

SCHOOL + STATE  
FINANCE PROJECT

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# THE URGENT NEED

*How Student-Centered Funding  
Can Fix Connecticut's Broken  
Education Funding System*

# HOW IS CONNECTICUT'S CURRENT WAY OF FUNDING SCHOOLS BROKEN?

# Connecticut's Broken System

- 67% of Connecticut public school students do not receive the full education funding they are entitled to.
- Current system has produced massive gaps in education funding that have negatively impacted economically-disadvantaged students and students of color.
- More than 10 different complicated formulas are currently used to fund public schools, but only two formulas account for student needs.
- Thousands of public school students are not being funded based on their learning needs and what they need to reach their full potential.
- Student resources and opportunities are frequently limited based on two factors: where a student lives and the type of public school they attend.
- Broken system has hindered workforce and skill development and created one of the largest opportunity gaps in the nation.

# Impact of Fewer Resources

- Fewer resources have a direct impact on a student's experience and opportunity to learn in the classroom.
  - Increased class size in an environment with high levels of student need.
  - Comparatively low teacher salaries resulting in less experienced teachers and high turnover.
  - Fewer paraprofessionals for students with disabilities.
  - Fewer mental health supports in the school.
  - Outdated instructional materials.

# Impact on Teacher Retention and Recruitment

- Fewer resources has a direct impact on a district's ability to hire and retain quality teachers.
- Teachers in lower-wealth, high-need districts are trying to educate students with additional learning challenges, while being paid less, and having fewer paraprofessionals, tutors, and aides to assist them.

| First year teacher with no stipends |                  |                |            |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|------------|
|                                     | <u>Bachelors</u> | <u>Masters</u> | <u>PhD</u> |
| Hartford                            | \$ 43,077        | \$ 46,179      | \$ 48,505  |
| New Haven                           | 45,357           | 47,551         | 54,215     |
| Fairfield                           | 47,553           | 52,308         | 61,816     |
| Westport                            | 48,059           | 52,662         | 61,036     |
| Waterbury                           | 49,672           | 51,303         | 57,931     |
| Greenwich                           | 56,111           | 61,932         | 72,109     |
| Highest step teacher                |                  |                |            |
|                                     | <u>Bachelors</u> | <u>Masters</u> | <u>PhD</u> |
| Hartford                            | \$ 68,923        | \$ 73,886      | \$ 77,608  |
| New Haven                           | 89,580           | 91,856         | 98,597     |
| Fairfield                           | 83,159           | 102,493        | 119,791    |
| Westport                            | 90,855           | 110,007        | 125,062    |
| Waterbury                           | 82,067           | 84,761         | 95,713     |
| Greenwich                           | 97,518           | 114,384        | 129,564    |

# WHAT IS STUDENT-CENTERED FUNDING?

# What is Student-Centered Funding?

- Comprehensive solution to Connecticut's broken education finance system.
- Simplified, more equitable, more transparent way to fund Connecticut's public schools.
- Consistent, cohesive method for distributing state education aid to public schools.
- Greater support for students, teachers, and schools.
- Expansion of the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula to include all public school types.
- Acceleration of the ECS formula's phase-in schedule.



# Key Components: ECS Grants

- Fully funds town ECS grants, effective FY 2025
  - ECS is the state's primary method to support K-12 education for local and regional school districts.
  - The current formula, which was passed in 2017, began in 2019 and is to be phased in over a 10-year period.
  - This means under current law, students and districts will not receive the full funding they're entitled to until FY 2028.

# Key Components: Public Schools of Choice

- Fully funds interdistrict magnet schools, AgriScience programs, state charter schools, and the Open Choice program based on student needs while protecting funding for local and regional public schools.
- Provides fiscal stability for all districts by eliminating regular education tuition billing for each student who exercises choice to attend an interdistrict magnet school or an AgriScience program.
- Fixes the disjointed education finance system that is currently used by the State.

# Key Components: Phase-Out Schedule

- Maintains the current statutory schedule for towns receiving reductions in their ECS grants.
- Most of these districts will see **net increases** in total funding to support students they are educating due to the elimination of regular education tuition billing.

# WHY CONNECTICUT NEEDS STUDENT-CENTERED FUNDING NOW

# Helps Bridge the Upcoming Fiscal Cliff

- Connecticut school districts have received an influx of over **\$1.5 billion in one-time federal COVID-relief aid**.
  - This has provided much-needed relief in the face of a global pandemic and has **temporarily reduced funding disparities**.
- However, the pandemic's **impacts on student learning and mental health will last long after federal funds expire** in September 2024.
- Student-centered funding will **provide districts with their full ECS funding in FY 2025** when the one-time federal aid expires.
  - Greater state support is **critical to ensuring students have access to the supports and resources they need** to be successful in the classroom and beyond.

# Closes Massive Gaps in Education Funding

- **Reduces economic and racial funding disparities.**
  - Significantly reduces the \$700+ million economic and racial gaps in education funding, which continue to limit opportunities for economically-disadvantaged students and students of color.
  - Additional funding will help close Connecticut's opportunity gap, which is one of the largest in the nation.
- **Provides ALL students with access to high-quality K-12 education so they can reach their full potential.**
  - Ends education finance system that has perpetuated multi-generational cycles of poverty and kept students from reaching their full potential.
  - Funds students based on their learning needs rather than where they live or the type of public school they attend.

# Addresses Workforce Shortage & Invests in CT's Future

- Helps address Connecticut's **severe labor and skill shortage that is hindering economic growth**, limiting business opportunities, and hurting our state's financial future.
- **Invests in Connecticut's most important resource**: our students.
- Provides the resources necessary to **educate the state's future workforce and equip them with the skills** to meet the needs of Connecticut's economy and employers.
- Research has repeatedly shown **greater education funding improves student outcomes**, including:
  - Higher test scores, graduation rates, and academic achievement;
  - Higher earnings for life; and
  - Reductions in adult poverty.

# Increases Accountability

- Increases accountability by **ensuring additional funding goes directly toward improving student achievement, supporting teachers, and engaging parents.**
- Requires funding **increases to be spent directly supporting student success** by:
  - Reducing class sizes;
  - Recruiting and retaining teachers, and increasing teacher pay;
  - Expanding afterschool and extracurricular programs;
  - Lowering rates of chronic absenteeism;
  - Hiring additional tutors, paraprofessionals, and reading and math interventionists;
  - Providing more social workers, counselors, psychologists, and mental health supports;
  - Updating outdated teaching materials and technology; and
  - Engaging parents, families, and community partners.

# HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT STUDENT-CENTERED FUNDING

# What You Can Do

- Contact your state senator and state representative and them tell why student-centered funding is important to you and your community, and urge them to support the proposal.
- Testify in support of student-centered funding at public hearings for the Education and Appropriations Committees.
- Get your superintendent, board of education, and local municipal officials to publicly advocate for student-centered funding.
- Tell your friends, family, neighbors, and coworkers about student-centered funding and ask them to contact their state legislators to support the bill.
- Sign onto our [Statement of Support](#).