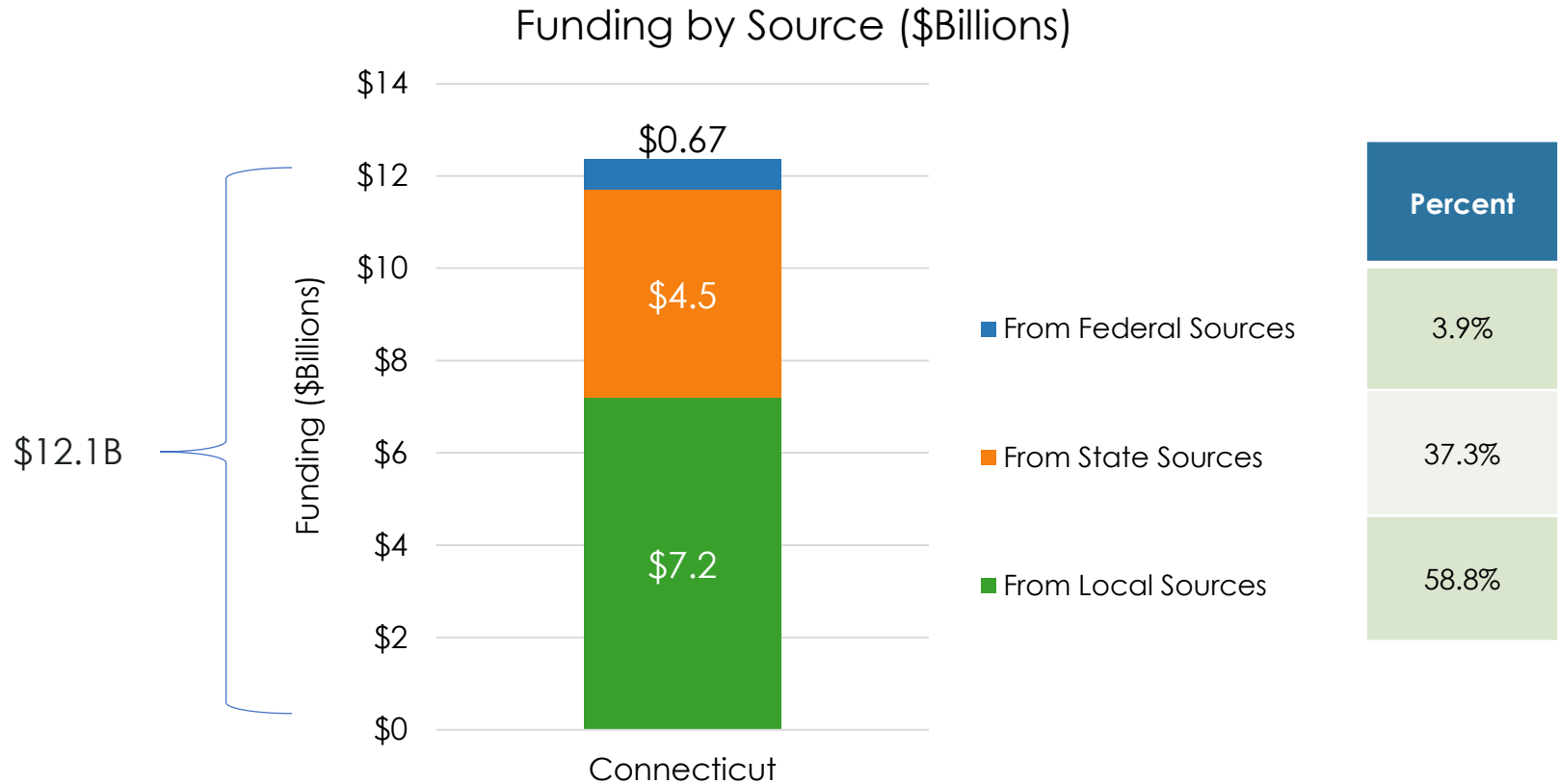
Communities

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OVERVIEW

What are the funding sources for K-12 education in Connecticut?

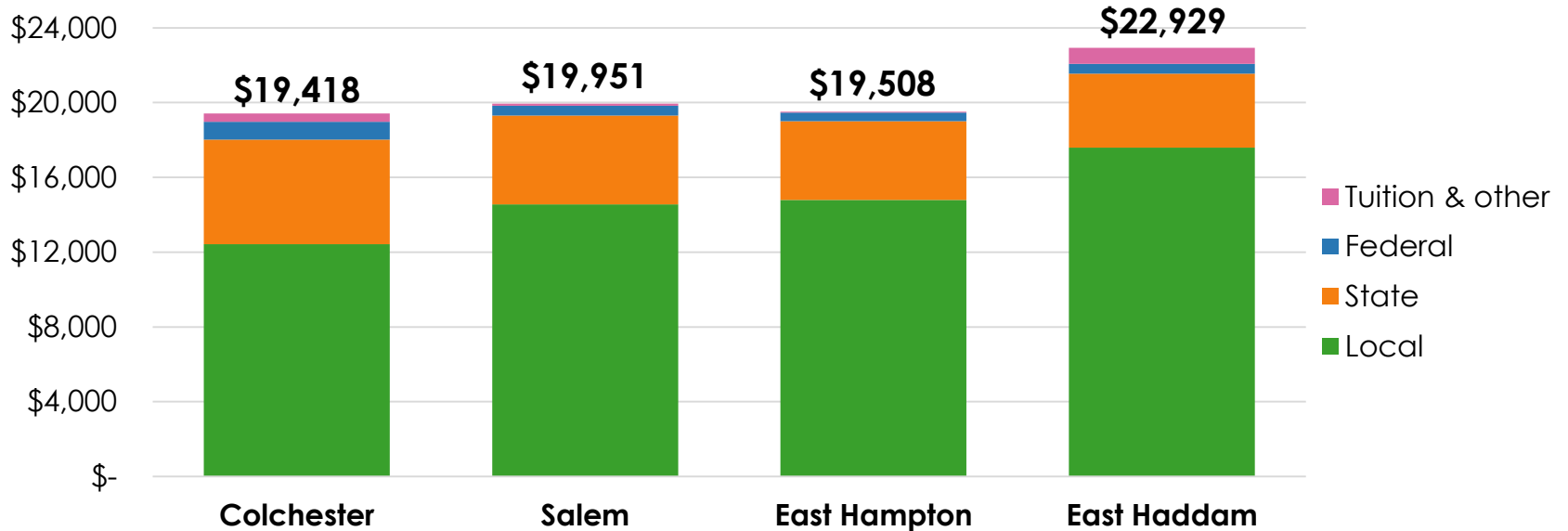


Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). Table 1: Summary of Public Elementary-Secondary School System Finances by State: Fiscal Year 2021. *2021 Annual Survey of School System Finances*. Washington, DC: Author. Available from https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/school-finances/tables/2020/secondary-education-finance/elsec20_sumtables.xls.

COLCHESTER
EDUCATION
SPENDING

Colchester spends nearly \$700 less per student than the state average (\$20,165)

Per-Student Funding by Source



Student Demographics	Colchester	Salem	East Hampton	East Haddam
Low-Income	23.3%	18.5%	21.2%	26%
Multilingual Learners	1.6%	*	*	0.6%
Students w/ Disabilities	15.4%	14.9%	16.7%	14.7%
BIPOC Students	16.8%	16.9%	13%	17.9%

*Due to the low number of students meeting this demographic, data is suppressed by the State to ensure student confidentiality.



STATE FUNDING
VIA THE EDUCATION
COST SHARING
FORMULA (ECS)

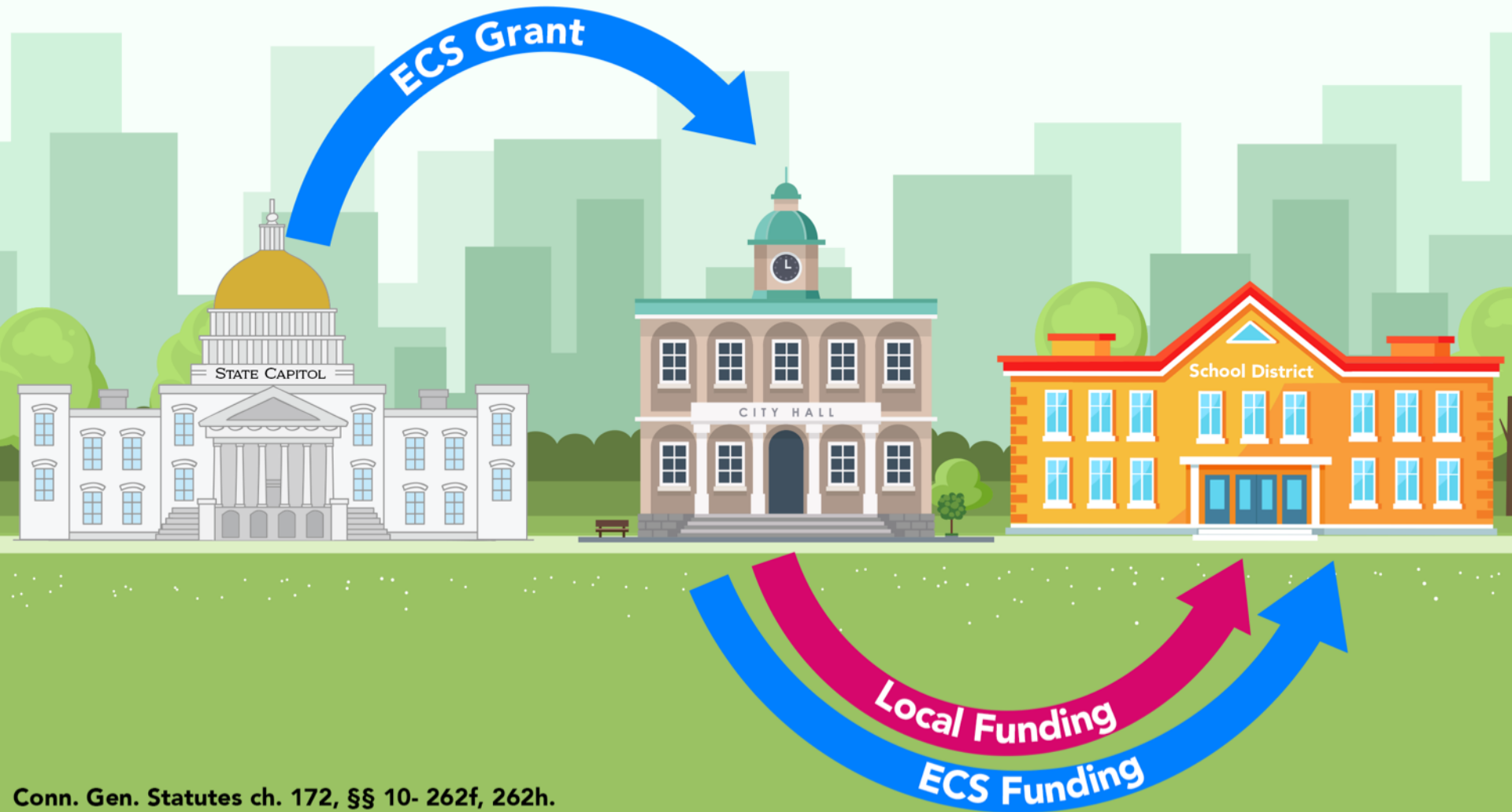
The ECS formula is used to distribute state education aid to municipalities for their local or regional public school districts

Why CT Has an ECS Formula

- The state began providing aid to cities/towns as a result of a 1977 CT Supreme Court decision, *Horton v. Meskill*.
- In *Horton* (1977), the Court ruled an education funding system that allows **“property wealthy” towns to spend more on education with less effort** is a system that **impedes** children’s constitutional rights to an **equal education**.
- As a result, CT established a formula to give money to public school districts that took property wealth into consideration.
 - In 1988, CT established the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula to serve this purpose. It has been revised numerous times since.
 - In theory, **the ECS grant is supposed to make up the difference between what a community can afford to pay and what it costs to run a public school system.**

Sources: *Horton v. Meskill*, 172 Conn. 615 (Conn. Sup. Ct. 1977).
Connecticut General Assembly, Office of Legislative Research. (2013). *Task Force to Study State Education Funding Final Report*. Retrieved from <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2013/rpt/2013-R-0064.html>.

How ECS Funding Flows



Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 172, §§ 10- 262f, 262h.

Foundation Amount

- The ECS formula begins with a foundation amount, which is supposed to represent the amount of money it costs to educate a child with no additional learning needs.
- In Connecticut, the foundation amount is established by the legislature
- Currently, the foundation amount is **\$11,525**

ECS Formula's Student-Need Weights

Low-Income Student Weight	30%
Concentrated Poverty Weight <i>Applied to Every Student Above 60% Concentrated Poverty</i>	15%
Multilingual Learner Weight	25%



LEARN MORE

Student Need	Funding Per Student
General Education (Non-need) Student	\$11,525
Low-income Student (+ \$3,458)	\$14,983
Concentrated Low-income Student (+ \$5,186)	\$16,711
Low-income and Multilingual Learner (+6,339)	\$17,864
Multilingual Learner (+\$2,881)	\$14,406
Concentrated Low-income Multilingual Learner (+8,067)	\$19,592

Source: Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 172, § 10-262f.
All numbers are rounded

Base Aid Ratio

A town's **ability to fund its public schools** is determined by two factors in the ECS formula. These factors make up the **Base Aid Ratio**.

Property Wealth
Factor

70%

Income Wealth
Factor

30%



LEARN MORE

Additional Funding for Towns in Need

- **Formula adds additional funding for communities that have one of the highest Public Investment Communities (PIC) index scores.**
 - The PIC index is calculated annually by the OPM and measures the relative wealth and need of CT's towns.
- If a town has one of the top 19 highest PIC Index scores, under the ECS formula, the town will receive a bonus of three to six percentage points to its Base Aid Ratio.

Town's PIC Index Rank	Additional % Points Added to Base Aid Ratio
1-5	6 percentage points
6-10	5 percentage points
11-15	4 percentage points
16-19	3 percentage points

Source: Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 172, § 10-262f.

Factors Impacting a Town's ECS Grant

- Town's prior year ECS grant amount
- # of students residing in town
- # of economically disadvantaged students
- % of students who are economically disadvantaged
- # of students who are multilingual learners
- # of students sent to regional school districts, and how many grades the regional district has
- Town's property wealth (ENGLPC)
- Income of town residents (Median Household Income)
- PIC Index score
- Alliance District status

Colchester's ECS Components: Total Cost

FY 2024 ECS Model

Selected Town

Colchester

2. Need Student Count

Students with certain learning needs are more likely to need additional resources in order to have equal access to educational opportunities. In order to assist districts serving students with higher learning needs, education funding formulas often include weights for specific student needs.

The ECS formula contains three "need-student" weights, which increase per-student state education aid for students with additional learning needs. Included in the ECS formula are weights for low-income students, concentrated poverty, and multilingual learners. A town's "Need Student Count" is determined using these weights.

Variable	Count	Weight	Weighted Count
Resident Student Count	2,201	None	2,201
Low-income Student Count (i.e. # of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch)	531	30%	159
Multilingual Learners Count	37	25%	9
% of Low-income Students (determines eligibility for concentrated poverty weight)	24.12%	60%	0

Need Student Count	2,370
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Foundation	x	Need Student Count	=	Foundation x NSC
\$11,525	x	2,370	=	\$27,313,328

Colchester's Calculated Base Aid Ratio

FY 2024 ECS Model

Selected Town

Colchester

3. Base Aid Ratio

<p>The Base Aid Ratio is the variable in the ECS formula that determines each community's ability to financially support its public schools. In the ECS formula, the Base Aid Ratio acts as an equity metric to distribute state education aid, with the towns with the least ability to fund their public schools receiving the most state aid.</p> <p>The Base Aid Ratio uses two elements to calculate a town's ability to fund its public schools: a property wealth factor and an income wealth factor. The property wealth factor counts for 70% in determining a town's Base Aid Ratio, while the income wealth factor counts for 30%.</p>	Variable	Value	Variable	Value
	Equalized Net Grand List per Capita (ENGLPC)	\$129,374	CT Median ENGL	\$158,132
	Median Household Income (MHI)	\$107,914	CT Median MHI	\$92,079
	Alliance District	No		
	Public Investment Communities (PIC) Index Rank	77		
	PIC Score	246		
	PIC Index Factor BAR Adjustment	0		

Base Aid Ratio	31.53%
-----------------------	---------------

Foundation	x	Need Student Count	x	Base Aid Ratio	=	Initial Grant
\$11,525	x	2,370	x	31.53%	=	\$8,613,039

ECS Phase-In for Colchester

FY 2024 ECS Model

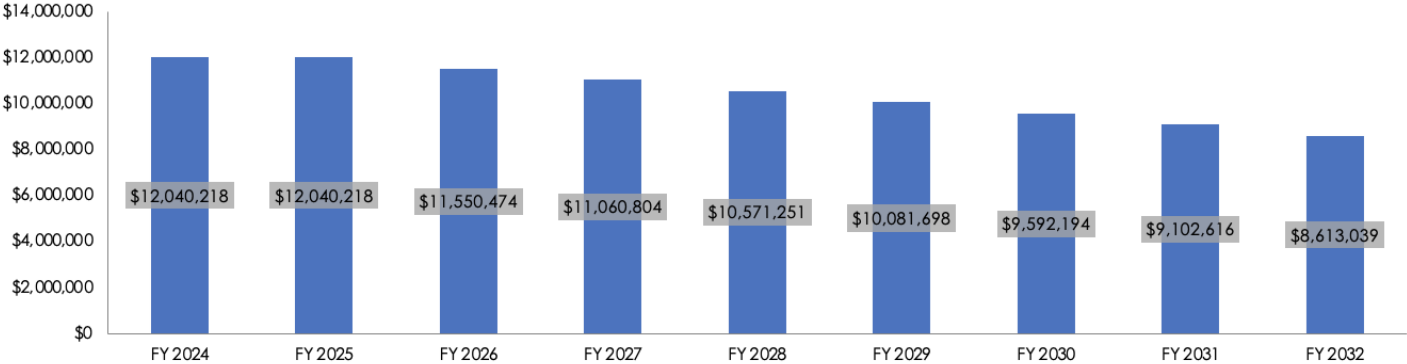
Selected Town

Colchester

The phase-in gradually transitions all towns from their prior year ECS grant amounts to their fully-funded amounts. The phase-in, as described on the prior tab, applies the phase-in percentage to the prior year's grant amount. Once a town completes the phase-in period, it will receive its fully-funded grant amount in every subsequent year.

	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031	FY 2032
Projected Grant	\$12,040,218	\$12,040,218	\$11,550,474	\$11,060,804	\$10,571,251	\$10,081,698	\$9,592,194	\$9,102,616	\$8,613,039
Projected Change from FY 2023	\$0	\$0	(\$489,744)	(\$979,414)	(\$1,468,967)	(\$1,958,520)	(\$2,448,024)	(\$2,937,602)	(\$3,427,179)

Town ECS Grant Projections



WHAT DOES
THIS MEAN FOR
COLCHESTER?

How do cities and towns raise money to pay for public schools?

- Cities and towns raise money to pay for services (including public schools) through property taxes.
 - Cities and towns are able to collect tax on property that is owned by the people who live there.
 - Cities and towns can collect taxes on “real” property (e.g. office building, apartment buildings, houses) and “personal” property (e.g. cars and boats).
 - Property that belongs to some nonprofit organizations, like universities, hospitals, and churches, may be exempt from property tax.

Source: State of Connecticut, Office of Policy and Management. (n.d.). Statutes Governing Property Assessment and Taxation. Retrieved from <https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/IGPP/Services/Statutes-Governing-Property-Assessment-and-Taxation>.

How much do cities and towns need to contribute toward funding their public schools?

- Cities and towns must make up the difference between what their local public school system receives from state and federal sources and the local public school district's budget.

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{School District Budget} - \text{Federal Revenue} - \text{State Revenue} \\ &= \\ &\text{Municipal (Local) Contribution} \end{aligned}$$

THE ROLE OF WEALTH AND PROPERTY TAXES

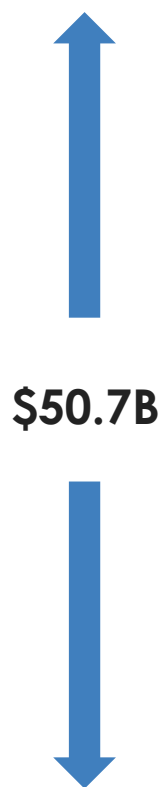
One of the most *fundamentally flawed* parts of education funding is its **reliance on local property taxes.**

It enables an *inequitable* system where affluent, predominantly white communities are able to **fund their schools at higher levels.**



LEARN MORE

The Value of Grand Lists Varies Widely

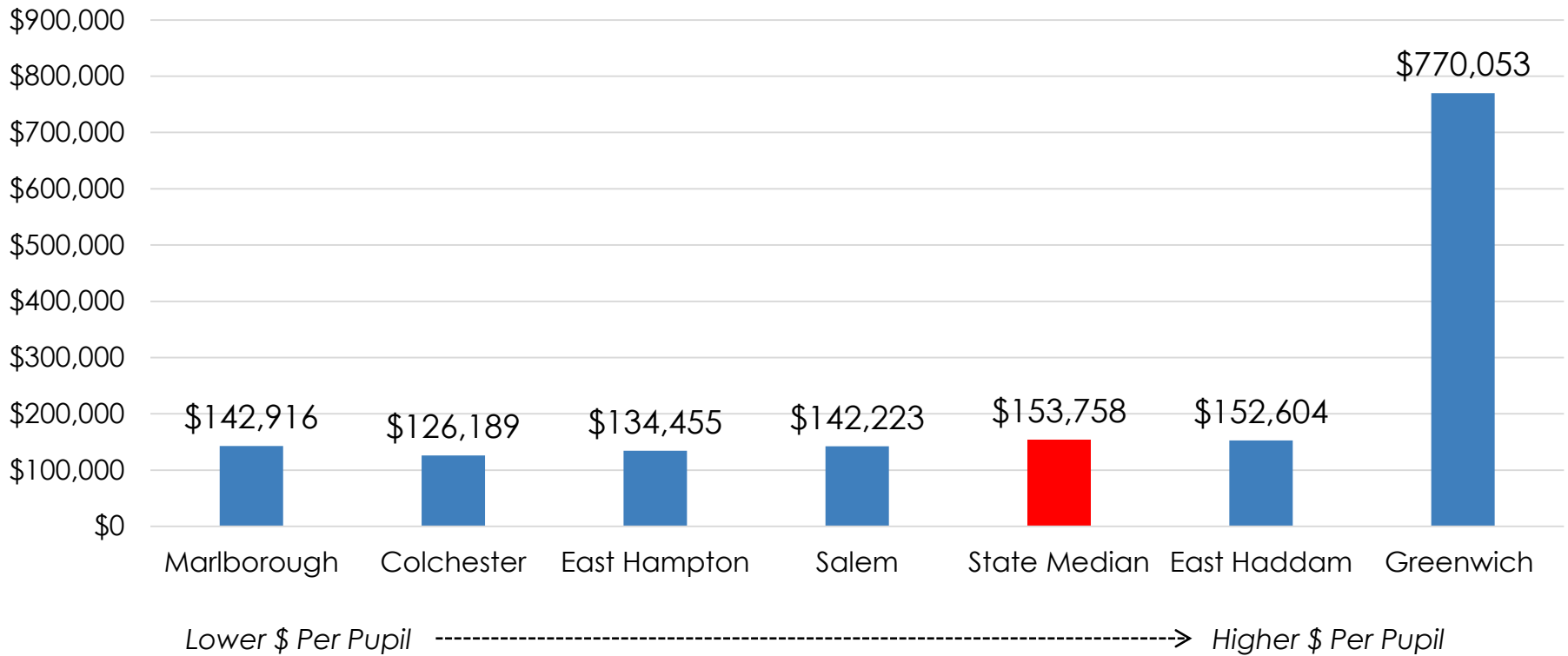


Municipality	Equalized Net Grand List GLYR 2021
GREENWICH	\$50,902,026,637
STAMFORD	\$40,182,853,790
NORWALK	\$25,748,651,546
FAIRFIELD	\$20,981,083,824
WESTPORT	\$20,636,390,634
...	...
STATE MEDIAN	\$2,270,541,491
...	...
COLCHESTER	\$2,206,523,392
...	...
CANAAN	\$362,753,395
EASTFORD	\$335,391,688
HAMPTON	\$329,544,282
SCOTLAND	\$224,233,435
UNION	\$193,857,459

Source: State of Connecticut, Office of Policy and Management. (2023). Equalized Net Grand List by Town (2011-2021 GL). Available from <https://data.ct.gov/Local-Government/Equalized-Net-Grand-List-by-Town-2011-2021-GL-/8rr8-a322>.

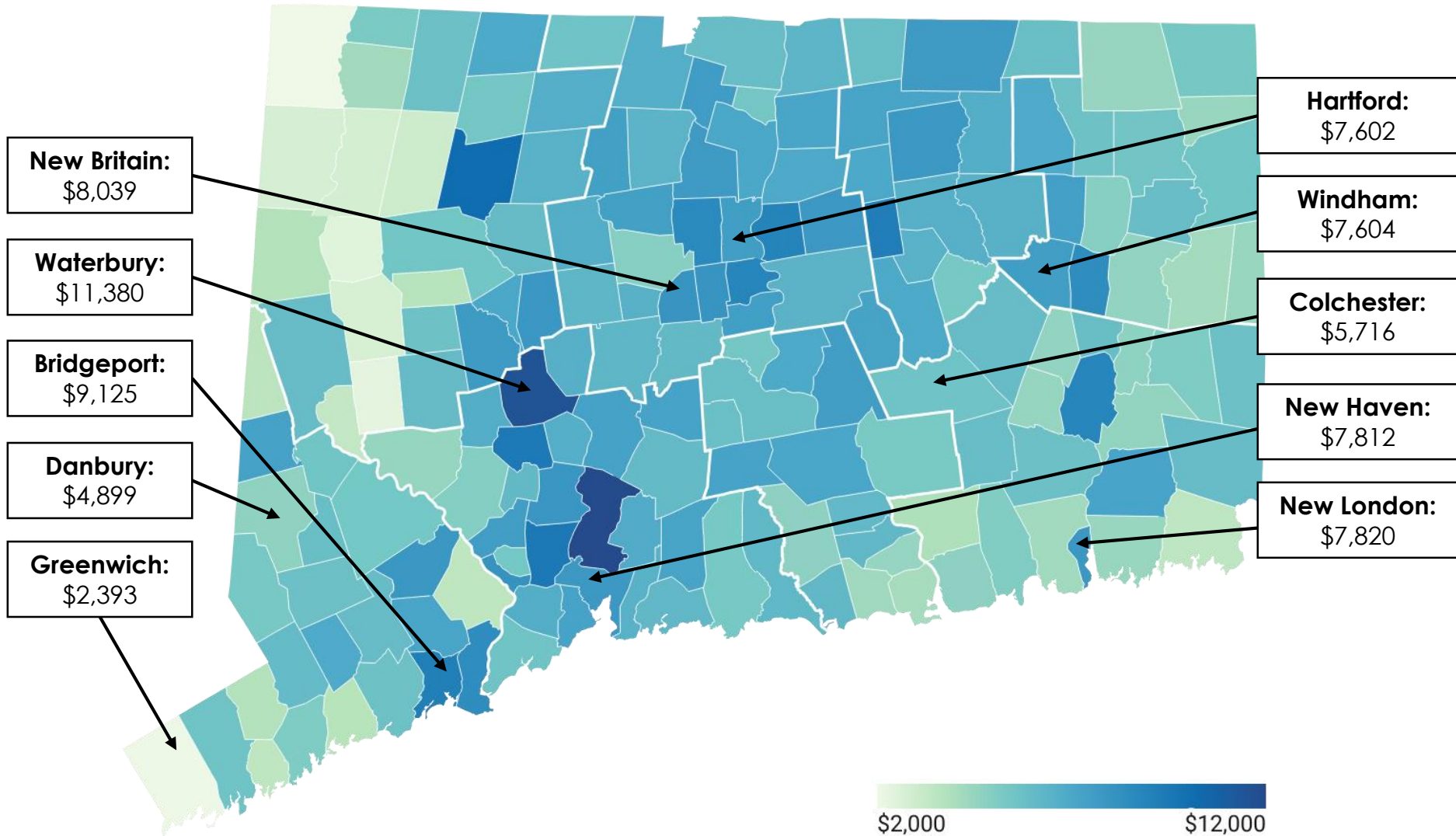
Equalized Net Grand List per Capita (ENGLPC) represents the value of taxable property in a town per resident

Equalized Net Grand List per Capita by Town



Sources: State of Connecticut, Office of Policy and Management. (2023). *Municipal Fiscal Indicators, Fiscal Years Ended 2017-2021*. Hartford, CT: Author. Retrieved from <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/OPM/Finance/MFS-Unit/FHMS/Municipal-Fiscal-Indicators-2017-21-AsOf-7-28-23.pdf>. Connecticut State Department of Education. (n.d.). *Per Pupil Expenditures by Function (District), 2021-2022*. Available from <https://edsight.ct.gov/>.

Property Taxes on a \$300,000 House



Understanding Tax Abatements

- In Connecticut, local municipalities may provide tax abatements to a person/business purchasing or leasing a property or airspace.
- **A tax abatement** is when a local municipality **reduces or exempts a property from taxes for a certain amount of time**. This includes both the property and any improvements made to the property.

Things to keep in mind:

- Local property taxes account for 58% of school funding in Connecticut.
- **Reducing or eliminating property taxes** results in lower property tax revenue for a municipality and may lead to **lower school funding**.
- Abatements **can encourage** companies to create more retail or manufacturing space, which results in **more jobs**.



2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Changes from the 2023 Legislative Session

- **A \$68.5 million investment in the ECS grant with an accelerated phase-in schedule.**
 - All underfunded towns will receive their full ECS grant amount in FY 2026 instead of FY 2028.
 - All overfunded towns will be fully phased out by FY 2032 instead of FY 2030.
- **RESC magnet, BOE magnet, and AgriScience formulas are unchanged in FY 2024, and unclear in FY 2025**
 - There are no formula or operation changes for FY24.
 - In FY 2025, operators will receive at least the per-student amount they received in FY 2024, tuition will be capped at 58% of the amount charged per student in FY 2024, and any changes to per-student grant are supported by additional state funding.

Changes from the 2023 Legislative Session

- **Sending districts receive revised tuition relief in FY 2024**
 - **FY 2023 and each year after:** East Hartford and Manchester will receive \$4,400 per student in tuition relief for each student above 4% of their resident students.
 - **FY 2024:** Windsor, New Britain, New London, and Bloomfield will receive \$4,400 per student for each student above 4% of their resident students; Hartford will receive \$3,000,000 in tuition relief.
- **State charter schools receive funding increases, but no phase-in schedule to full funding is included**
 - **FY 2024:** Charter schools will receive ECS foundation amount plus **36.08%** of their weighted funding phase-in.
 - **FY 20 25 and beyond:** Charter schools will receive ECS foundation plus **56.7%** of their weighted funding phase-in.
 - Budget contains funding for new charter schools in New Haven and Norwalk.

Changes from the 2023 Legislative Session

- **Funding for non-tuition BOE magnets and Open Choice operators is broadly unchanged in FY 2024 and unclear in FY 2025**
 - **FY 2024:** Existing per-student formulas for state grants are in place; operators are not permitted to charge tuition.
 - **FY 2025 and beyond:** Operators will receive at least the per-student grant they received for each student in FY 2024 and these changes are supported by additional state funding.
- **Choice operators will receive additional state support in FY 2025, but it's unclear how it will be allocated**
 - FY 2025 Education Finance Reform Appropriations:
 - State charter schools: \$9.4 million more (for phase-in)
 - BOE magnet schools: \$13.3 million more
 - Open Choice program: \$11.4 million more
 - RESC magnet schools: \$40.2 million more
 - BOE magnet schools: \$13.3 million more
 - AgriScience (ASTE) programs: \$7.2 million more

Changes from the 2023 Legislative Session

- **School Meals**

- Provides **\$16 million in FY 2024** to extend free school meals to all students from families making at or below **200% of the federal poverty line.**

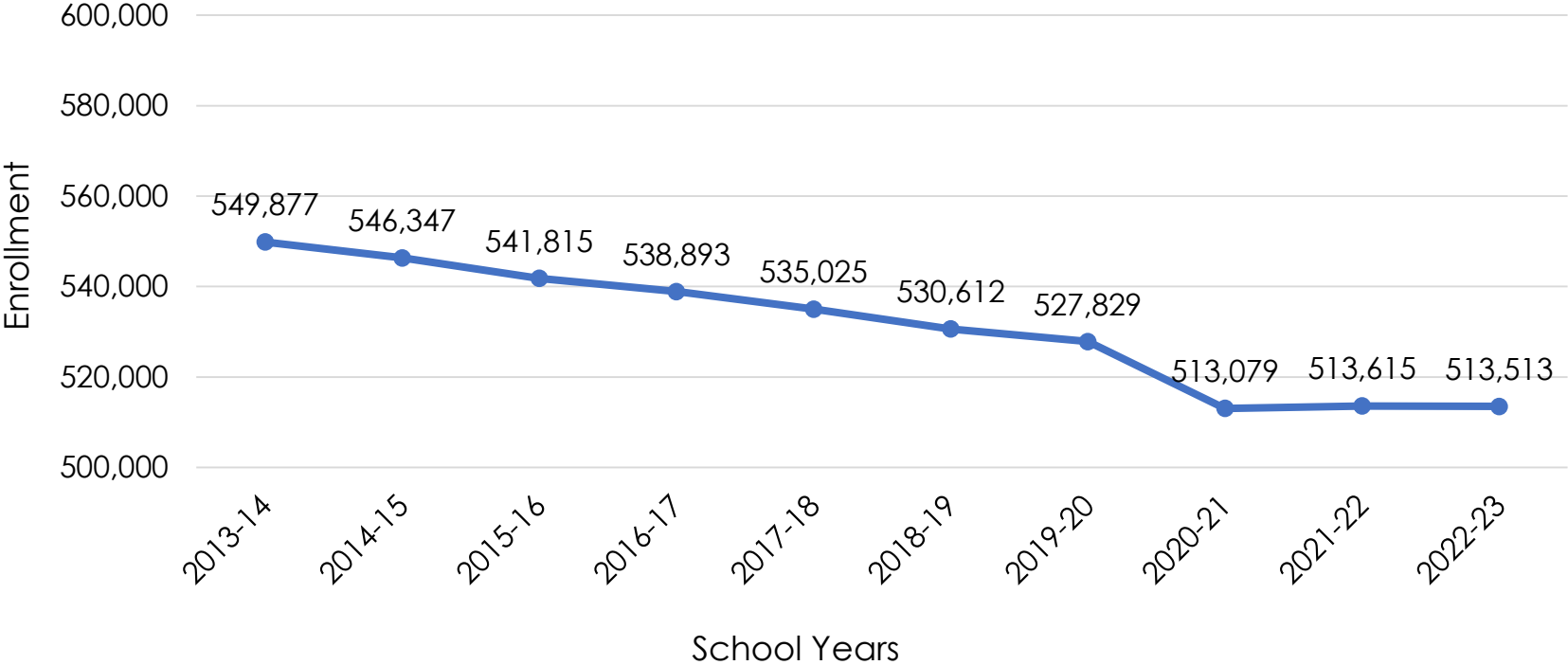
- **Priority School Districts**

- Extends phase-out eligibility for exiting districts by one more year (now FY 2024 for those districts that received a third phase-out year in FY 2023).

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Over the last 10 years, the total number of students in Connecticut public schools has declined by 6.6%

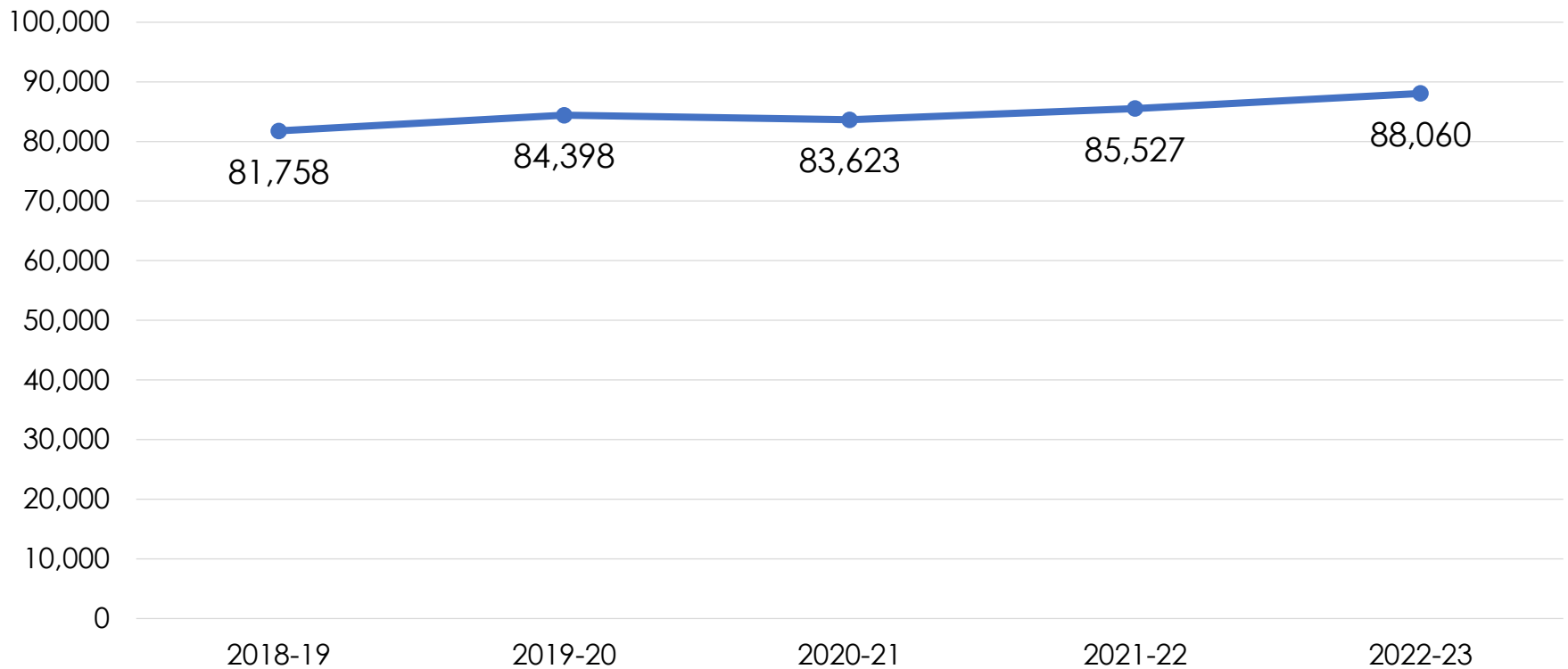
Connecticut Public School Enrollment by School Year



Source: Connecticut State Department of Education. (n.d.). EdSight: Public School Enrollment. Available from <http://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>.

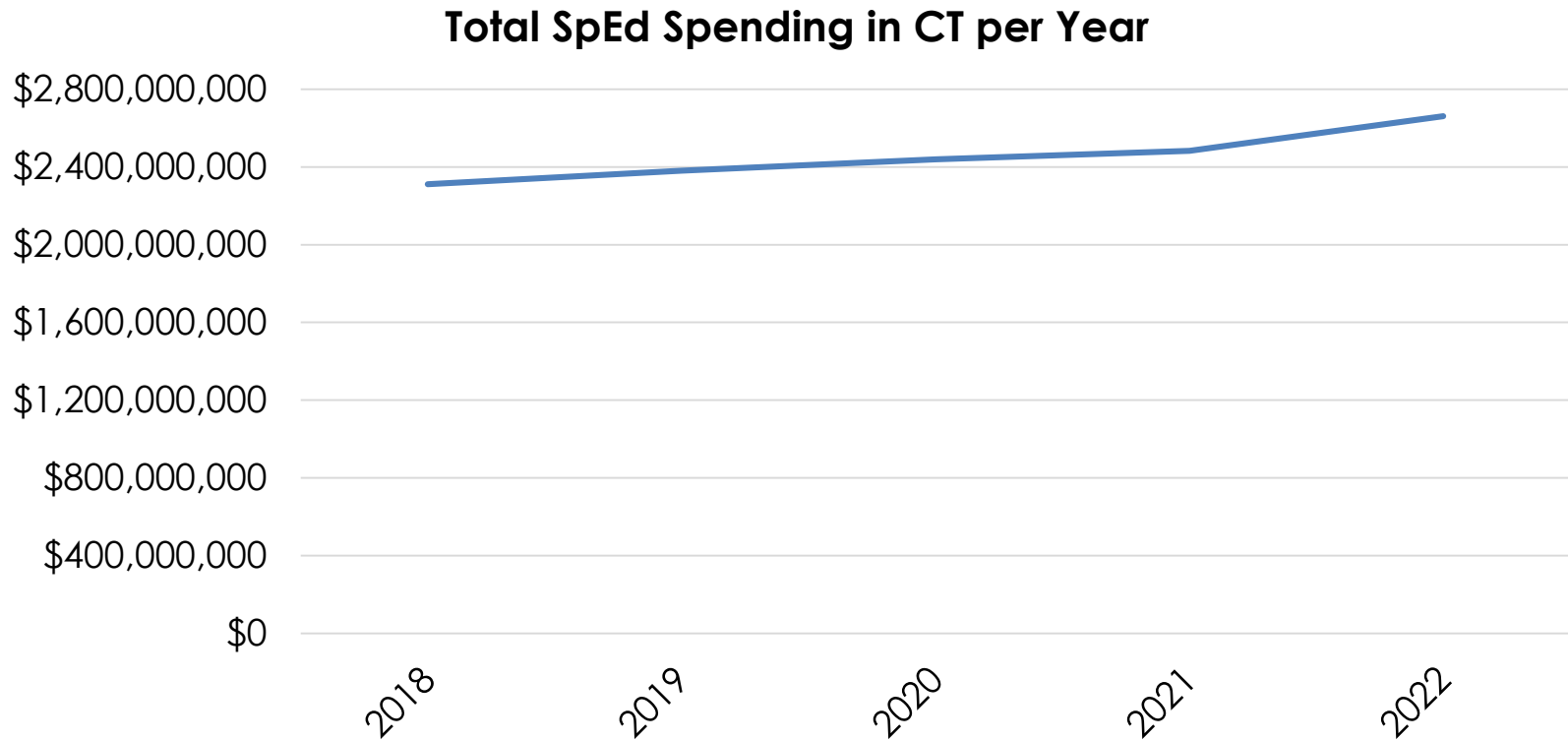
Over the last 5 years, the total number of students with disabilities in Connecticut public schools has increased by 7.7%

Connecticut Students with Disabilities by School Year



Source: Connecticut State Department of Education. (n.d.). EdSight: Public School Enrollment. Available from <http://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>.

At the state level, special education spending has been predictable over the past 5 years



Source: Connecticut State Department of Education. (n.d). EdSight: Fiscal Resources; Special Education Expenditures. Available from <https://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>.

How does Connecticut fund special education?

- Connecticut is one of the few states in the country that does not have a separate special education funding system.
- Connecticut's local public school districts primarily receive funding for students with disabilities from the ECS grant.
- Additionally, districts are partially reimbursed for extraordinary special education costs through the state's Excess Cost grant.
 - Excess Cost grant reimburses districts when expenditures for educating a student in special education are 4.5 times greater than the district's spending per pupil.
 - For FY 2024, the Excess Cost grant is fully funded. However, the grant is currently not projected to be fully funded in FY 2025.

Changes to Excess Cost Grant

- The General Assembly modified the formula for the Excess Cost grant as part of budget adjustments made during the 2022 legislative session and **again during the 2023 legislative session.**
- Under the new formula, if the legislature does not fully fund the Excess Cost grant, districts will be reimbursed using a 3-tiered system that is based on the wealth of their town.
- Each town will be ranked in descending order from one to 169, and each tier will be reimbursed at a different rate.

Tier	Prior Law	New Law
Districts with the lowest wealth (municipalities ranked 115 to 169)	76.25%	<u>91%</u>
Districts in the middle tier (municipalities ranked 59 to 114)	73%	<u>88%</u>
Districts in the wealthiest tier (municipalities ranked 1 to 58)	70%	<u>85%</u>

Source: Conn. Acts 23-1.

WHERE CAN I FIND COLCHESTER'S EDUCATION BUDGET?

Superintendent's Budget Presentation

- 2023-2024 Budget Presentation to Colchester Board of Education:

https://cdnsm5-ss11.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_7752070/File/Board%20of%20Education/Education%20Budget%20Documents/BY%202023-2024/Superintendent%20Budget%20Presentation.pdf

Website: Colchester Public Schools → Board of Education → Education Budget → February 7, 2023 Superintendent's Budget Presentation



What you will find in the budget presentation

- Here you will find information about:
 - Superintendent's Goals
 - Student Demographics
 - Budget Drivers
 - Budget Summary
 - Budget History
- There is not a lot of context or narrative in the presentation, but that's ok. You can always ask a member of the board of education!

ESSER FUNDING

Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund

- Created by Congress in March 2020 to help states and school districts combat the impacts the COVID-19 pandemic has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools across the country.
- Over \$189 billion appropriated to the ESSER Fund.
- ESSER funding provided as a part of three federal relief packages:
 - Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act – March 2020
 - Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act – December 2020
 - American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act – March 2021



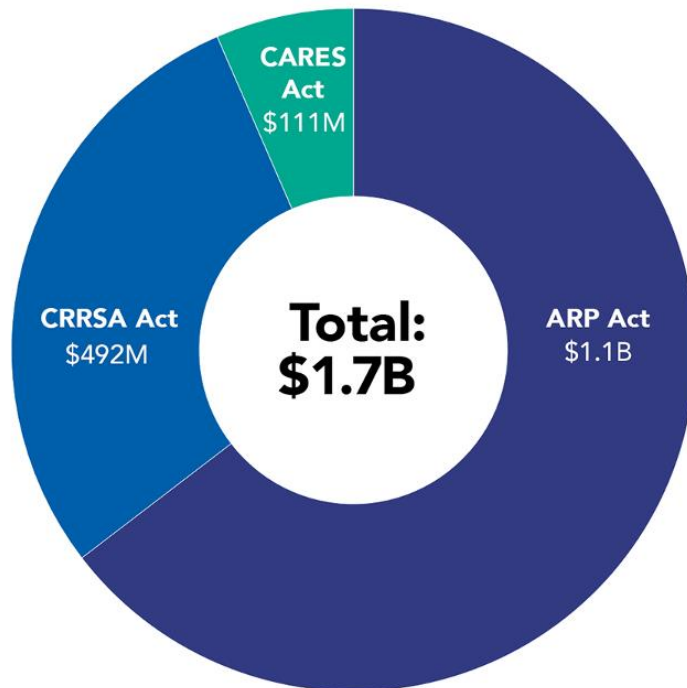
COVID-19 Relief Funding for Education



CLICK
HERE TO

LEARN
MORE

Connecticut ESSER Funding by Coronavirus Relief Legislation



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CARES Act (ESSER I)

Signed into law in **March 2020**.

CRRSA Act (ESSER II)

Signed into law in **December 2020**.

ARP Act (ESSER III)

Signed into law in **March 2021**.

ESSER: The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund was created by Congress to help states and school districts across the country combat the impacts of COVID-19 on students and K-12 education.

How ESSER Funds are Distributed: Based on Title I, Part A, which provides federal funding to school districts with high numbers of students from low-income families.

Funds may be used for (among other things): Preventing & Responding to COVID-19; Implementing Activities to Address Student Needs; Training for school districts responding to COVID-19; and Purchasing

Click the top right icon to learn more

How much of ESSER has been spent? (as of October 2023)

- Of the \$1.7 billion ESSER aid that was given to Connecticut, **\$981M has been spent. (57%)**
- **Approximately 99% of ESSER I funding** has been spent. The deadline for districts to allocate ESSER I funds was September 30, 2022.
- **Approximately \$413.9M (84%) of ESSER II funding** has been spent. The deadline for districts to allocate ESSER II funds was September 30, 2023.
- **Approximately \$457M (41%) of ESSER III funding** has been spent. The deadline for districts to allocate ESSER III funds is September 30, 2024.

How are ESSER funds being used? (as of October 2023)

- The **main priority area** for **ESSER II and III** has been **salaries** while ESSER I funds were used for property, supplies and salaries.
- Districts have reported spending **\$334.8M of ESSER funds on salaries and benefits** for teachers and staff.
- **More than half (52.9%) of all ESSER spending** has been used toward salaries and benefits for educators.
- It's likely that **not all districts will follow their original ESSER plans as priorities change.**

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Participate at the Local Level

- Attend board of education meetings
 - [Board of education meeting listing](#)
- Submit public testimony at the board of education and city council during budget season
- Reach out to local decision-makers to ask questions, begin a conversation about education funding, or ask them to support state initiatives that will benefit Colchester Public Schools
 - The members of the board of education can be found [here](#), along with their contact information.
 - Members of the board of selectmen can be found [here](#), along with their contact information.

Participate at the State Level

- Reach out to your State Representative
 - [Rep. Mark DeCaprio](#)
- If you aren't sure who your Representative is, you can find out [here](#).
- Reach out to your State Senator
 - [Sen. Norm Needleman](#)
- Not sure what to say? Reach out to us for helpful tips [here](#)!

Add Your Voice to the Conversation



- **Talk about school finance** with others



- **Attend local municipal meetings** such as the board of education, city/town council, or subcommittee meetings



- **Host a workshop** or meeting with us



- **Stay informed** and help keep others informed



- **Tell elected officials** that school finance is an important issue for kids in your community

APPENDIX

HOW DO OTHER PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS RECEIVE FUNDING?

For those students,
Connecticut has
10 different
funding formulas



LEARN MORE

State Charter Schools (20 schools)

State Charter Schools

State Charter School Grant

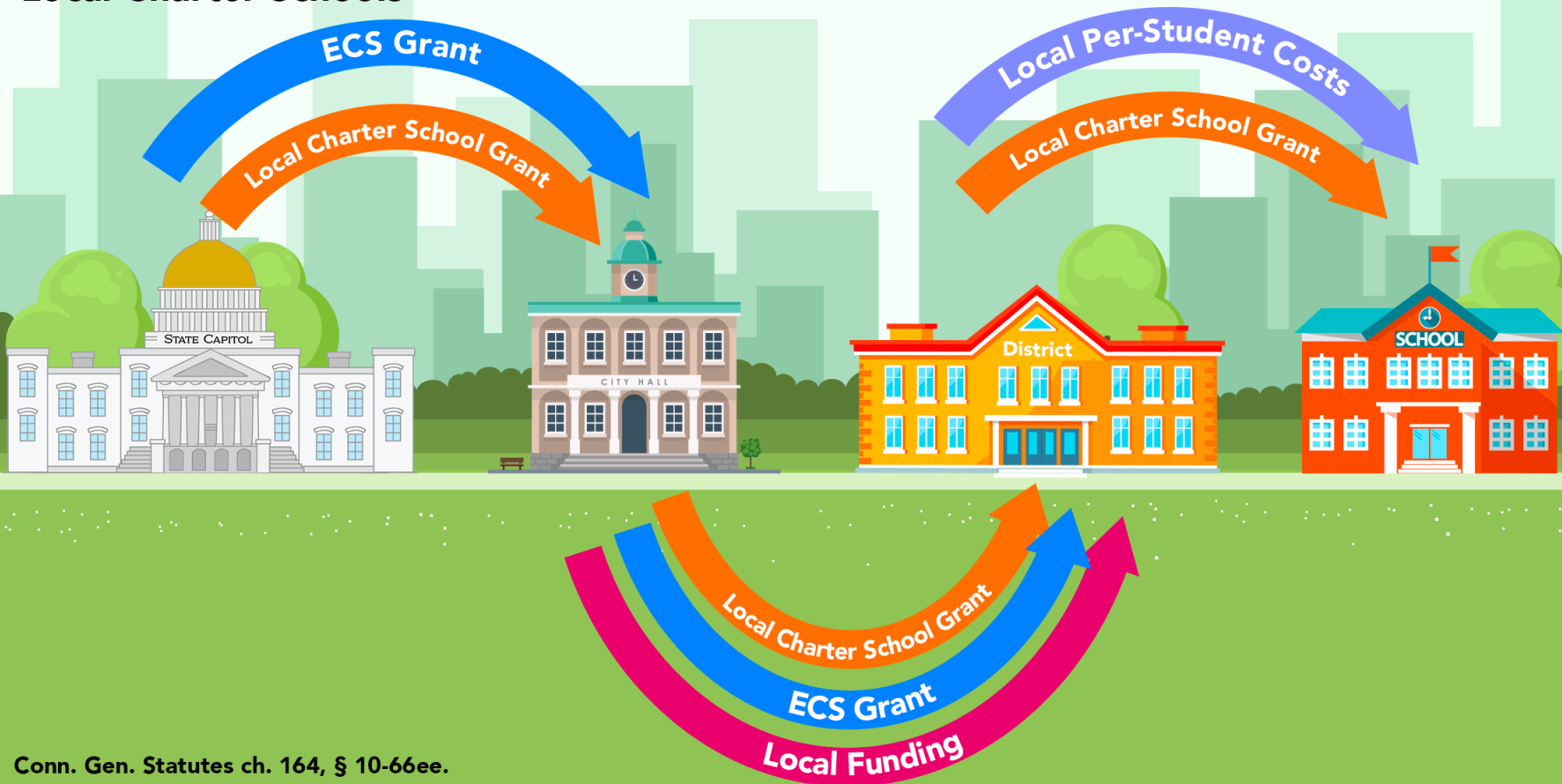


In FY 2024, state charter school students will receive 36.08% of their full weighted funding based on their individual learning needs. In FY 25, they will receive 56.7%.

Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 164, § 10-66ee.

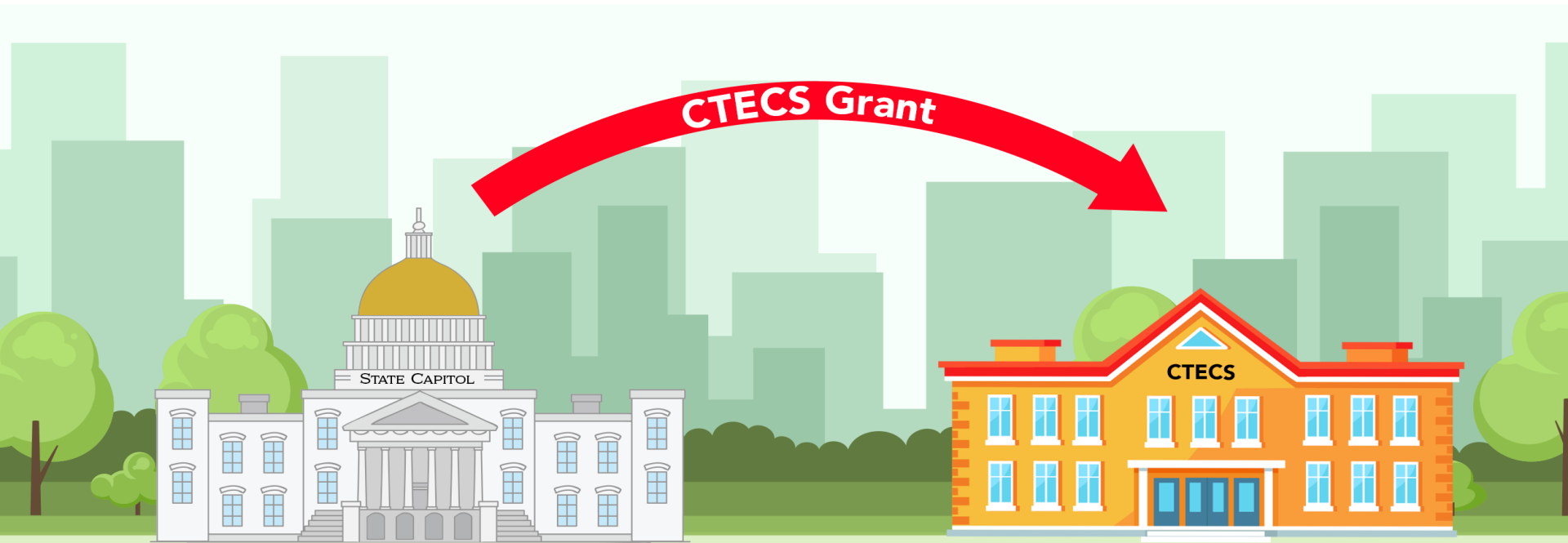
Local Charter Schools (1 school)

Local Charter Schools



Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 164, § 10-66ee.

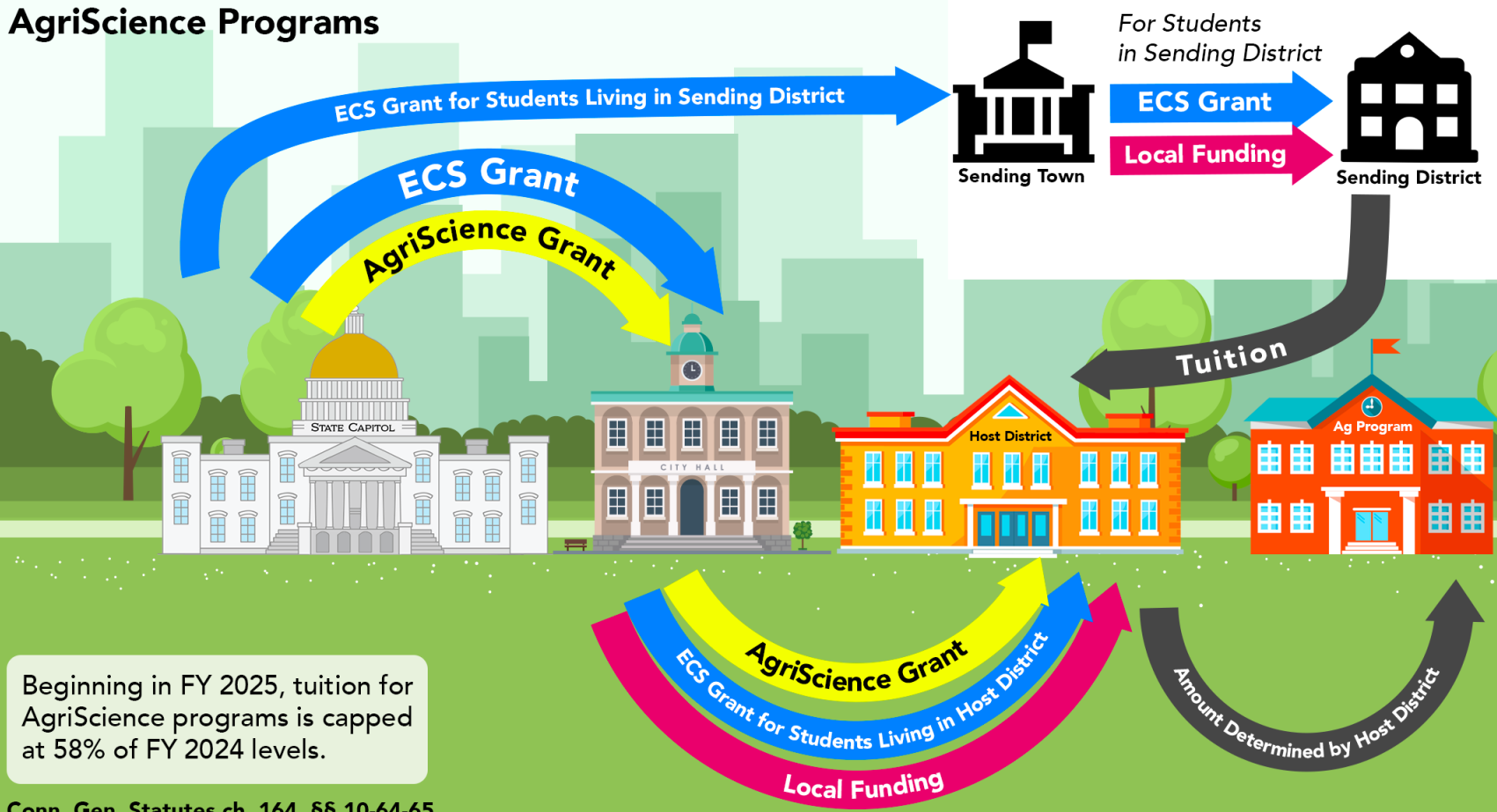
CT Technical Education and Career System (20 schools)



Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 164, § 10-95.

Agriscience Program (20 centers)

Agriscience Programs

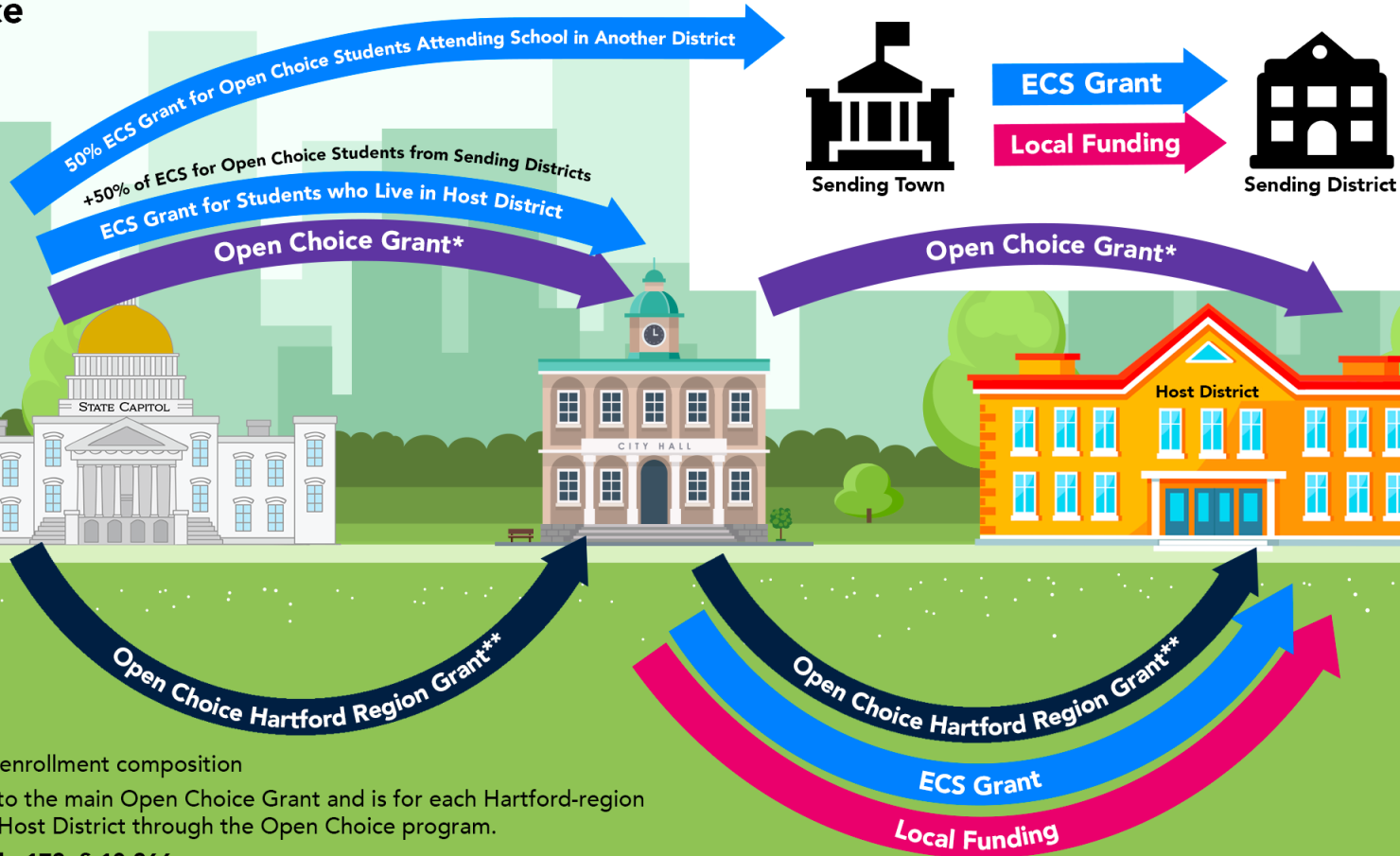


Beginning in FY 2025, tuition for Agriscience programs is capped at 58% of FY 2024 levels.

Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 164, §§ 10-64-65.

Open Choice (47 participating districts)

Open Choice



* Amount depends on enrollment composition

** Grant is in addition to the main Open Choice Grant and is for each Hartford-region student attending the Host District through the Open Choice program.

Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 172, § 10-266aa.

RESC Magnet School (Sheff) (18 schools)

Regional Educational Service Center (RESC)
Magnet School (Sheff)

ECS Grant to Sending District



ECS Grant

Local Funding



Amount varies*

TUITION

Beginning in FY 2025, tuition for magnet schools is capped at 58% of FY 2024 levels.

Magnet School Grant

*Amount depends on enrollment composition

Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 172, § 10-264I.

RESC Magnet School (Non-Sheff) (12 schools)

Regional Educational Service Center (RESC)
Magnet School (Non-Sheff)

ECS Grant to Sending District



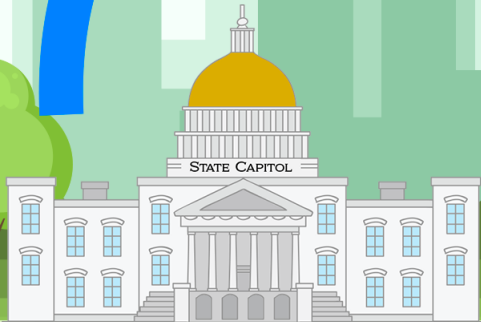
ECS Grant

Local Funding



Amount varies*

TUITION



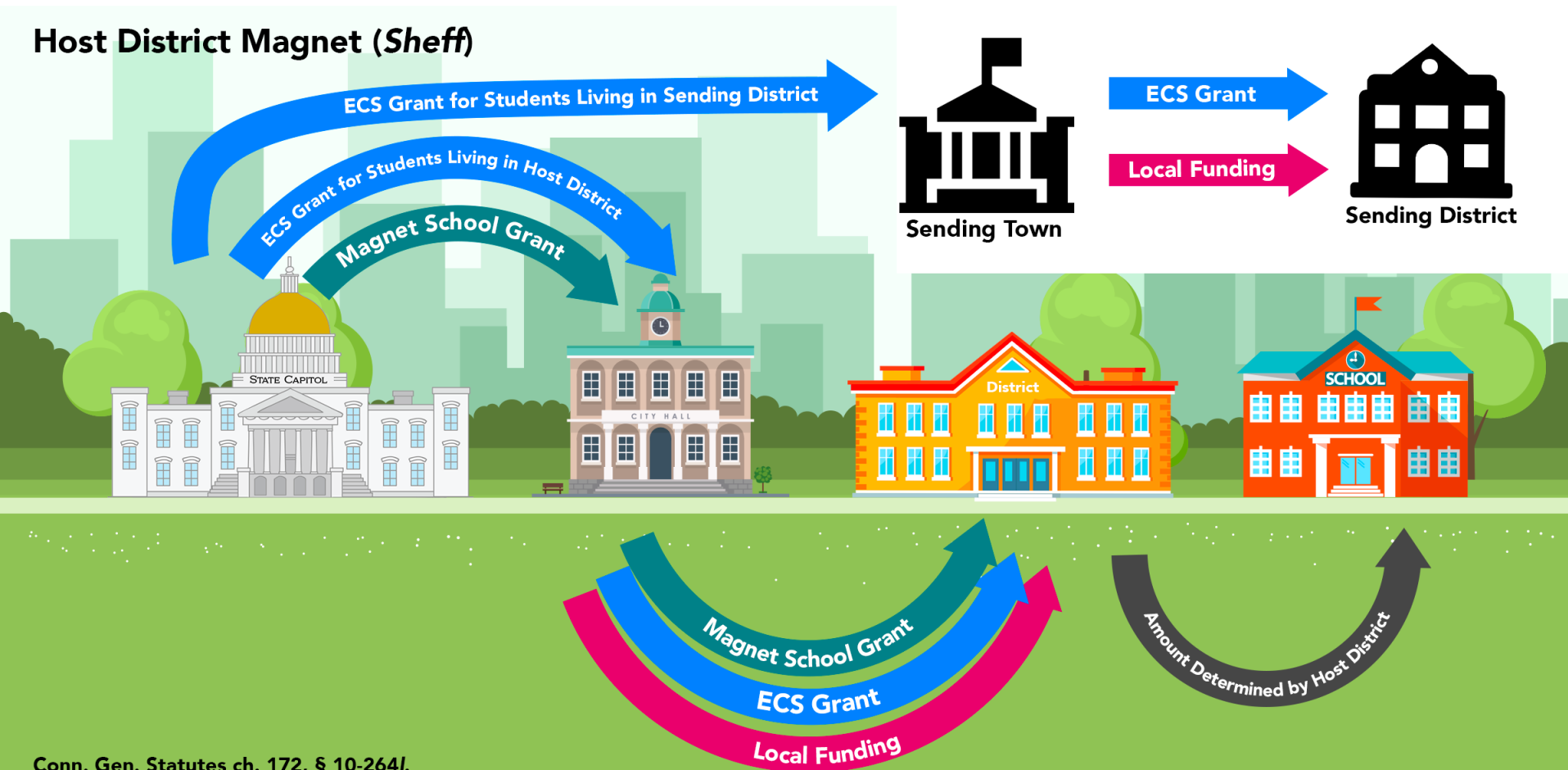
Beginning in FY 2025, tuition for magnet schools is capped at 58% of FY 2024 levels.

Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 172, § 10-264I.

*Amount depends on enrollment composition

Host District Magnet (Sheff) (20 schools)

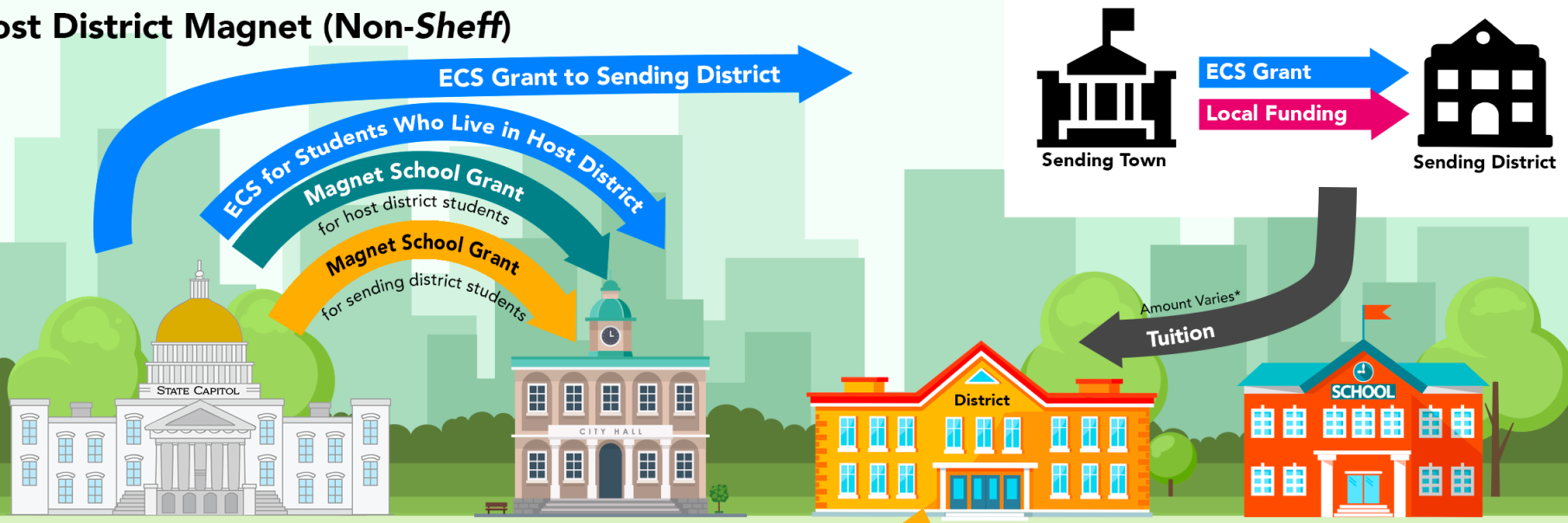
Host District Magnet (Sheff)



Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 172, § 10-264I.

Host District Magnet (Non-Sheff) (34 schools)

Host District Magnet (Non-Sheff)



*Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 172, § 10-264(m)(2) prohibits host magnet schools from charging tuition if tuition was not charged in FY 2014-15. Tuition may be charged with the Commissioner of Education's permission if the request is made by Sep. 1 of the year before tuition will be charged.



Beginning in FY 2025, tuition for magnet schools is capped at 58% of FY 2024 levels.

Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 172, § 10-264I.