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FINANCE PROJECT

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# SCHOOL FINANCE IN HARTFORD

Including of Hartford Public Schools'  
Unique Funding Ecosystem

# Contact Us

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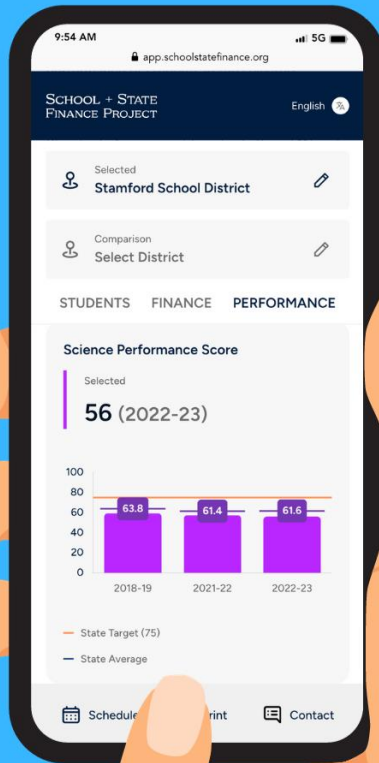
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 **student performance**

 **school finance**

 **demographics**

developed by

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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**



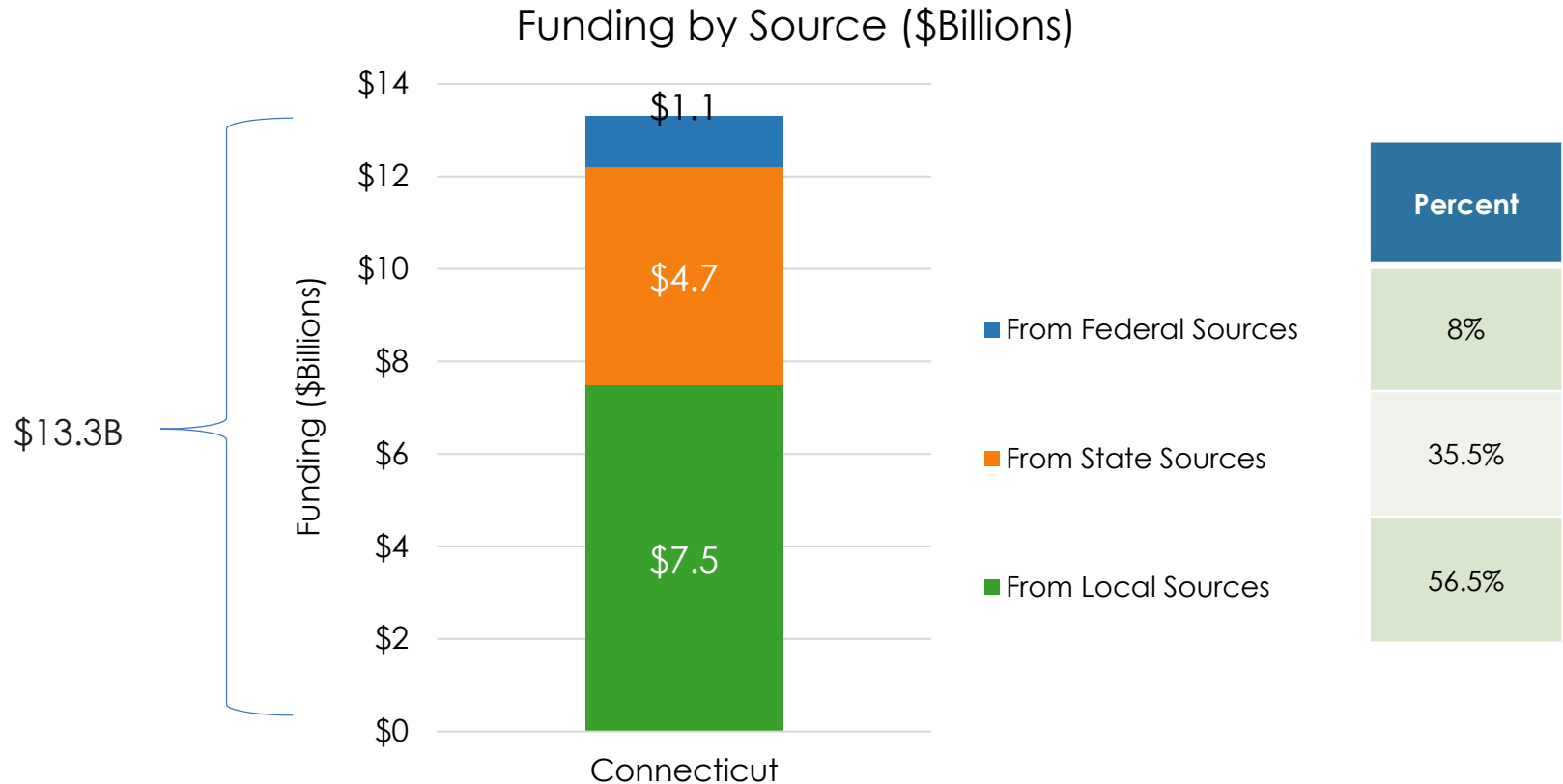
**Schools**



**Communities**

# OVERVIEW

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

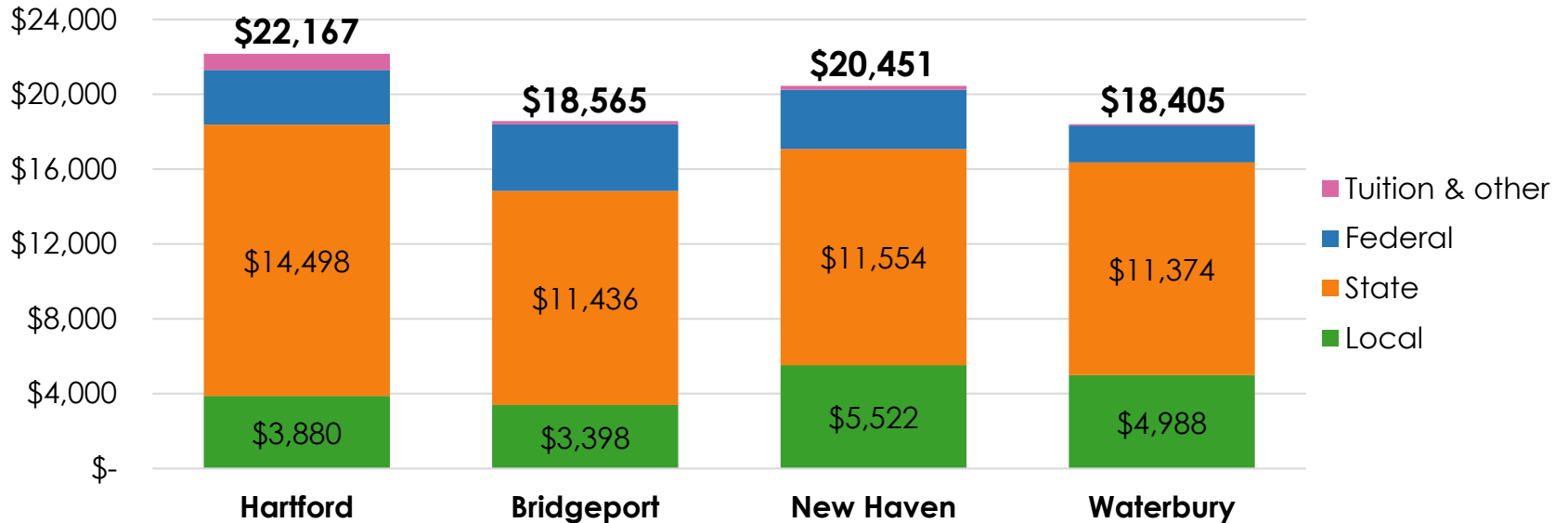


Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). Table 1: Summary of Public Elementary-Secondary School System Finances by State: Fiscal Year 2022. *2022 Annual Survey of School System Finances*. Washington, DC: Author. Available from <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2022/econ/school-finances/secondary-education-finance.html>.

# HARTFORD EDUCATION SPENDING

# Hartford spends \$1,024 more per student than the state average (\$21,143)

## Per-Student Funding by Source



Student Demographics	Hartford	Bridgeport	New Haven	Waterbury
Low-Income	78.9%	80.6%	74.7%	77.1%
Multilingual Learners	23.9%	26.3%	20.5%	18.1%
Students w/ Disabilities	20.3%	19.5%	15.6%	19.6%
BILPOC Students	93%	91.1%	89.5%	88.9%



STATE FUNDING  
VIA THE EDUCATION  
COST SHARING  
FORMULA (ECS)

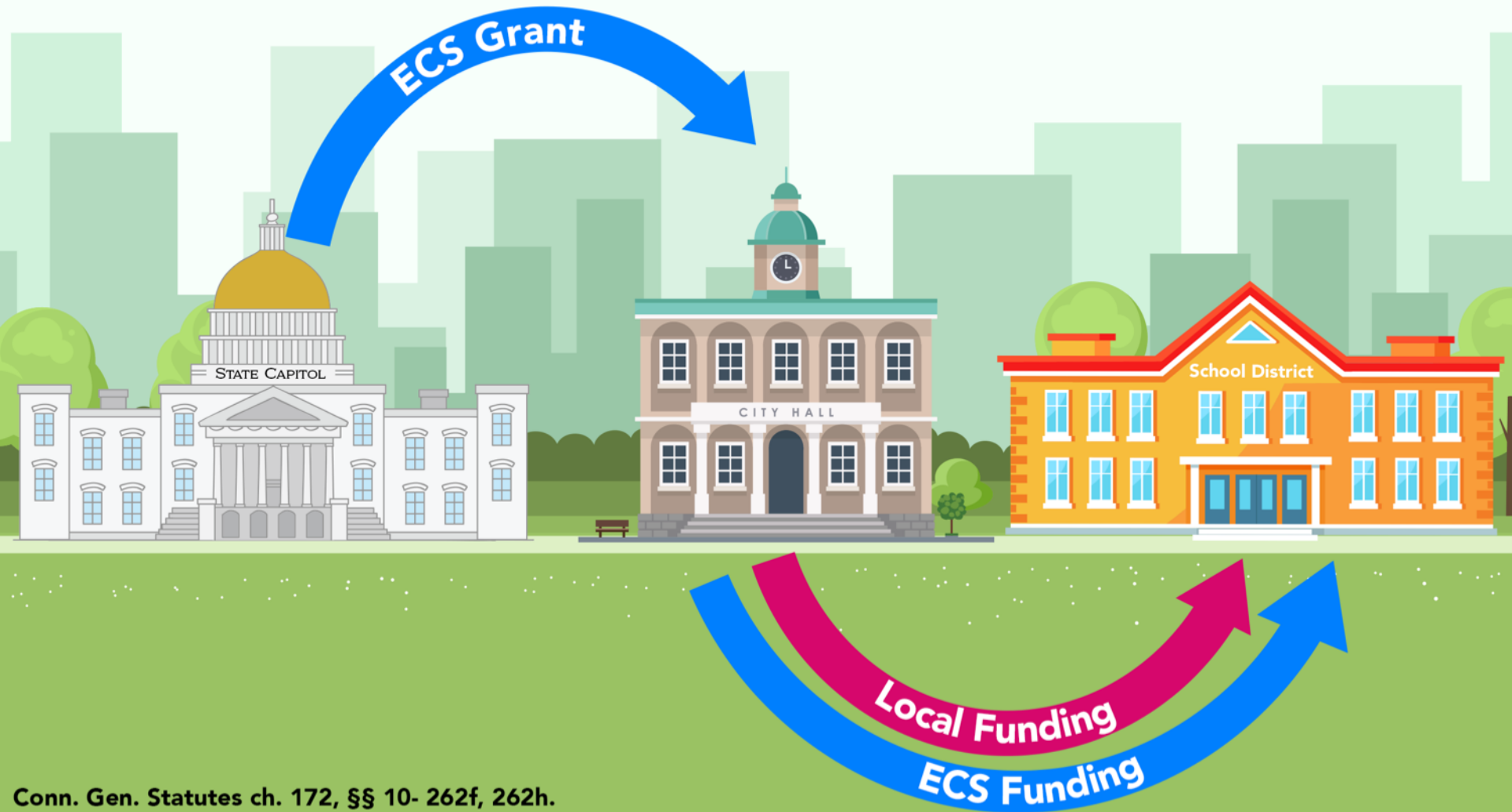
**The ECS formula is used to distribute state education aid to municipalities for their local or regional public school districts**

# 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

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



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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%



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# 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

# Phase-In/Out Schedule

- Formula began implementation in FY 2019
- Towns receiving increases will be phased in over 8 years (**towns receive full funding in 2026**)
- Towns receiving decreases will be phased out over 14 years (**phase-out paused for FYs 2022-25**)
- Alliance Districts that would otherwise receive a decrease in their grant amounts are held harmless so they won't experience cuts to their ECS funding.

Phase-in Schedule			
	FYs 2024 and 2025	FYs 2026-2031	FY 2032
Towns Receiving Increase in ECS Funding Over Prior Year ECS Grant	ECS funding increased gradually	Towns receive 100% of their ECS grant	
Towns Receiving Decrease in ECS Funding Compared to Prior Year ECS Grant	Held harmless	ECS funding decreased gradually	Towns receive 100% of their ECS grant

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

# Hartford's ECS Components

# Hartford's ECS Components: Total Cost

FY 2025 ECS Model

Selected Town

Hartford

## 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	18,652	None	18,652
Low-income Student Count (i.e. # of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch)	16,077	30%	4,935
Multilingual Learners Count	4,823	25%	1,152
% of Low-income Students (determines eligibility for concentrated poverty weight)	86.20%	60%	793

<b>Need Student Count</b>	<b>25,414</b>
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<b>Foundation</b>	x	<b>Need Student Count</b>	=	<b>Foundation x NSC</b>
\$11,525	x	25,414	=	\$292,891,740

# Hartford's Calculated Base Aid Ratio

FY 2025 ECS Model

Selected Town

Hartford

### 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%. Towns with a PIC rank of 0 do not receive a PIC bonus and do not have a score because they are not among the 42 highest ranked towns.</p>	Variable	Value	Variable	Value
	Equalized Net Grand List per Capita (ENGLPC)	\$61,879	CT Median ENGL	\$172,274
	Median Household Income (MHI)	\$37,477	CT Median MHI	\$95,553
	Alliance District	Yes		
	Public Investment Communities (PIC) Index Rank	1		
	PIC Score	499		
	PIC Index Factor BAR Adjustment	0.06		

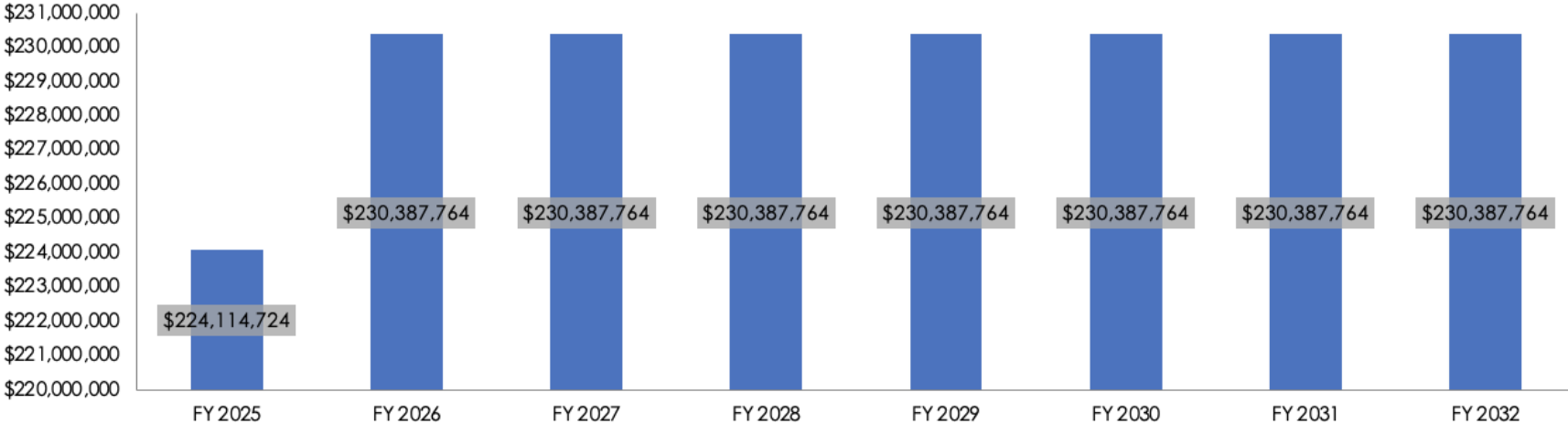
<b>Base Aid Ratio</b>	<b>76.36%</b>
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<b>Foundation</b>	x	<b>Need Student Count</b>	x	<b>Base Aid Ratio</b>	=	<b>Initial Grant</b>
\$11,525	x	25,414	x	76.36%	=	\$223,653,890

# ECS Phase-In for Hartford

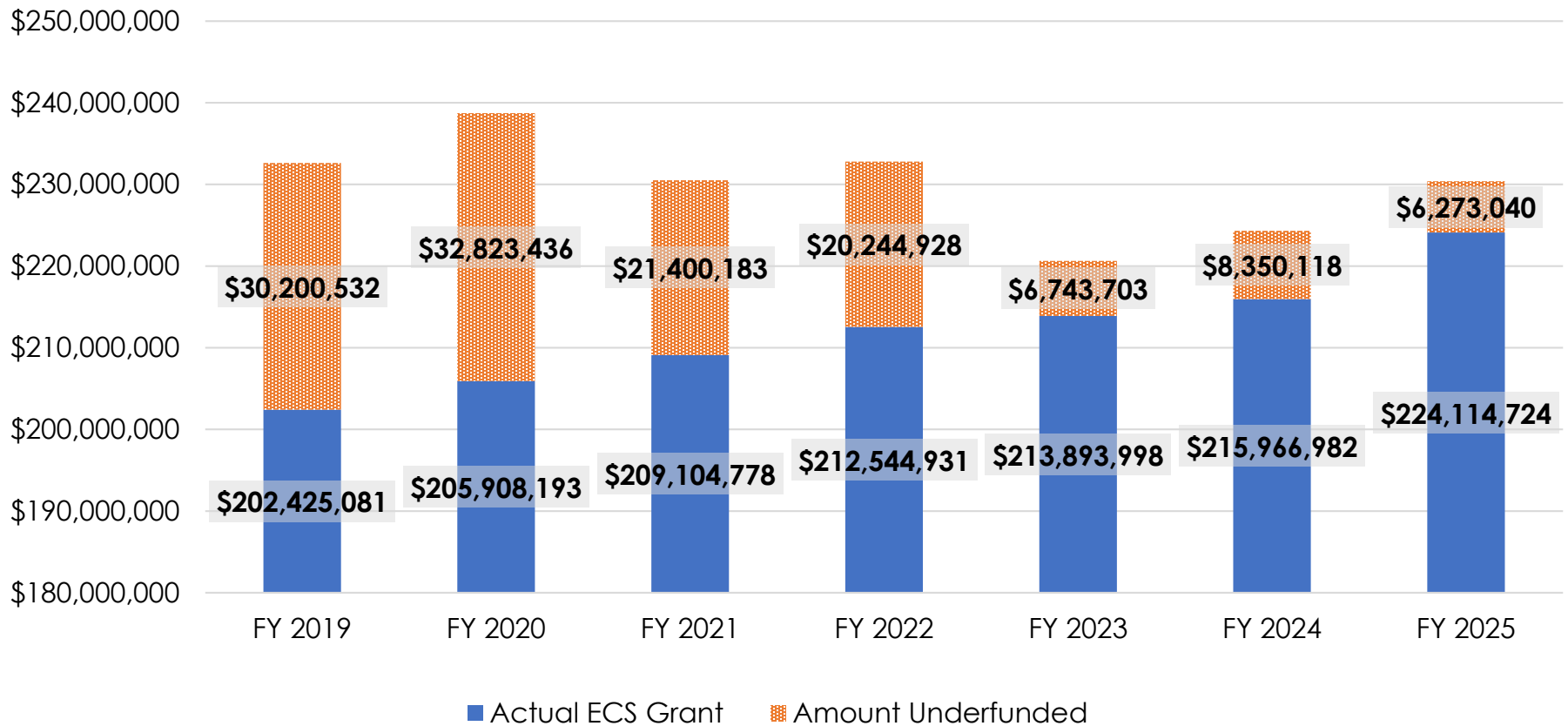
	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031	FY 2032
<b>Projected Grant</b>	\$224,114,724	\$230,387,764	\$230,387,764	\$230,387,764	\$230,387,764	\$230,387,764	\$230,387,764	\$230,387,764
<b>Projected Change from FY 2024</b>	\$8,147,742	\$14,420,782	\$14,420,782	\$14,420,782	\$14,420,782	\$14,420,782	\$14,420,782	\$14,420,782

**Town ECS Grant Projections**



# Since the start of the ECS formula in FY 2019, Hartford has received \$126M less than what full funding called for

## Hartford ECS Grants and Amount Underfunded by Year



# 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.**



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# 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 Value of Grand Lists Varies Widely

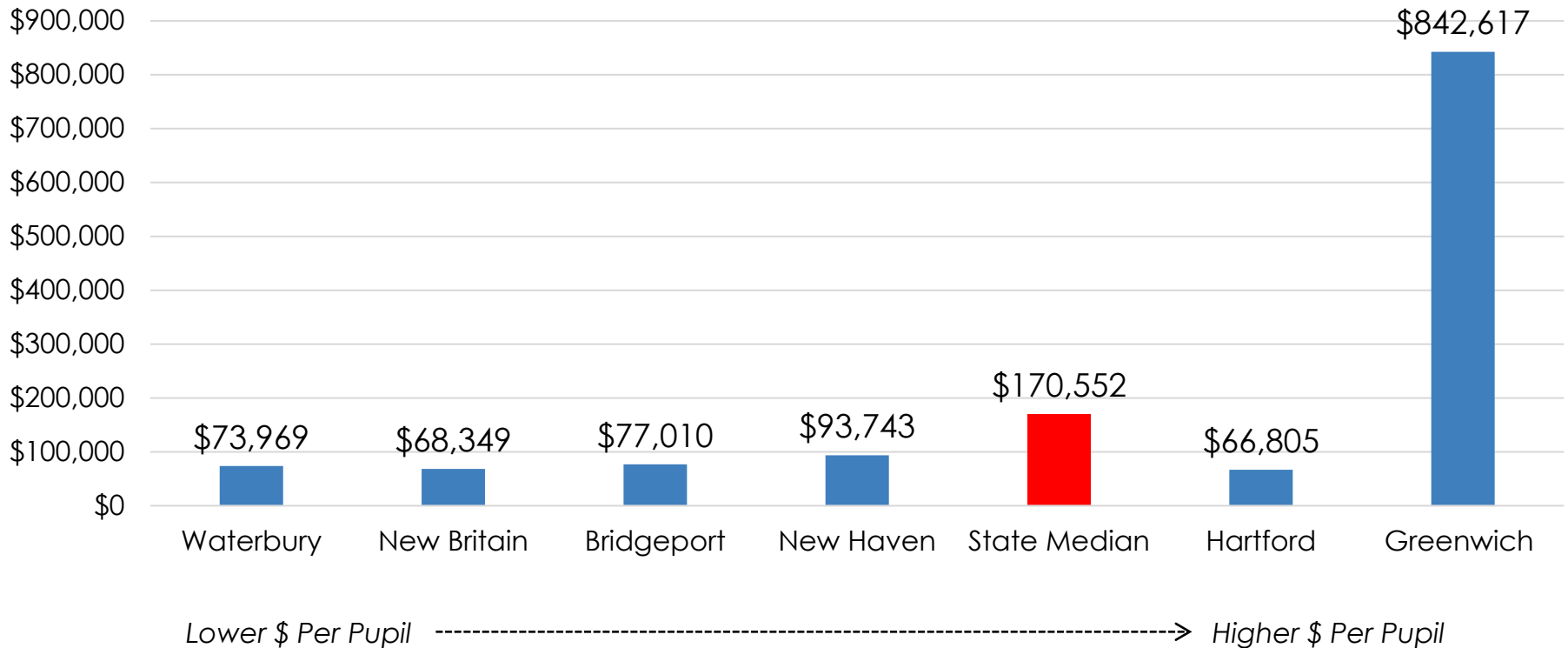
Municipality	Equalized Net Grand List GLYR 2022
GREENWICH	\$62,632,853,187
STAMFORD	\$43,785,874,323
NORWALK	\$27,515,255,112
WESTPORT	\$22,964,312,305
FAIRFIELD	\$22,275,269,235
...	...
<b>HARTFORD</b>	<b>\$9,942,291,173</b>
...	...
<b>STATE MEDIAN</b>	<b>\$2,630,152,182</b>
...	...
CANAAN	\$338,781,167
EASTFORD	\$322,116,821
HAMPTON	\$298,495,601
SCOTLAND	\$251,179,289
UNION	\$211,355,052

**\$62.4B**

Source: State of Connecticut, Office of Policy and Management. (2024). Equalized Net Grand List by Town (2011-2022 GL). Available from [https://data.ct.gov/Local-Government/Equalized-Net-Grand-List-by-Town-2011-2022-GL-/8rr8-a322/about\\_data](https://data.ct.gov/Local-Government/Equalized-Net-Grand-List-by-Town-2011-2022-GL-/8rr8-a322/about_data).

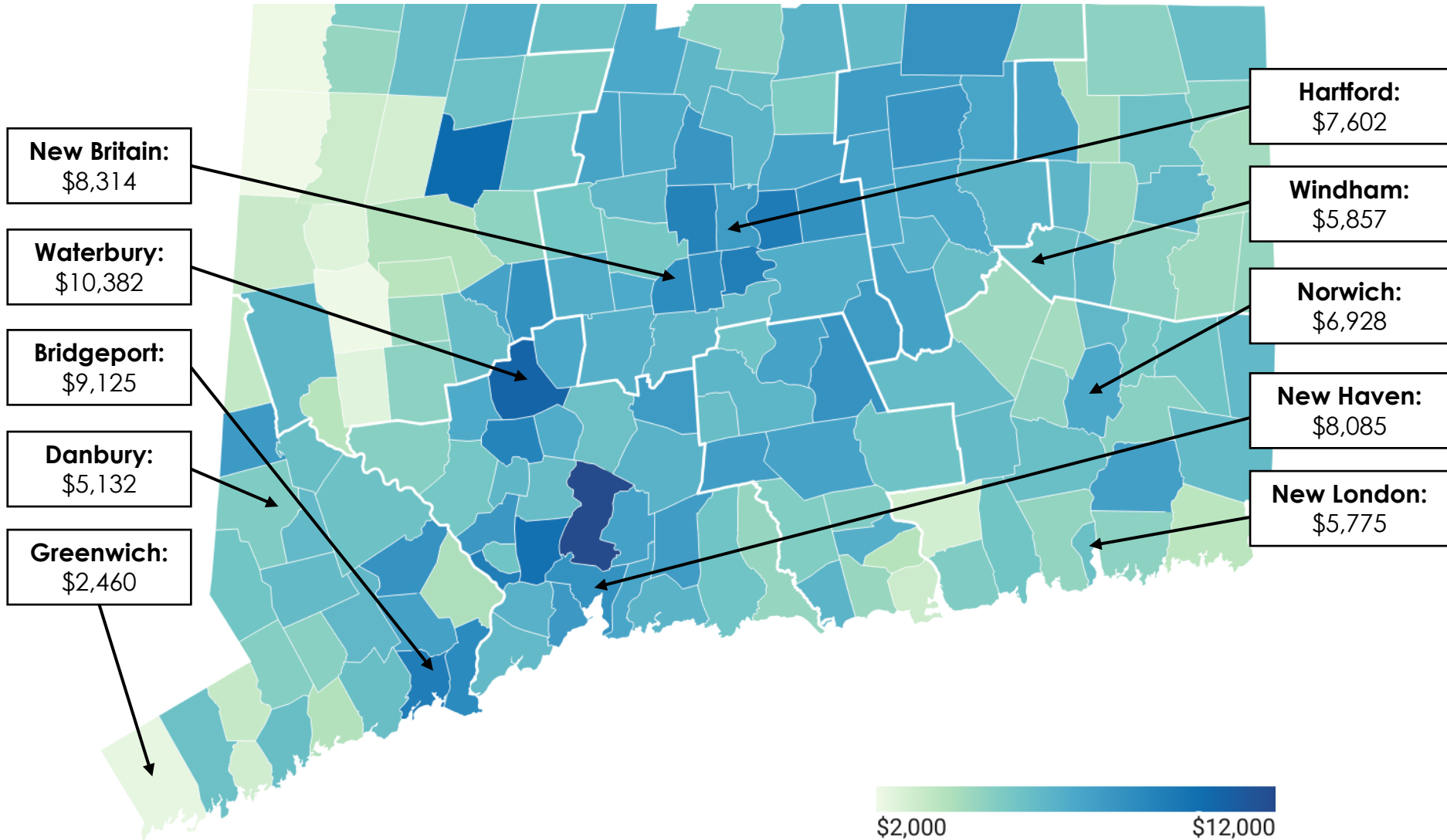
# Equalized Net Grand List per Capita (ENGLPC) represents the value of taxable property in a town per resident

## Equalized Net Grand List per Capita by Town



Sources: State of Connecticut, Office of Policy and Management. (2024). *Municipal Fiscal Indicators, Fiscal Years Ended 2018-2022*. Hartford, CT: Author. Retrieved from <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/opm/finance/mfs-unit/municipal-fiscal-indicators/municipal-fiscal-indicators-2018-22---final.pdf>. Connecticut State Department of Education. (n.d.). *Per Pupil Expenditures by Function (District), 2022-2023*. Retrieved from [https://public-edsight.ct.gov/overview/per-pupil-expenditures-by-function---district?language=en\\_US](https://public-edsight.ct.gov/overview/per-pupil-expenditures-by-function---district?language=en_US).

# Property Taxes on a \$300,000 House



# IMPACT OF THE CONNECTICUT FUNDING SYSTEM ON HPS

## Other Considerations for HPS

- In 1996, the Connecticut Supreme Court ruled in *Sheff v. O'Neill* that Hartford's public schools are racially segregated and in violation of the Connecticut Constitution's anti-segregation provision.
- The Court found that the racial segregation deprived the plaintiff's children of their right to substantially equal educational opportunity and ordered the State to develop a constitutional remedy.
- As a result, Hartford Public Schools is uniquely impacted by the overall school choice and funding structure that exists in the state.

# Other Funding Formulas Affecting Hartford Public Schools

# 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

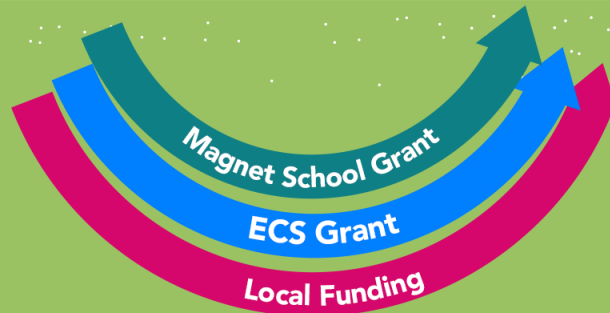
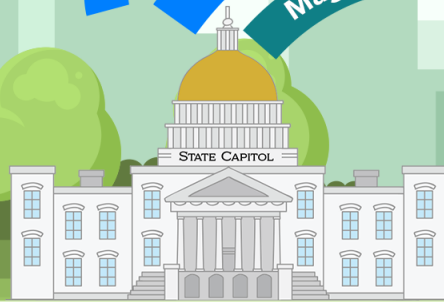
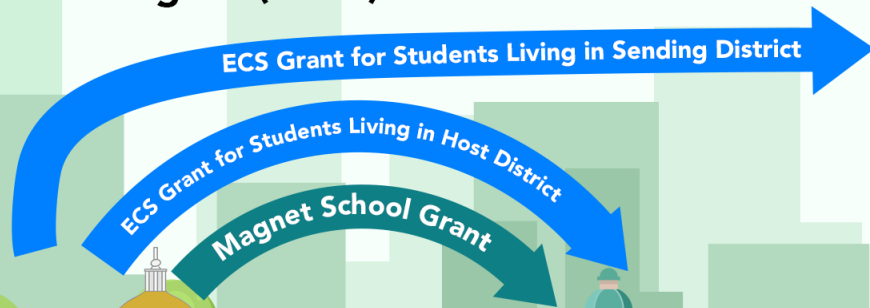
Beginning in FY 2025, tuition for magnet schools is capped at 58% of FY 2024 levels. Partial ECS-based weighted funding is provided to magnet schools for FY 2025.

Magnet School Grant

\*Amount depends on enrollment composition  
Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 172, § 10-264I.

# Host District Magnet (Sheff) (20 schools)

## Host District Magnet (Sheff)

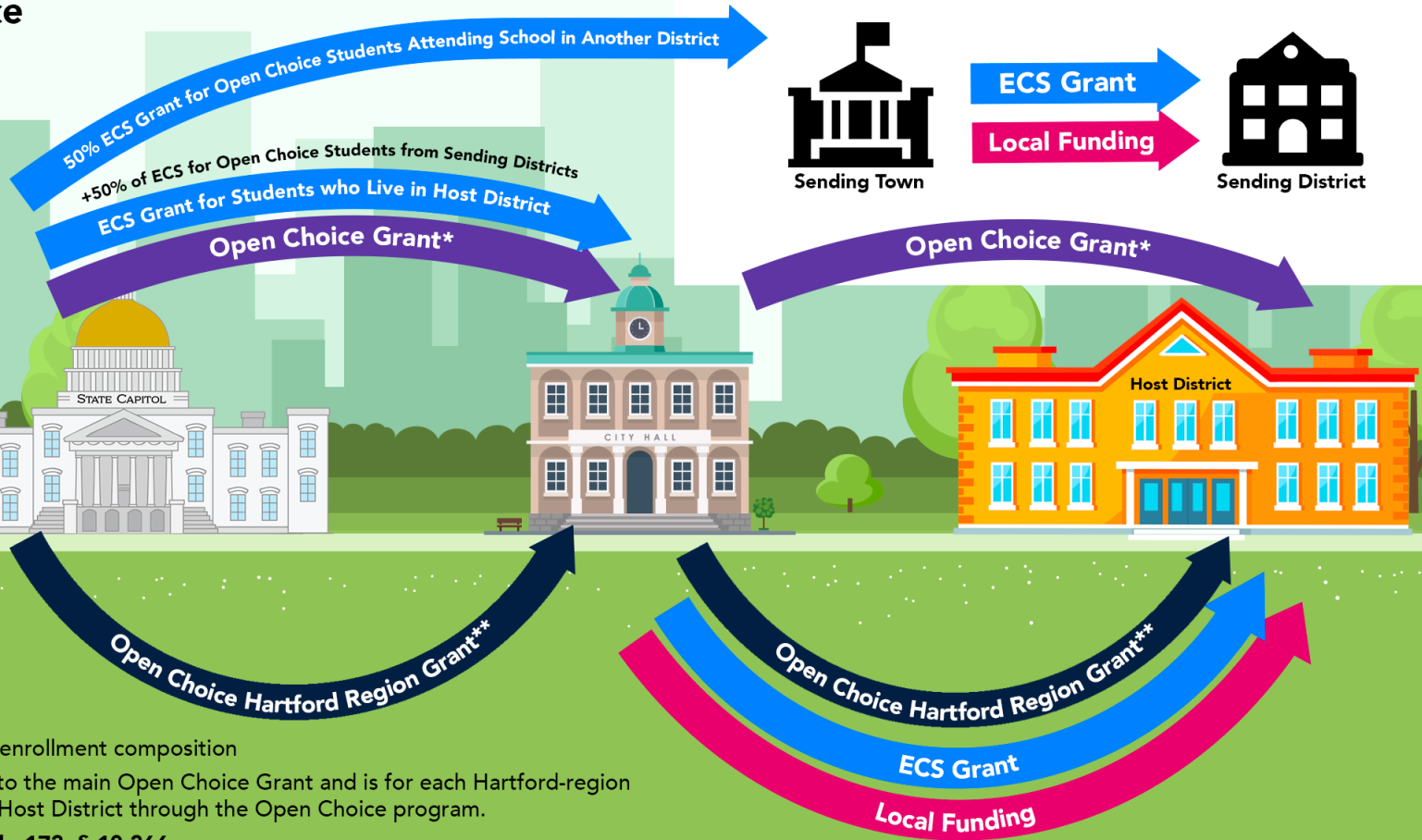


Partial ECS-based weighted funding is provided to magnet schools for FY 2025.

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

# Open Choice (47 participating districts)

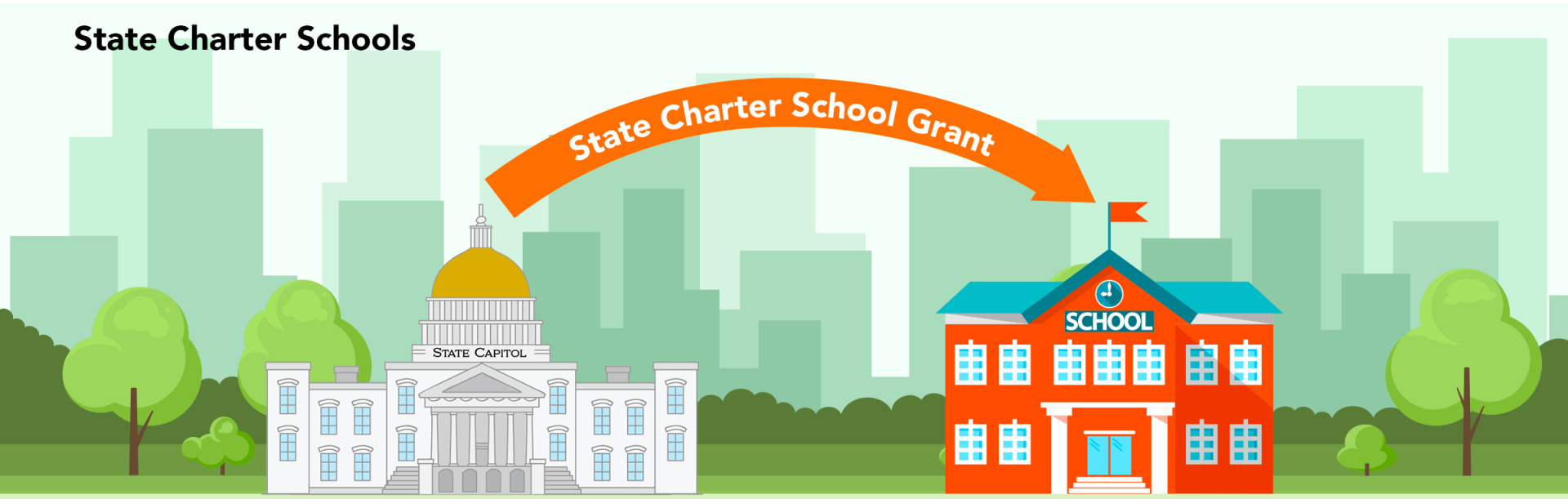
## Open Choice



\* 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.

# State Charter Schools (20 schools)

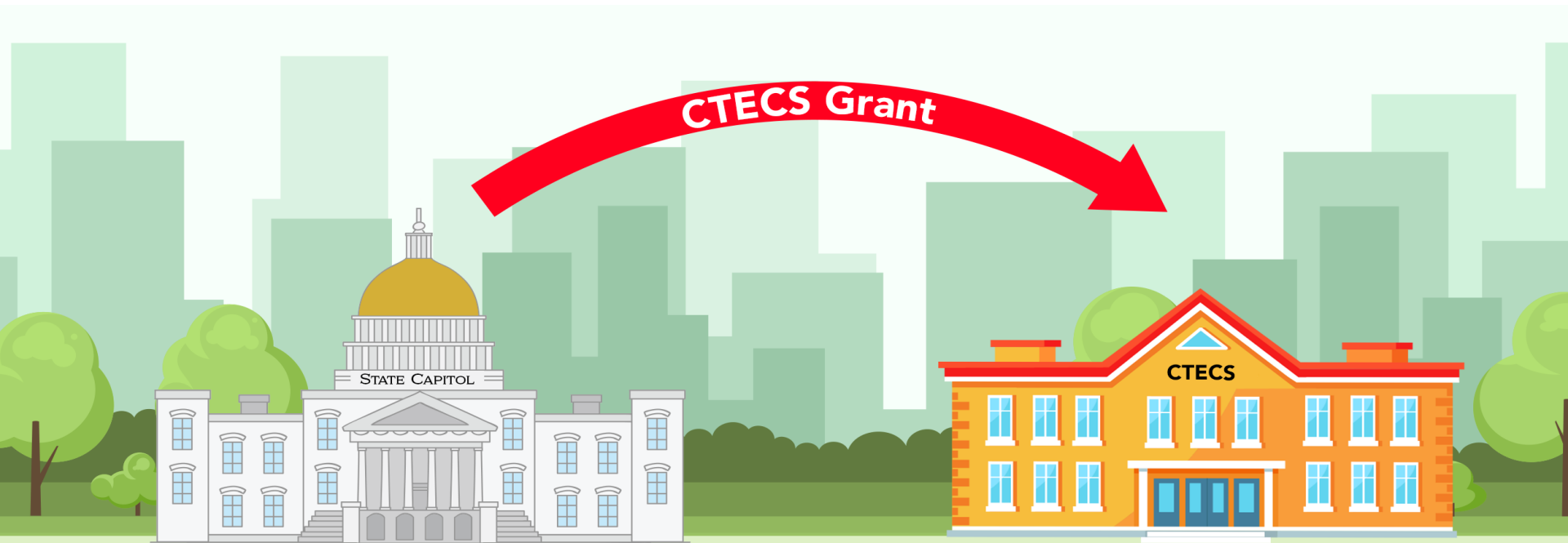
## State Charter Schools



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.

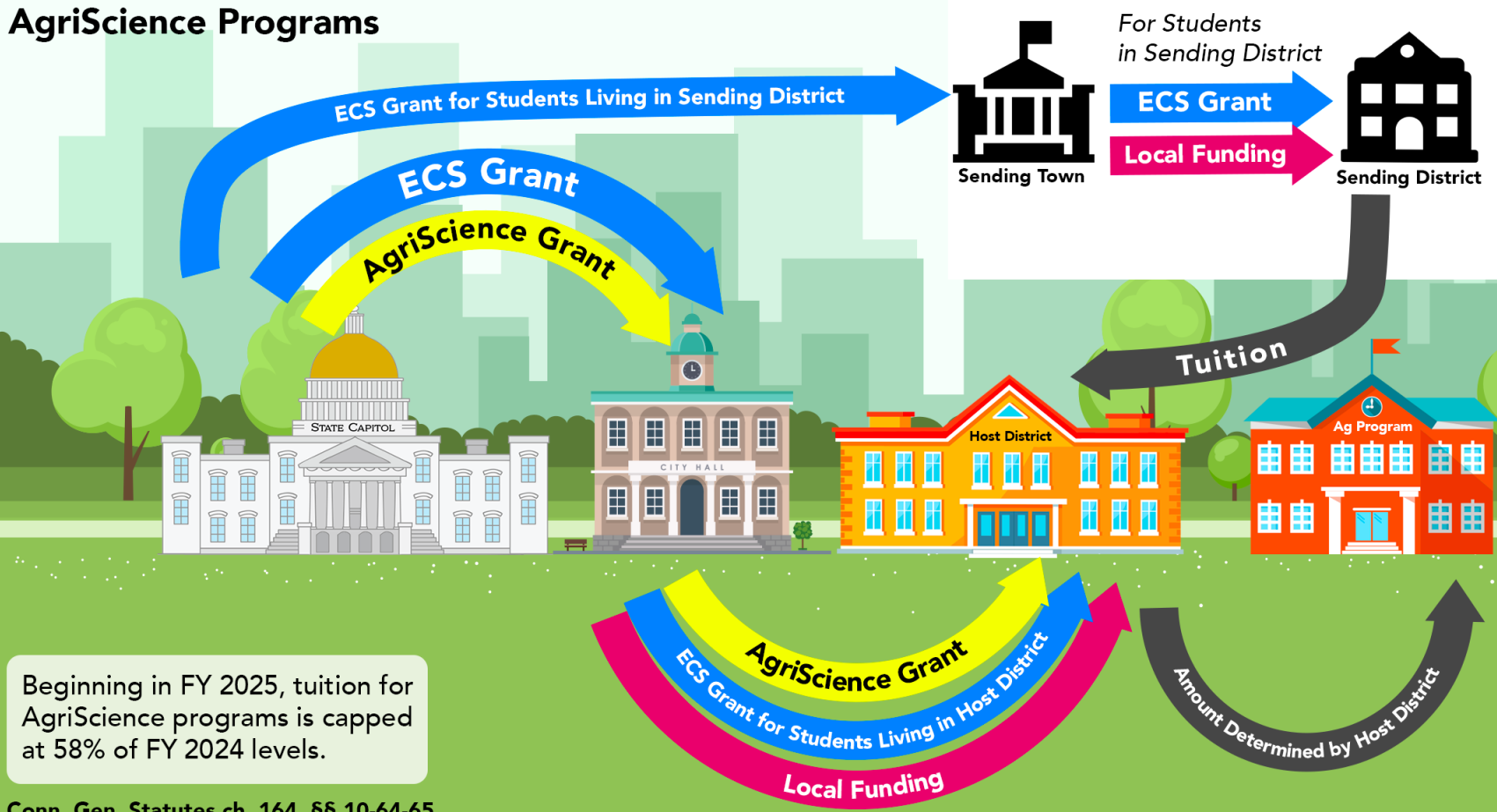
# CT Technical Education and Career System (20 schools)



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.

# Data Points to Consider

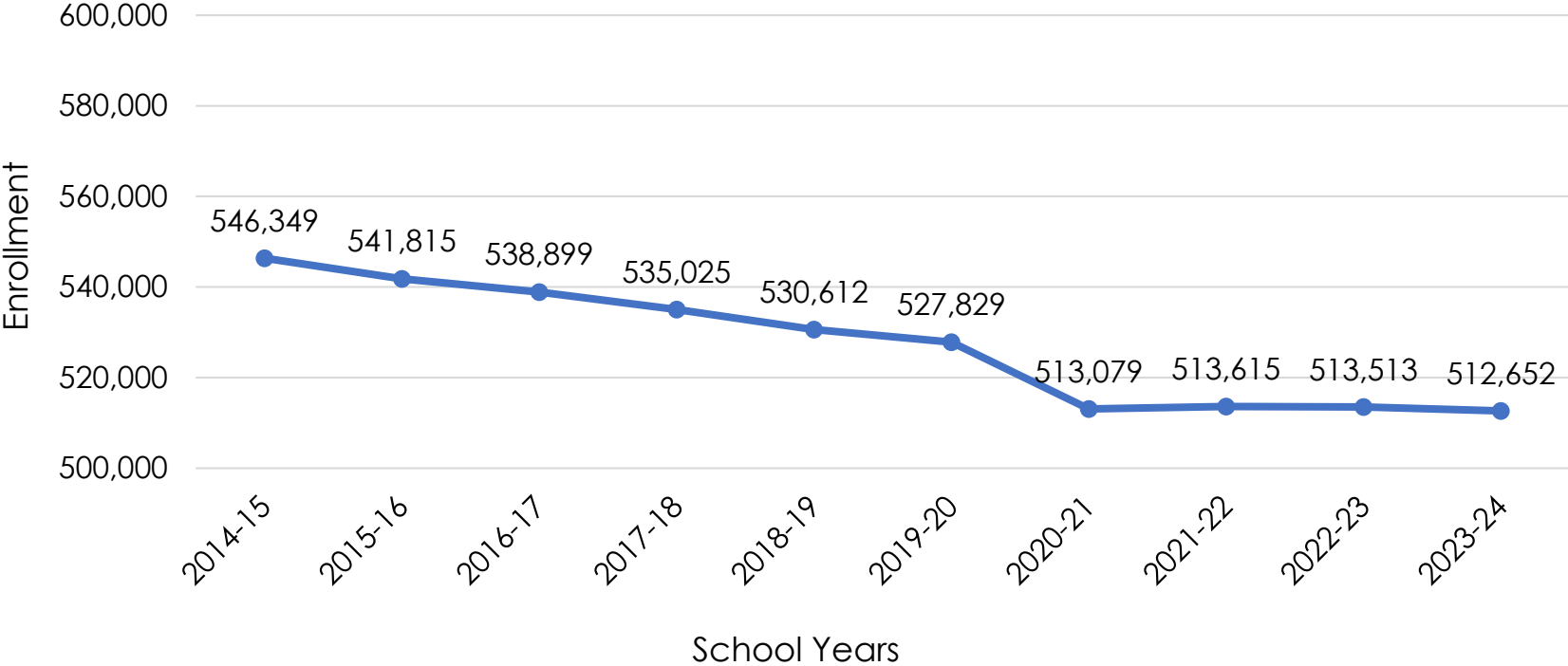
- The total number of students attending a Hartford BOE magnet school has decreased by 479 students between 2020 and 2024.
- The number of students that attend a magnet school not operated by HPS has increased by 608 students between 2019 and 2023.
- According to the latest data available, total tuition payments made by HPS have increased by \$49.8 million between 2014 and 2023, with the five-year increase totaling \$16.9 million (between 2019 and 2023).
- Hartford has budgeted \$117.6 million for tuition expenditures in FY 2025, this is an increase of \$12.6 million over the tuition expenditure in FY 2023.

# SPECIAL EDUCATION

# Enrollment

# Over the last 10 years, the total number of students in Connecticut public schools has declined by 6.2%

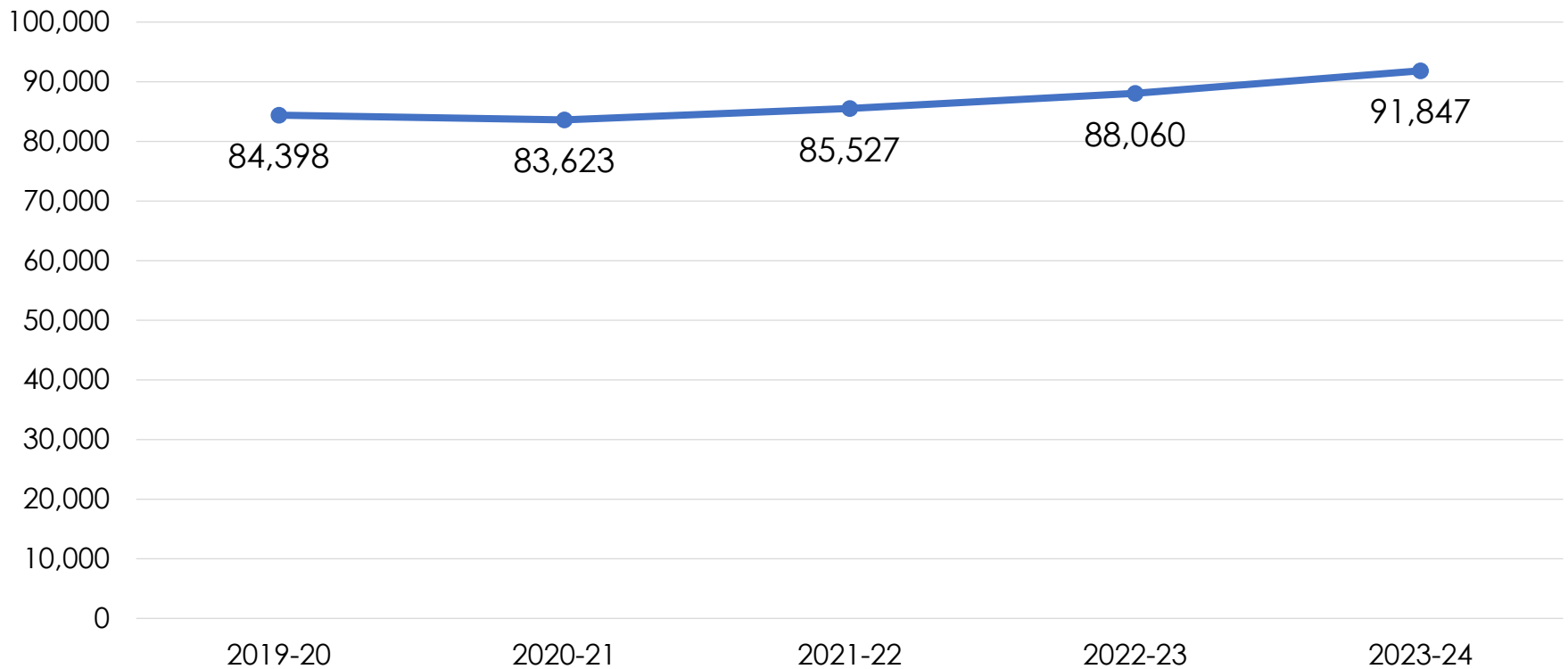
### Connecticut Public School Enrollment by School Year



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

# Despite declining enrollment, the total number of students with disabilities in Connecticut public schools has increased by 8.8% over the past 5 years

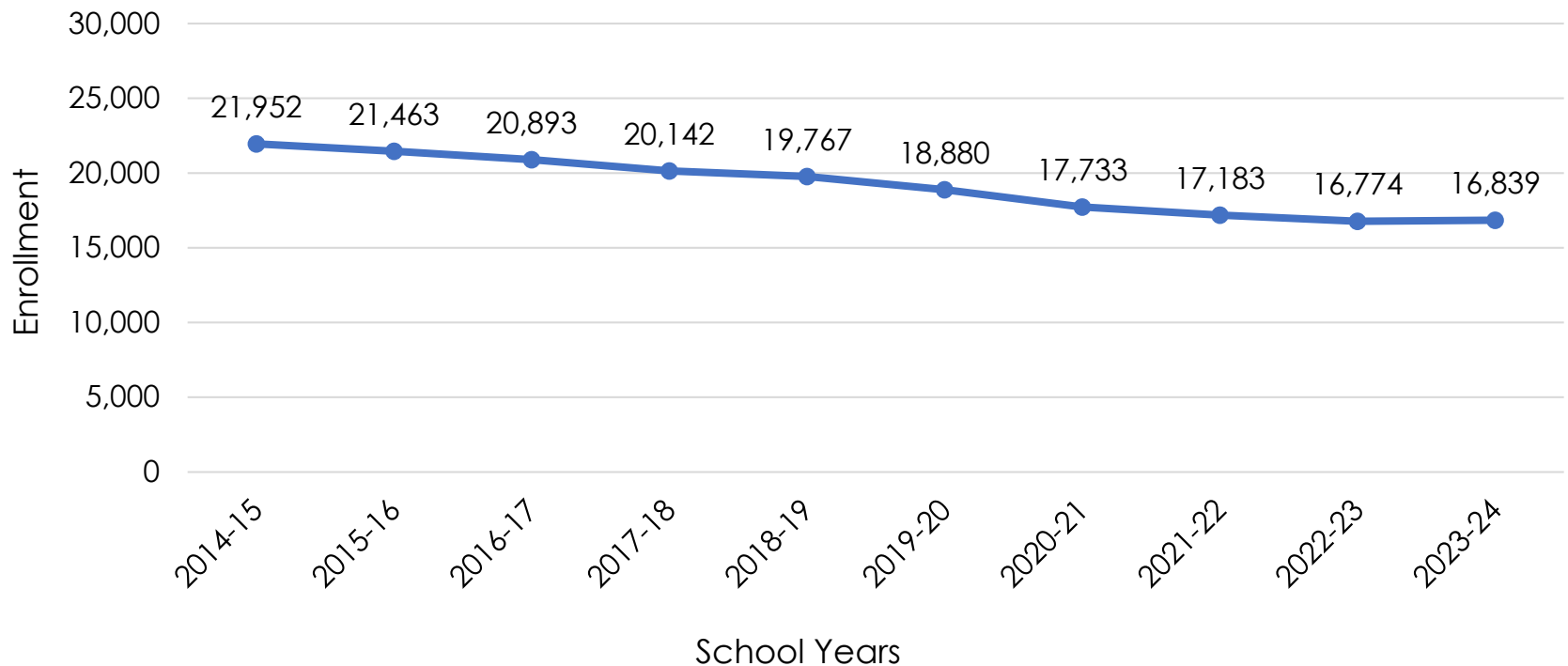
## Connecticut Students with Disabilities by School Year



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

Over the last 10 years, the total number of students enrolled in Hartford Public Schools has declined by 23%

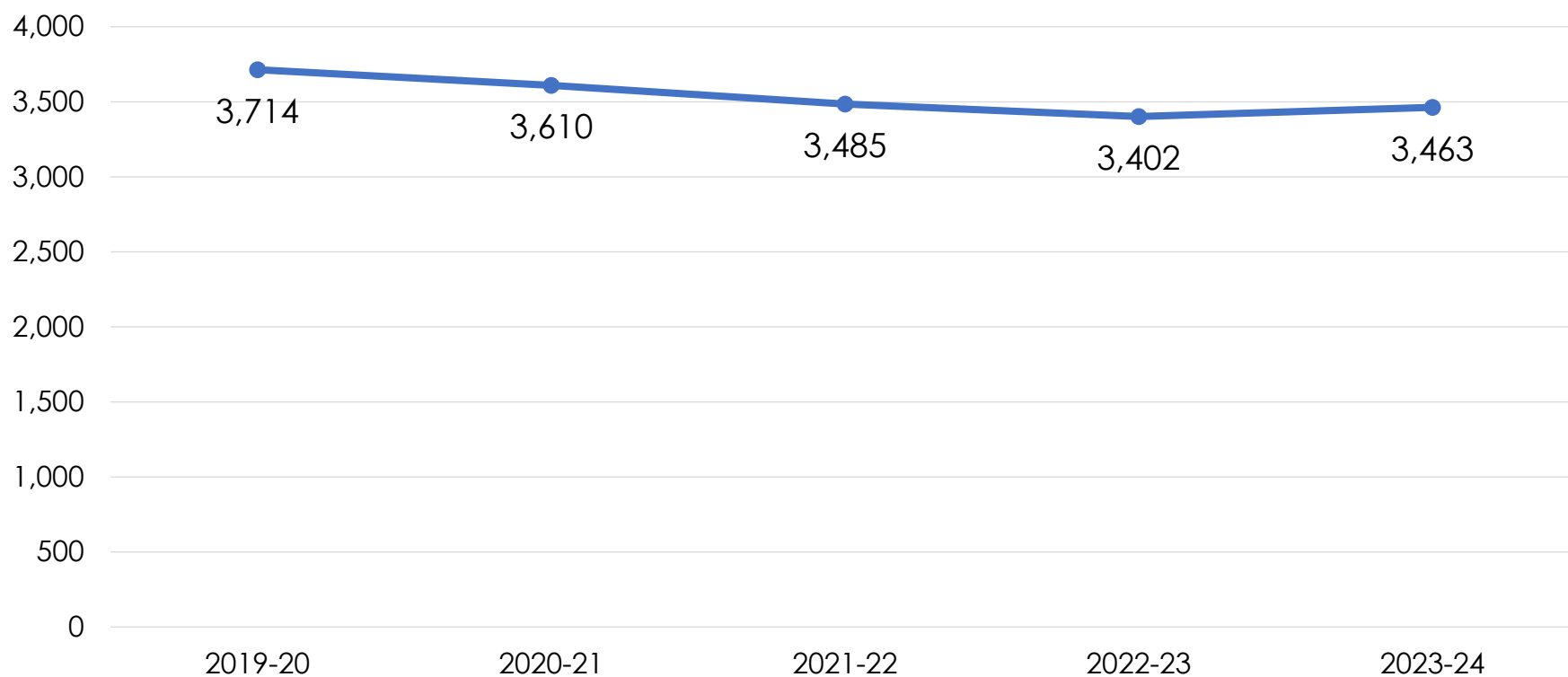
Hartford Public Schools Enrollment  
by School Year



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

## As enrollment has declined, so has the number of students with disabilities enrolled in Hartford Public Schools

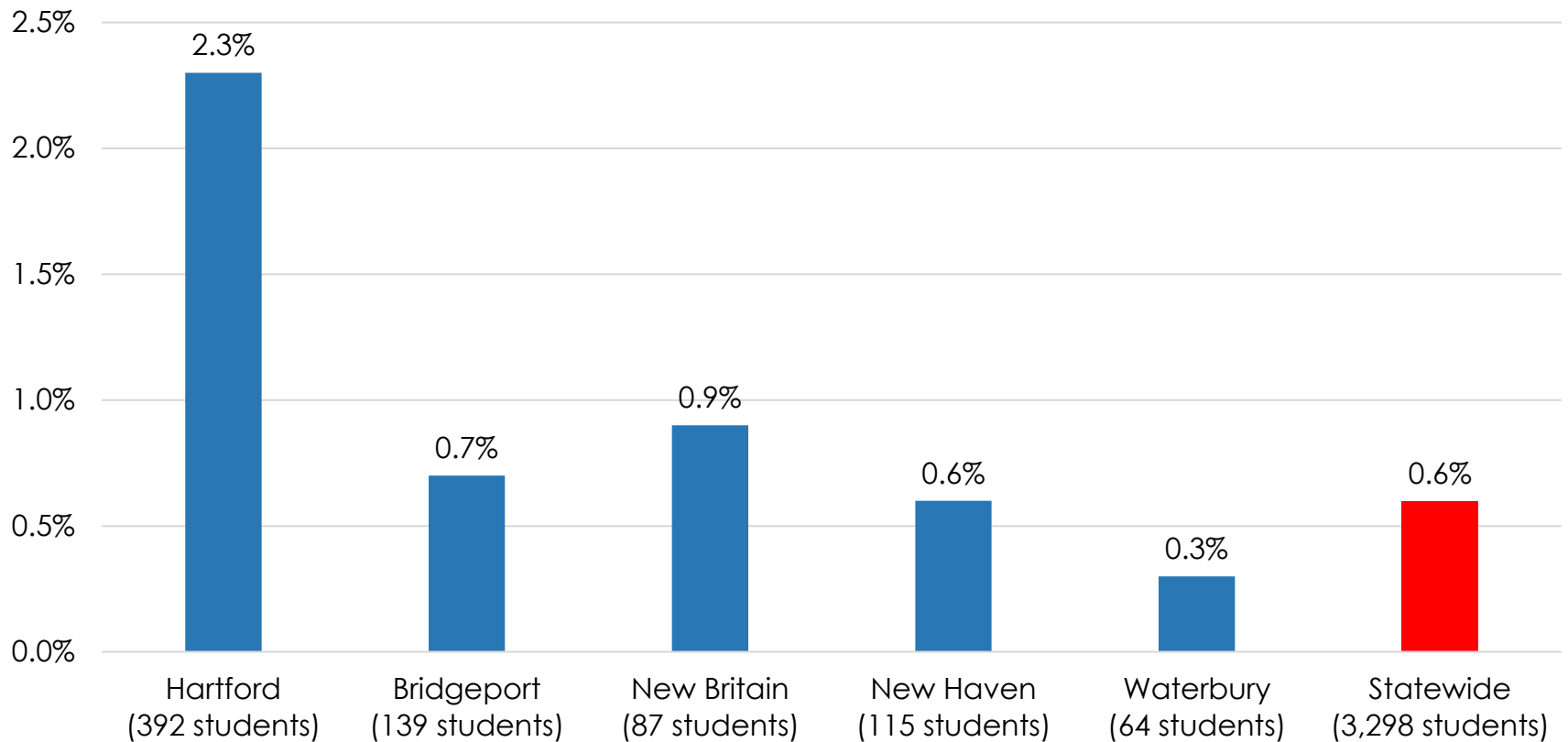
**Students with Disabilities by School Year, Hartford Public Schools**



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

# Hartford has the largest percentage of students with disabilities who are outplaced to private, residential, or out-of-state facilities

Percentage of Students with Disabilities Outplaced, 2022-23 School Year



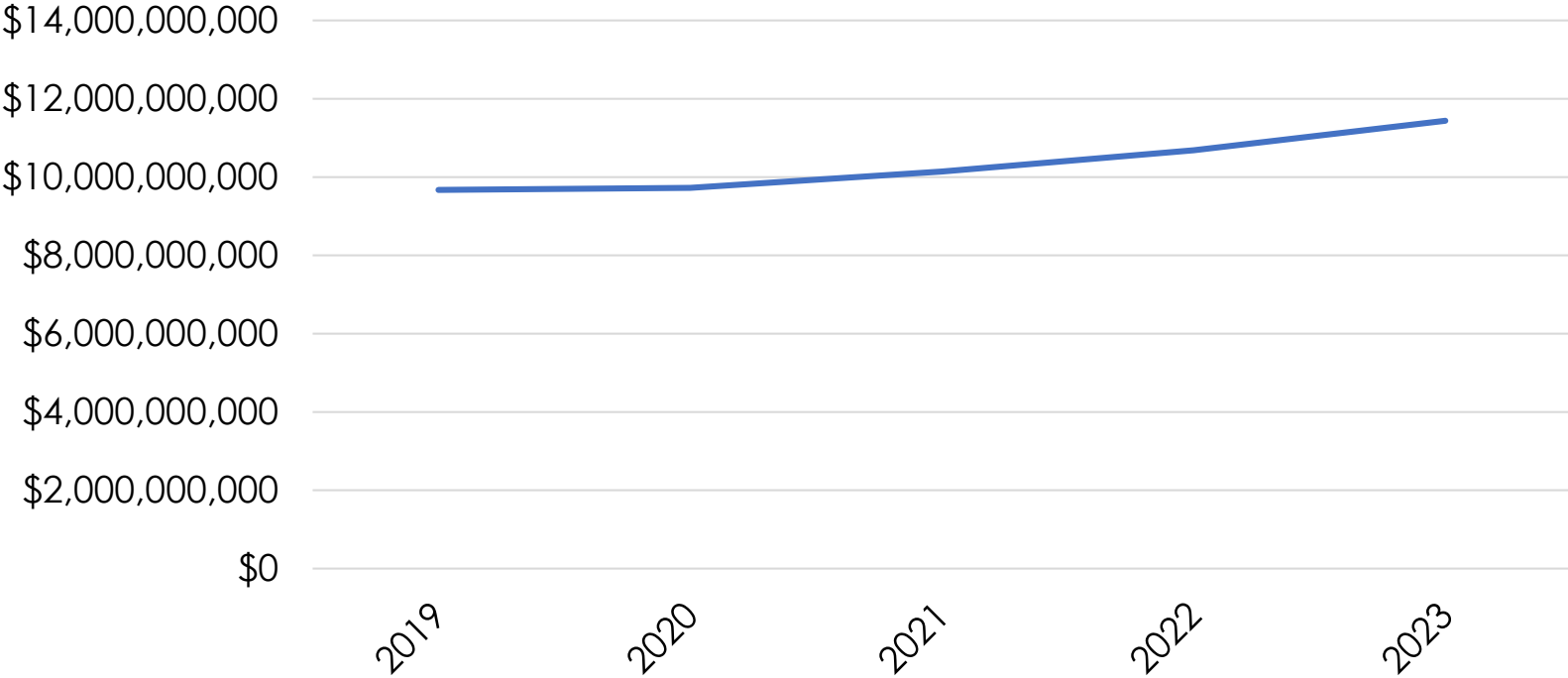
# Enrollment Summary

- From 2019-20 school year to 2023-24 school year:
  - Connecticut's overall enrollment declined by 15,177 (2.9%)
  - Hartford's overall enrollment declined by 2,041 (10.8%)
  - Connecticut's special education enrollment increased by 7,449 (8.8%)
  - Hartford's special education enrollment decreased by 251 (6.8%)

# State Spending on Special Education

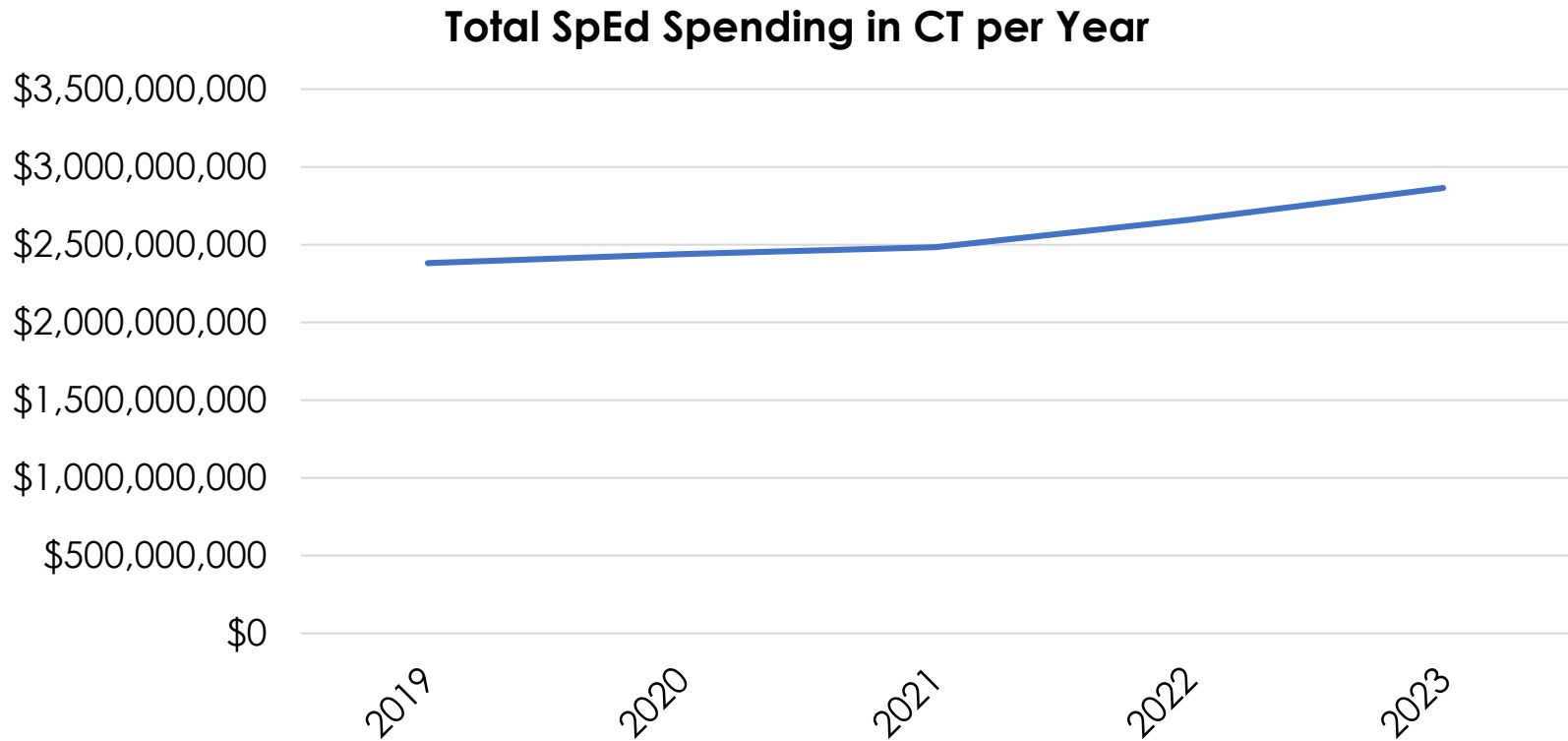
# At the state level, total education spending has increased by 18.2% over the past 5 years

**Total Education Spending in CT per Year**



Source: Connecticut State Department of Education. (n.d). EdSight: Per Pupil Expenditures by Function (District). Available from <https://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>.

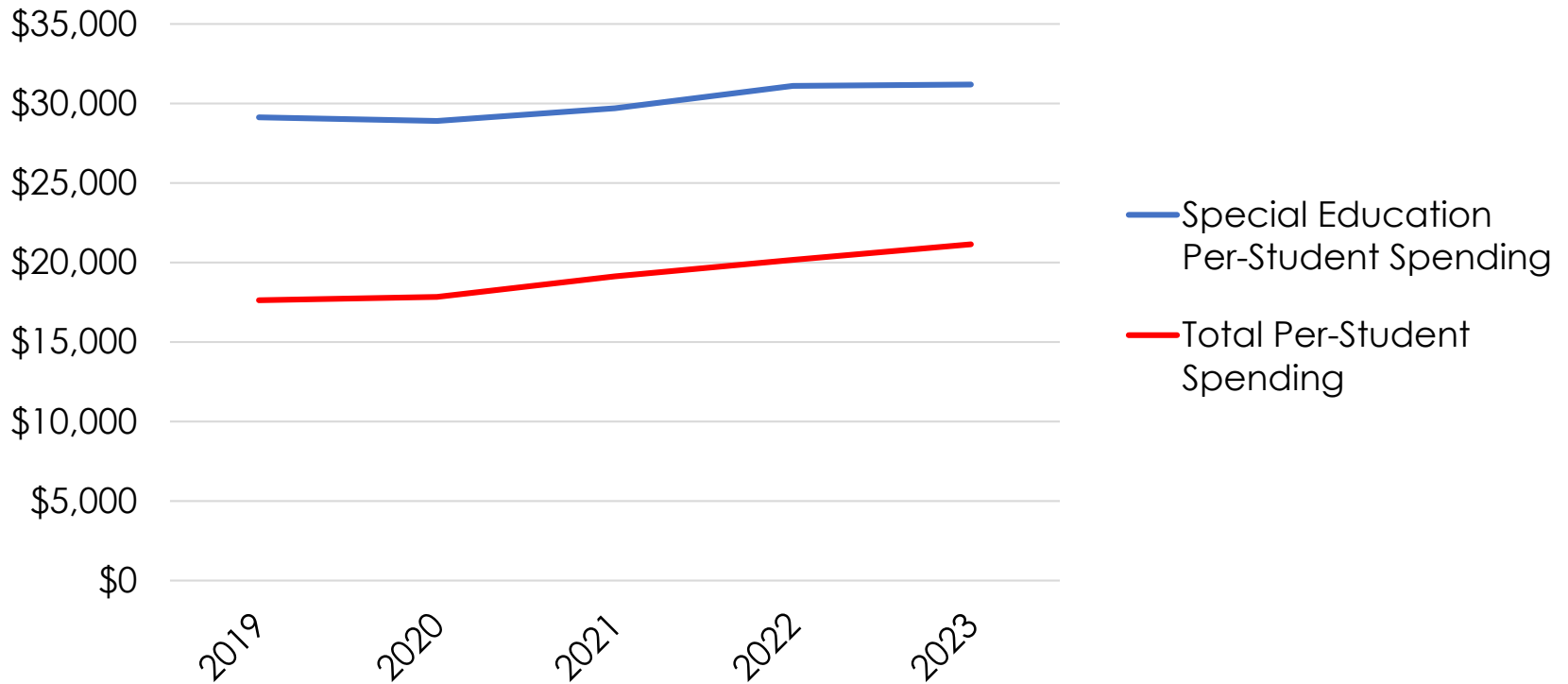
# At the state level, total special education spending has increased by 20.3% over the past 5 years



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

Over the past 5 years, total per-student spending has increased by \$3,514, while SpEd spending per-student has increased by \$2,062

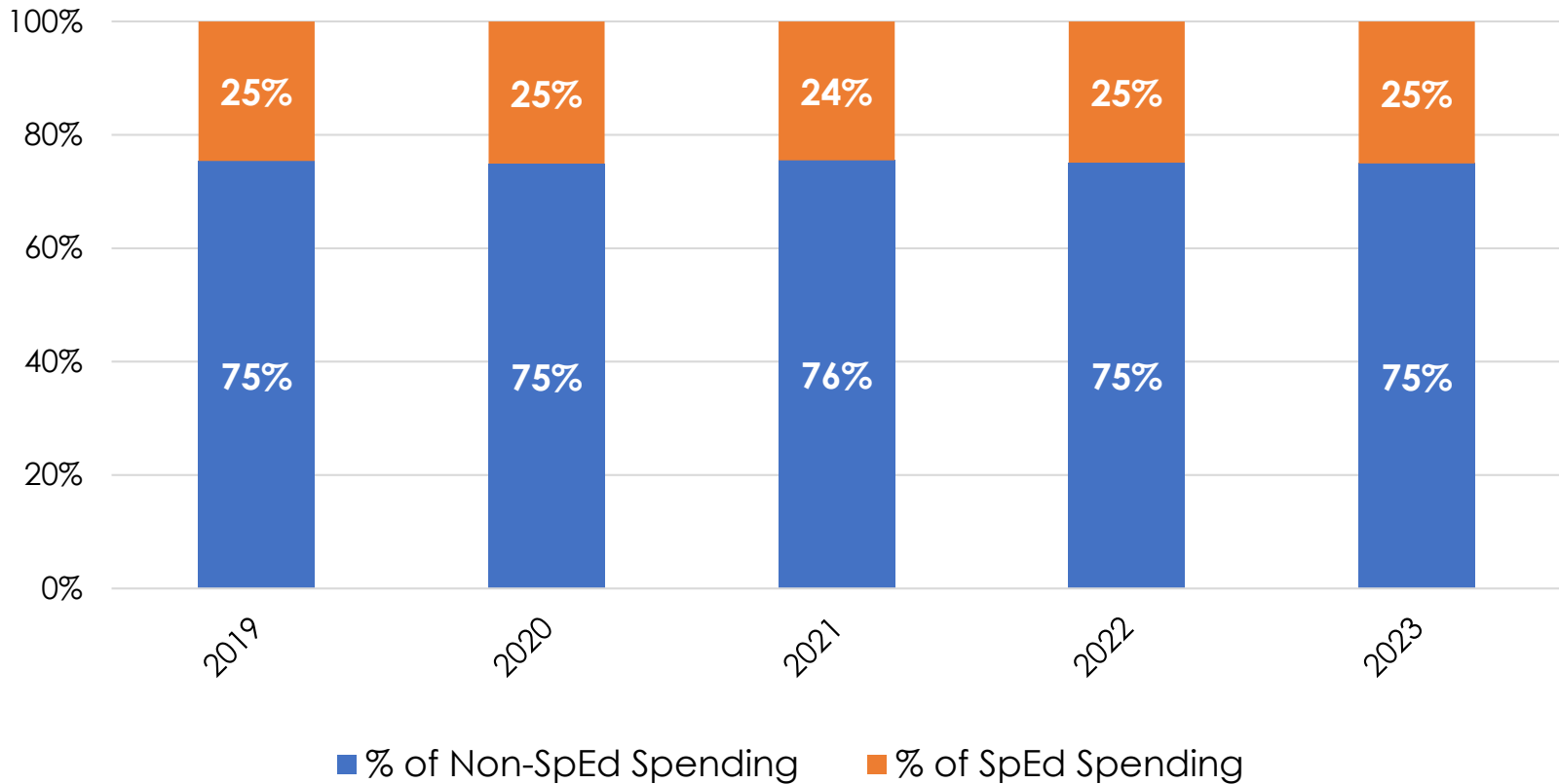
Spending Per-Student by School Year



Sources: Connecticut State Department of Education. (n.d). EdSight: Per Pupil Expenditures by Function (District). Available from <https://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>.  
Connecticut State Department of Education. (n.d). EdSight: Fiscal Resources; Special Education Expenditures. Available from <https://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>.  
Connecticut State Department of Education. (n.d.). EdSight: Public School Enrollment. Available from <http://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>.

# The percentage of total education spending attributed to special education has been consistent for the state over the past 5 years

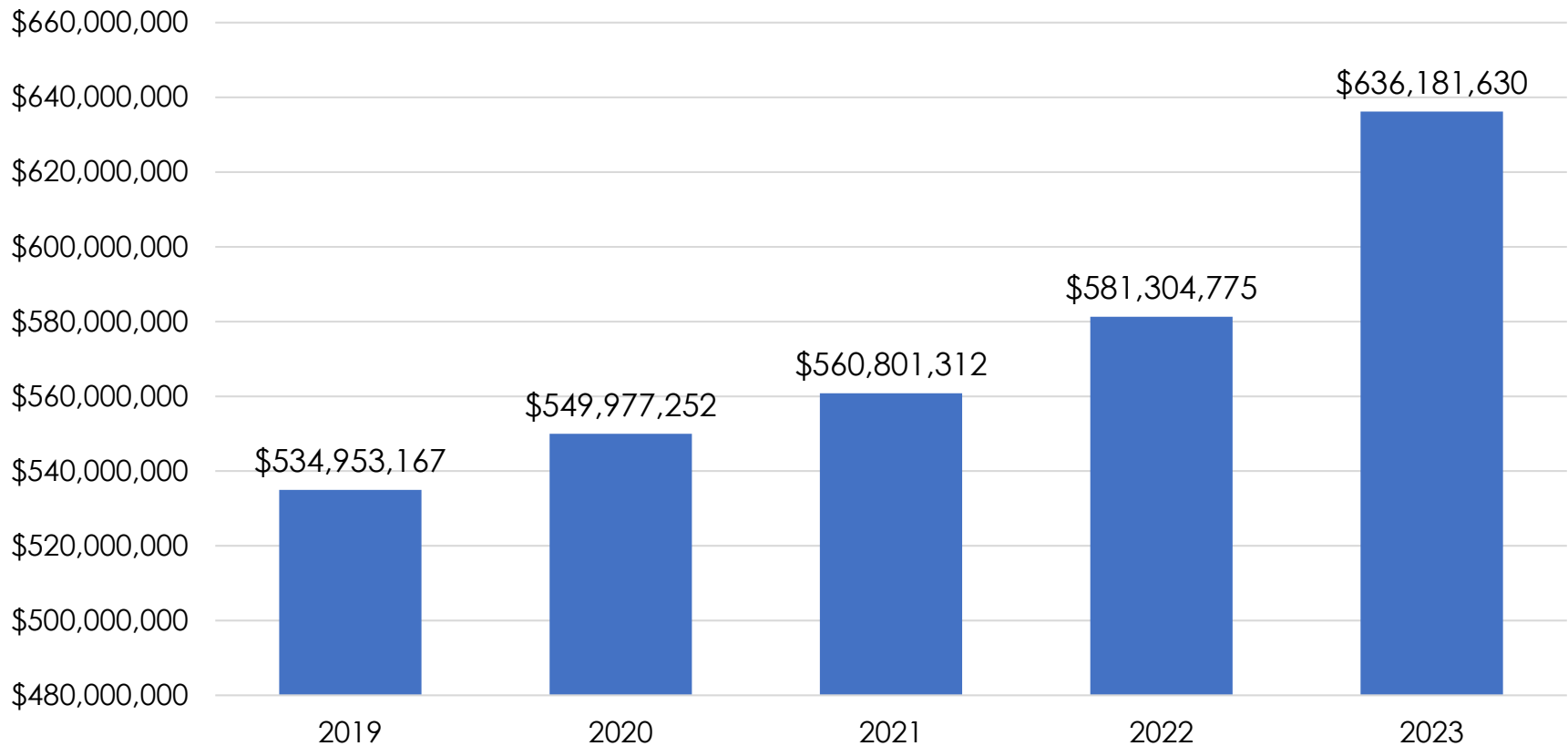
## Special Education Spending as a % of Total Spending by Year



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

# Total SpEd tuition expenditures have risen over \$101 million over the past 5 years

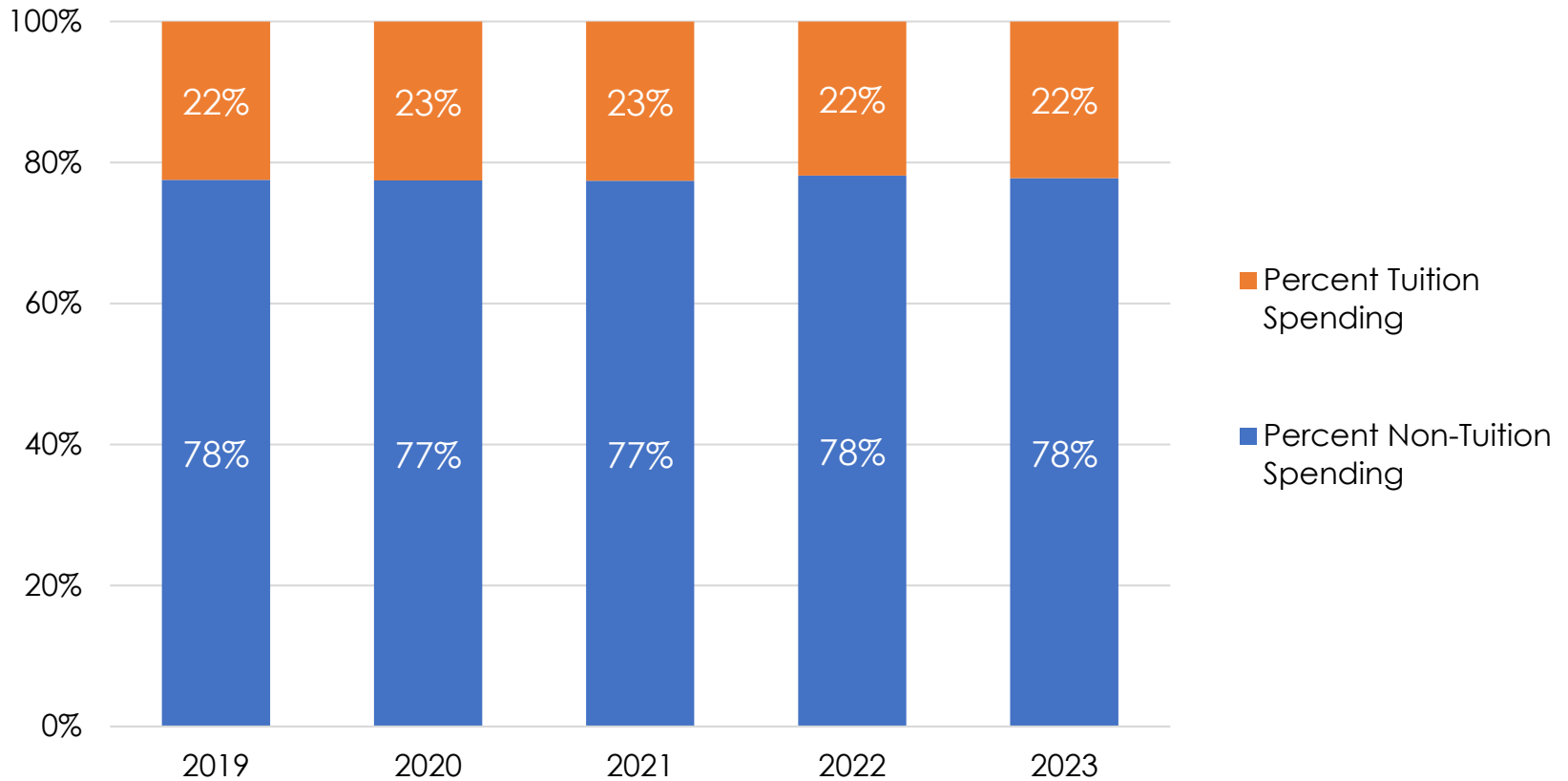
## Total Special Education Tuition Expenditures



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

# However, total tuition costs as a percentage of total SpEd expenditures have been consistent over the past 5 years

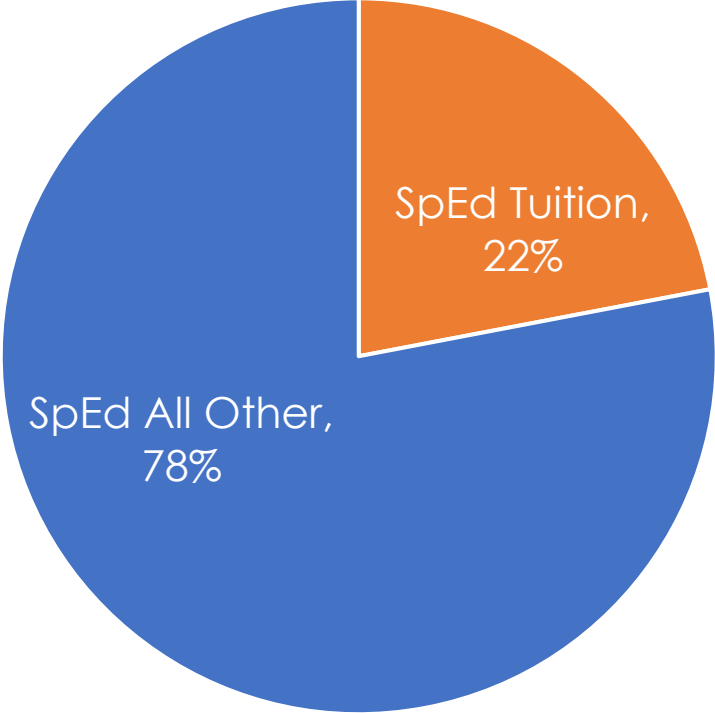
## SpEd Tuition as a Percentage of Total SpEd Spending by School Year



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

# In-district expenditures account for 78% of all special education spending

**Connecticut Special Education Expenditures,  
2022-23 School Year**

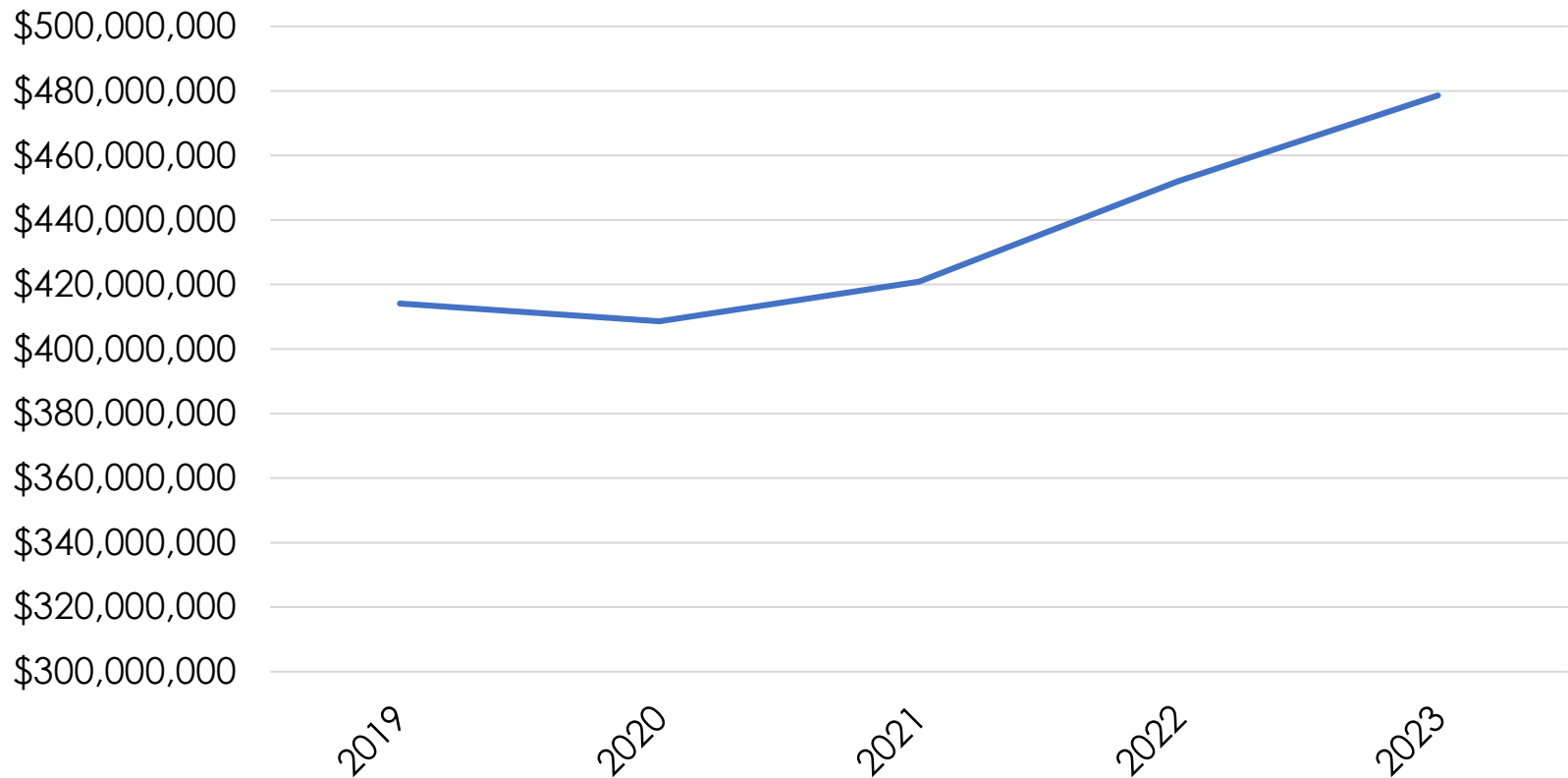


Source: Connecticut State Department of Education. (n.d). EdSight: Fiscal Resources; Special Education Expenditures. Available from <https://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>.

# Hartford Public Schools Spending on Special Education

# Total education spending for Hartford Public Schools has risen by 15.6% over the past 5 years

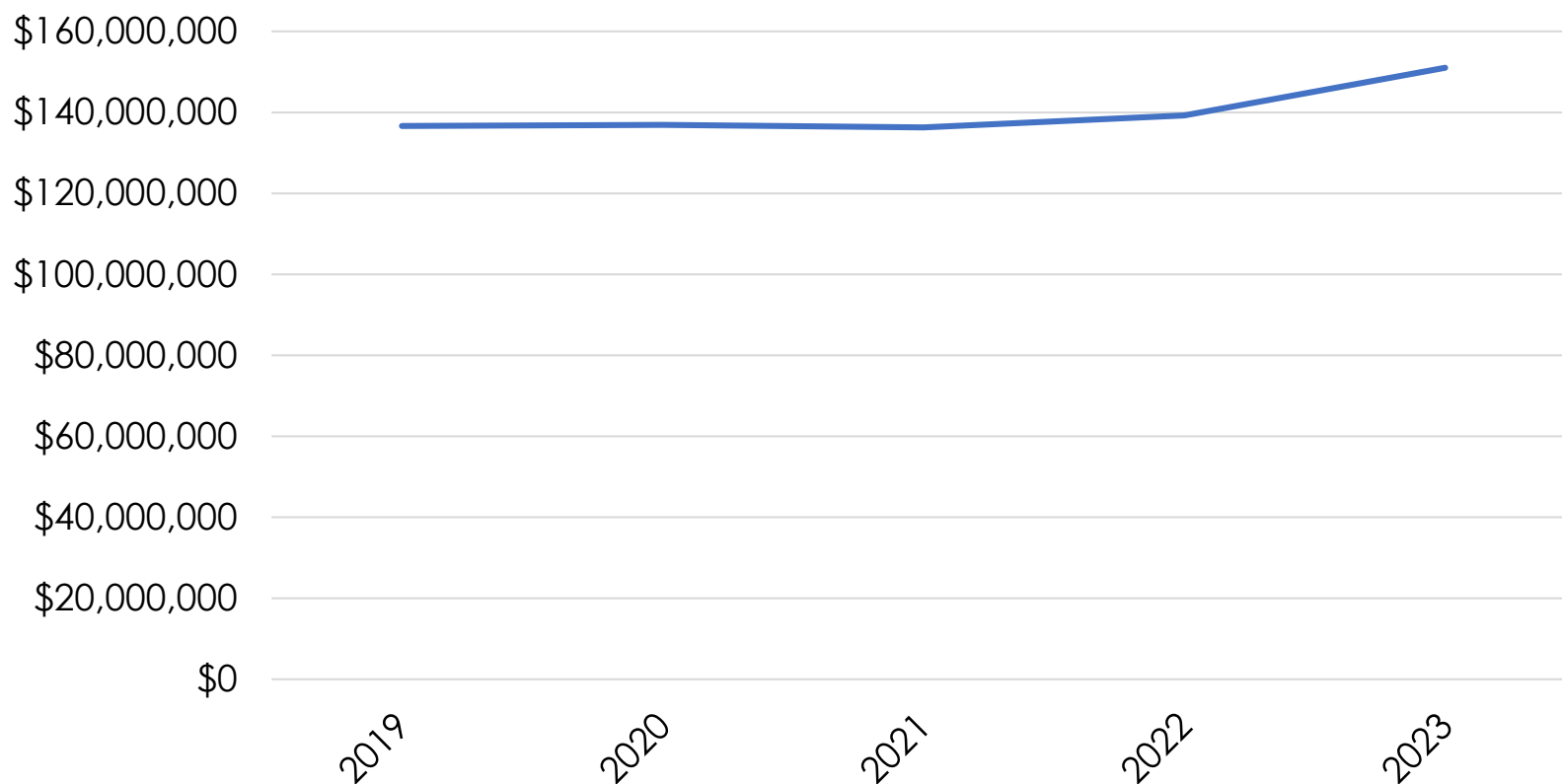
**Total Spending by Year, Hartford Public Schools**



Source: Connecticut State Department of Education. (n.d). EdSight: Per Pupil Expenditures by Function (District). Available from <https://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>.

# Special education spending for Hartford Public Schools has risen by 10.5% over the past 5 years

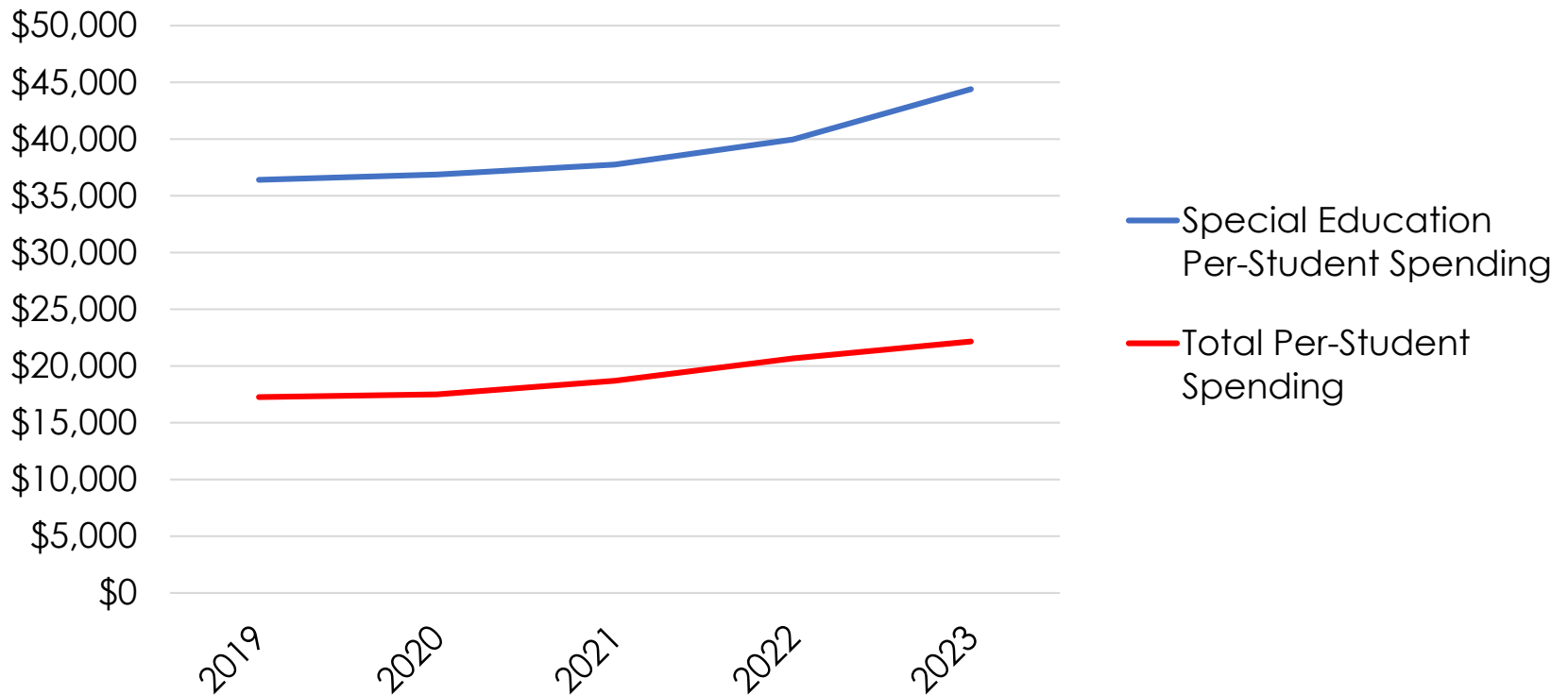
**Total SpEd Spending by Year, Hartford Public Schools**



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

Over the past 5 years, total per-student spending for Hartford Public Schools has increased by \$4,906, while SpEd spending per-student has increased by \$7,991

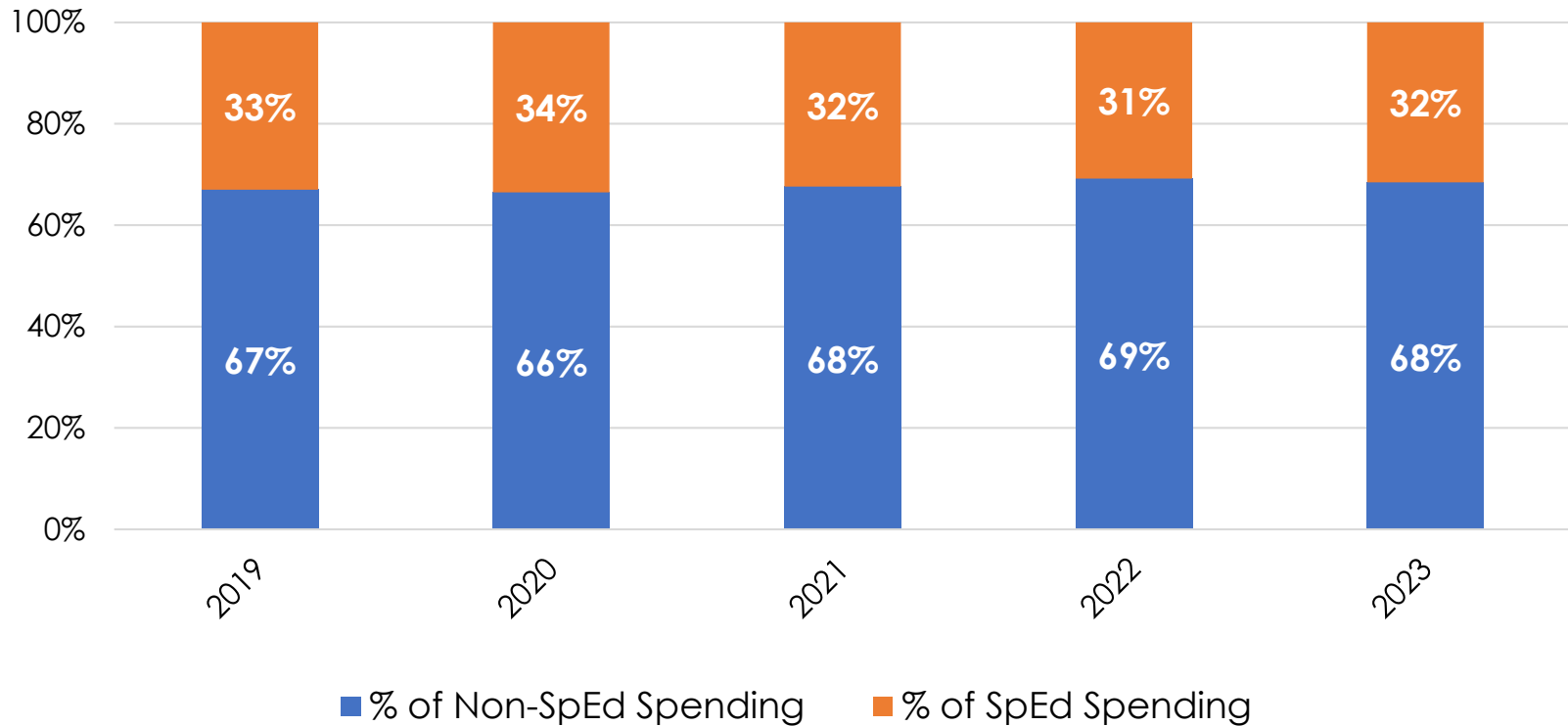
Spending Per-Student, Hartford Public Schools



Sources: Connecticut State Department of Education. (n.d). EdSight: Per Pupil Expenditures by Function (District). Available from <https://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>.  
Connecticut State Department of Education. (n.d). EdSight: Fiscal Resources; Special Education Expenditures. Available from <https://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>.  
Connecticut State Department of Education. (n.d.). EdSight: Public School Enrollment. Available from <http://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>.

# The percentage of total education spending attributed to special education has been largely consistent for Hartford over the past 5 years

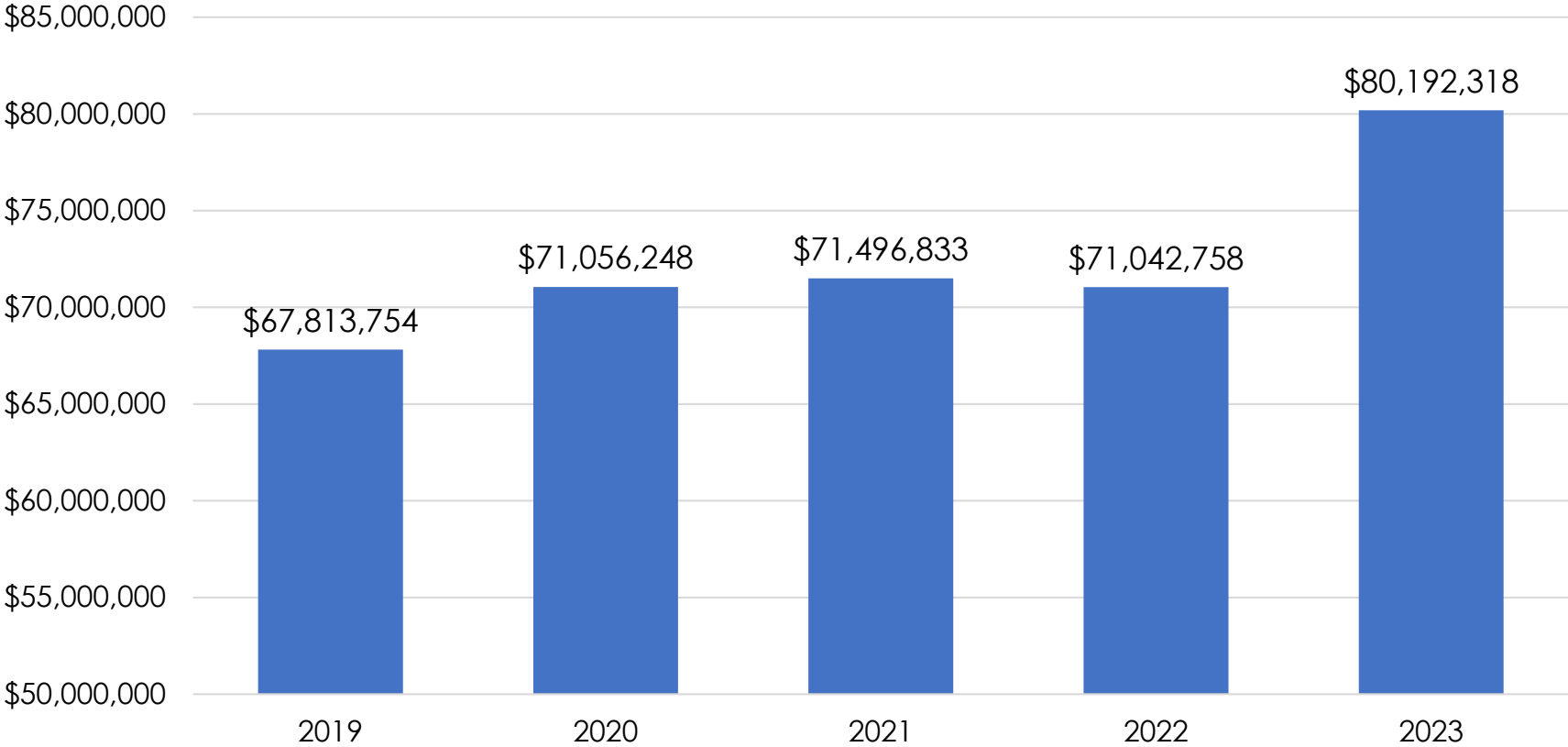
## Special Education Spending as a % of Total Spending by Year, Hartford Public Schools



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

# SpEd tuition expenditures for Hartford Public Schools have risen nearly \$12.4 million over the past 5 years

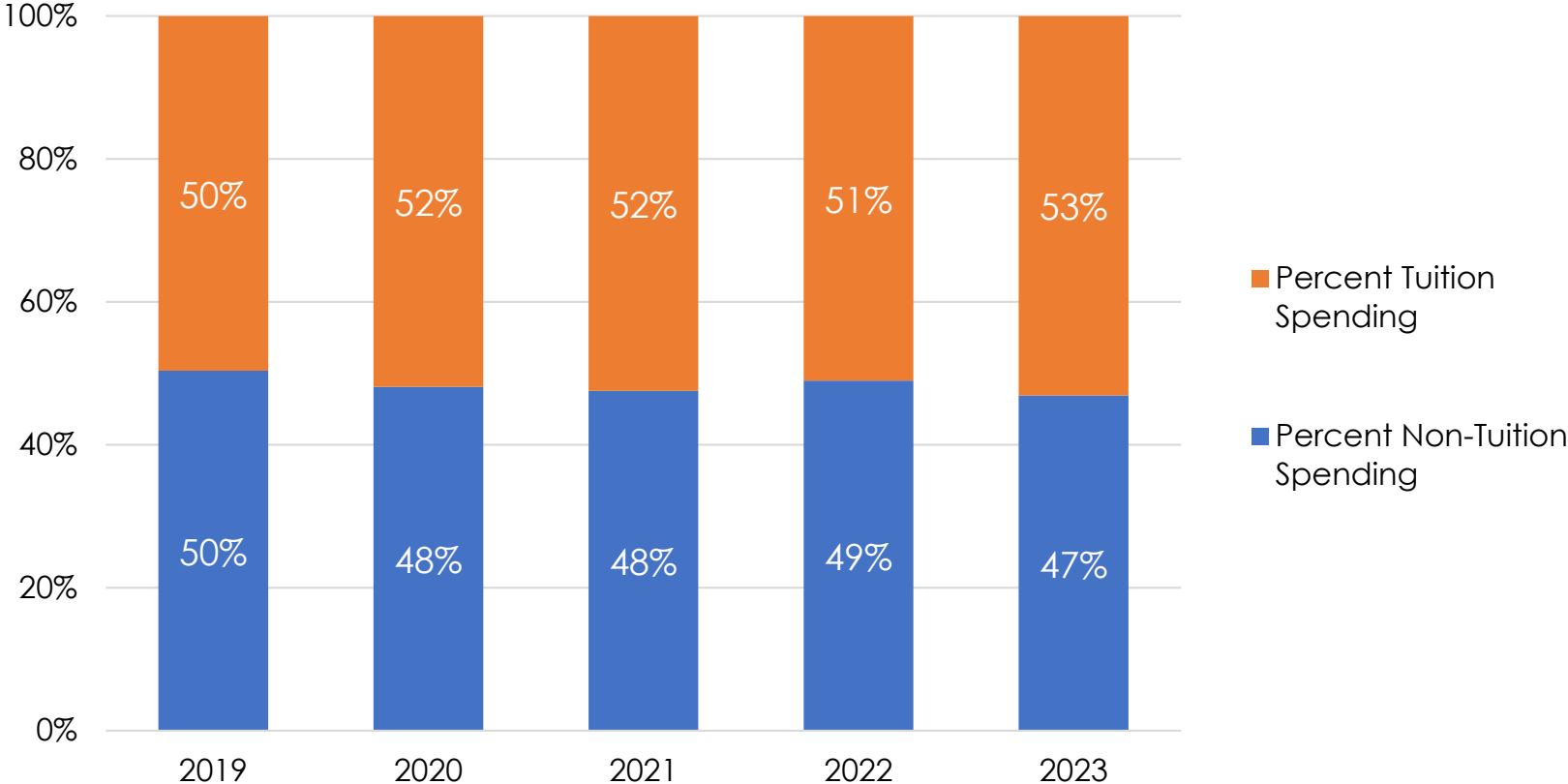
### Special Education Tuition Expenditures, Hartford Public Schools



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

# Tuition costs as a percentage of Hartford's total SpEd expenditures have increased over the past 5 years

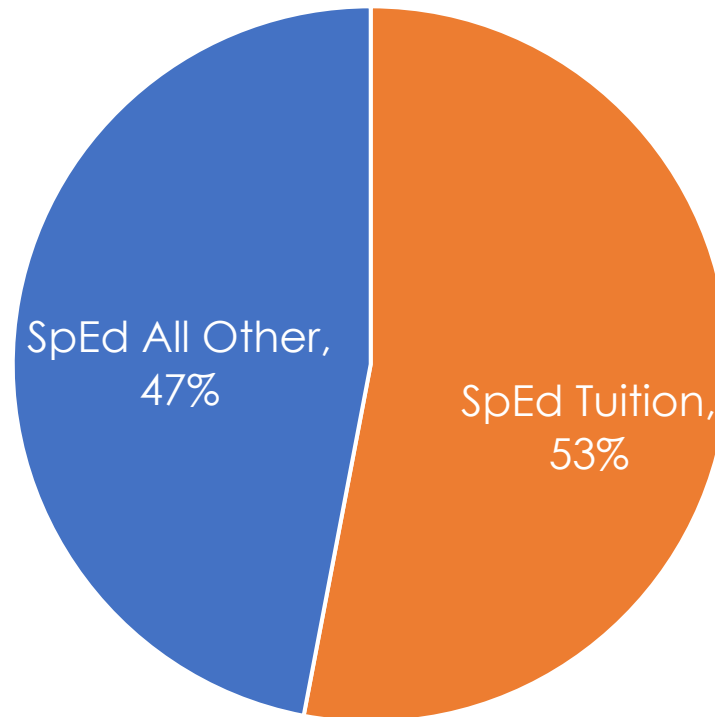
Tuition as a % of Hartford's Total SpEd Spending by School Year



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

# Tuition expenditures account for more than half of Hartford's total special education spending

**Hartford Public Schools Special Education Expenditures,  
2022-23 School Year**



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

# How Hartford Special Education Spending Compares to Statewide

# Special Education Spending Comparison

	% Increase of Total Spending, FY 2019 – FY 2023	% Increase of Total SpEd Spending, FY 2019 – FY 2023	\$ Change of SpEd Spending Per Student, FY 2019 – FY 2023	SpEd Spending as % of Total Spending, FY 2023	% Increase of SpEd Tuition Spending, FY 2019 – FY 2023	Tuition as % of Total SpEd Spending, FY 2023
<b>Hartford</b>	15.6%	10.5%	+ \$7,991	32%	18.3%	53%
<b>Statewide</b>	18.2%	20.3%	+ \$2,062	25%	18.9%	22%

# Special Education Funding

# Special education funding in the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula

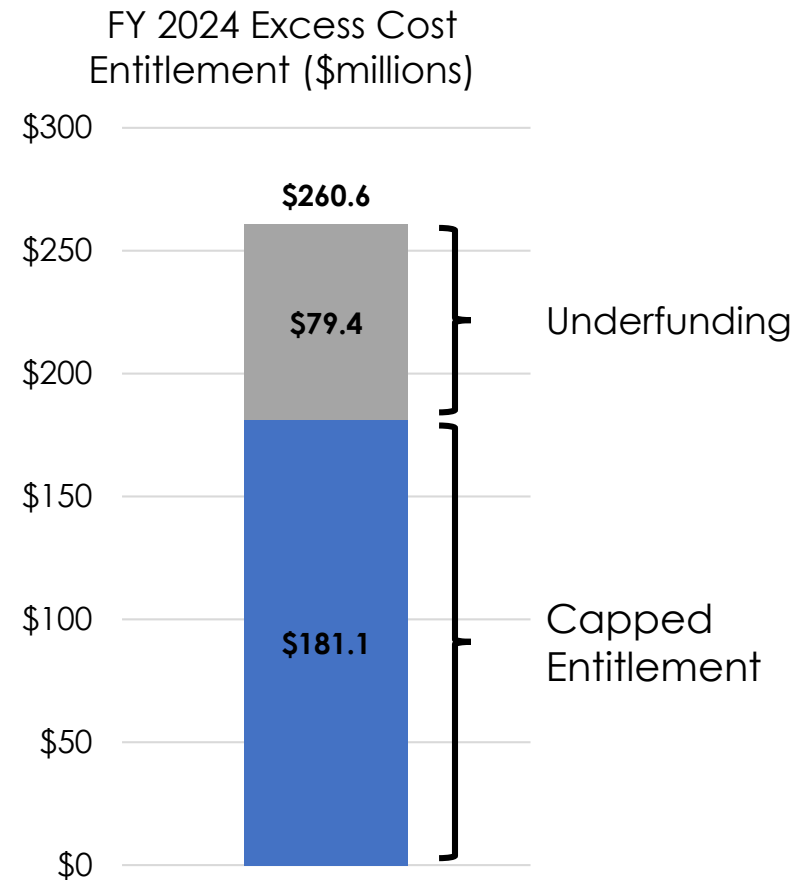
- All of a town's resident students, including special education students, are included in resident student counts used to calculate equalization grants.
- In 1995, the CT General Assembly increased the ECS foundation by \$911 to account for special education costs.
- According to CT State Department of Education, approximately 20-25% of ECS funding is assumed to be attributed to special education expenditures.
- However, the ECS formula does not take a district's special education needs into consideration.
- The ECS formula does not include a weight (like the formula does for low-income students and multilingual learners) that provides additional state funding for each student who requires special education services.

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

Connecticut General Assembly, Office of Fiscal Analysis and the Office of Legislative Research. (2014). *CT Special Education Funding* [PowerPoint slides]. Hartford, CT: Author. Retrieved from [http://www2.housedems.ct.gov/MORE/SPED/pubs/OFA-OLR\\_Presentation\\_2013-01-23.pdf](http://www2.housedems.ct.gov/MORE/SPED/pubs/OFA-OLR_Presentation_2013-01-23.pdf).

# 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 was not fully funded. The amount appropriated by the legislature was \$79.4 million less than what was needed to fully fund the grant.



# Excess Cost grant reimbursement tiers

- Under current law, if the legislature does not fully fund the Excess Cost grant, districts are to be reimbursed using a 3-tiered system that is based on the wealth of their town.
- Each town is ranked in descending order from one to 169, and each tier will be reimbursed at a different rate.
- However, the amount appropriated by the legislature for FY 2024 is not enough to reimburse districts using the tiered system in statute.
- As a result, for FY 2024 districts were reimbursed at percentages ranging from 64% to 75%.

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

# 2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

# Changes from the 2024 Legislative Session

## Education Cost Sharing (ECS grant)

- The legislature provided an additional increase of \$150 million for K-12 education in the 2024 legislative session to accelerate the ECS grant to full funding.
- Accelerating the ECS phase-in provided an additional \$4.7 million to HPS for this academic year.
- Upon full funding next year (FY 2026), HPS will receive an additional increase of \$6.3 million.

# Changes from the 2024 Legislative Session

## General Education Tuition Billing

- The \$150 million was also used to partially implement a policy referred to as student-centered funding, which resulted in a general education tuition cap of 58% of the amount charged per student in FY 2024. This provision will save HPS \$11.3 million this academic year and every year thereafter.
- In addition, HPS received an additional \$5 million in tuition relief.
- While not currently statutorily in place beyond the current fiscal year, when the student-centered funding policy is implemented in full, HPS will save an additional \$15.5 million in general education tuition expenses.

# Changes from the 2024 Legislative Session

## Choice Program Funding

- Included in the \$150 million student-centered funding policy are funds that implement 42% of a full weighted per-student formula for students enrolled in interdistrict magnet schools and agriscience programs. The policy provides 42% of weighted student funding over FY 24 grant amounts.
- This provision will net HPS an additional \$1.2 million this academic year and every year thereafter.
- While not currently statutorily in place beyond the current fiscal year, when the student-centered funding policy is implemented in full, HPS will gain an additional \$2.9 million in grants.

UPCOMING  
2025 LEGISLATIVE  
SESSION

# Opportunities for 2025 Session

- **Fully implement student-centered funding**
  - Fully extend ECS-based funding so all public school students receive 100% of their weighted, need-based funding
  - Save districts tens of millions of dollars annually by fully eliminating tuition billing for choice students
- **Adding weight for students with disabilities to the ECS formula**
  - Provide funding to better support students who receive special education services
  - 25% weight would drive an estimated \$77 million in additional funding to districts in FY 2026.
- **Fully fund Excess Cost grant**
  - Reimburse districts for 100% of their eligible costs to support students with disabilities
  - Excess Cost grant is currently underfunded by nearly \$80 million

# More Opportunities for 2025 Session

- **Adjust ECS foundation amount for inflation**
  - ECS foundation amount has not been adjusted since 2013
  - Adjustment would reduce the reliance on local property taxes to fund all increases in spending that occur each year due to inflation
- **Implement universal chart of accounts (UCOA) to increase budget transparency and accountability**
  - UCOA has been in state statute for over a decade, but never fully implemented or utilized
  - Make it easier to compare spending between districts, identify areas of inefficiency, and ensure spending is adequately addressing student needs
- **Strengthen funding for multilingual learners through improved data collection and transparency**
  - Require the calculation and reporting of per-pupil expenditures for multilingual learner students
  - Revise and improve the Bilingual Education Program grant to better support the state's growing multilingual learner population

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## For further information on

- Performance/spending, for Hartford Public Schools and CREC:  
<https://app.schoolstatefinance.org/en/districts/hartford-school-district?comparison=capitol-region-education-council>
- Spending and performance:  
<https://schoolstatefinance.org/issues/spending-performance>
- DRGs, including spending and performance by DRG:  
<https://schoolstatefinance.org/drgs>
- District spending compared to the state average:  
<https://schoolstatefinance.org/spending-breakdown>
- Chronic absenteeism, broken out by year, raw number and percentage of student population over several years:  
[https://public-edsight.ct.gov/students/chronic-absenteeism?language=en\\_US](https://public-edsight.ct.gov/students/chronic-absenteeism?language=en_US) (by district as well as by school)

# For information on Disconnected Youth

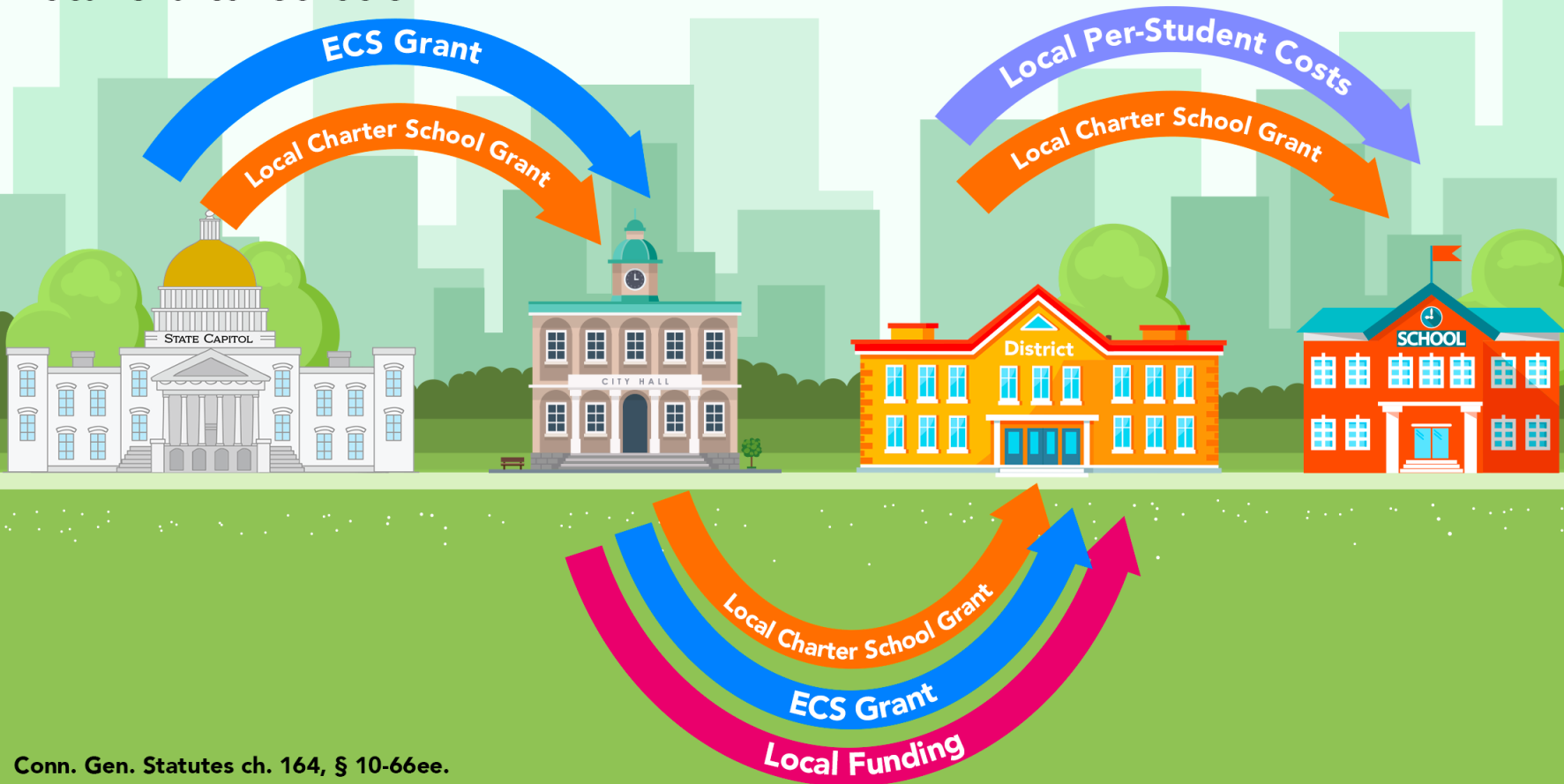
- To learn more about **disconnected youth** in Hartford and across the state, download the Boston Consulting Group's Report "Getting Young People Back on Track" at the 119K Commission's website:  
<https://www.119kcommission.org/about>
- To understand the disconnection **from the perspective of affected youth**, download the report "Elevating the Voices of Young People":  
<https://www.dalioeducation.org/elevating-voices/>

# APPENDIX

# FUNDING FORMULAS NOT USED IN HARTFORD

# Local Charter Schools (1 school)

## Local Charter Schools



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

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

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

ECS Grant to Sending District



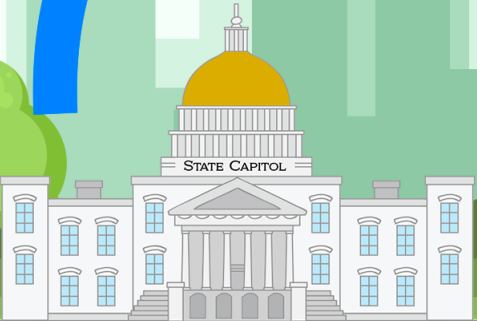
ECS Grant

Local Funding



Amount varies\*

TUITION



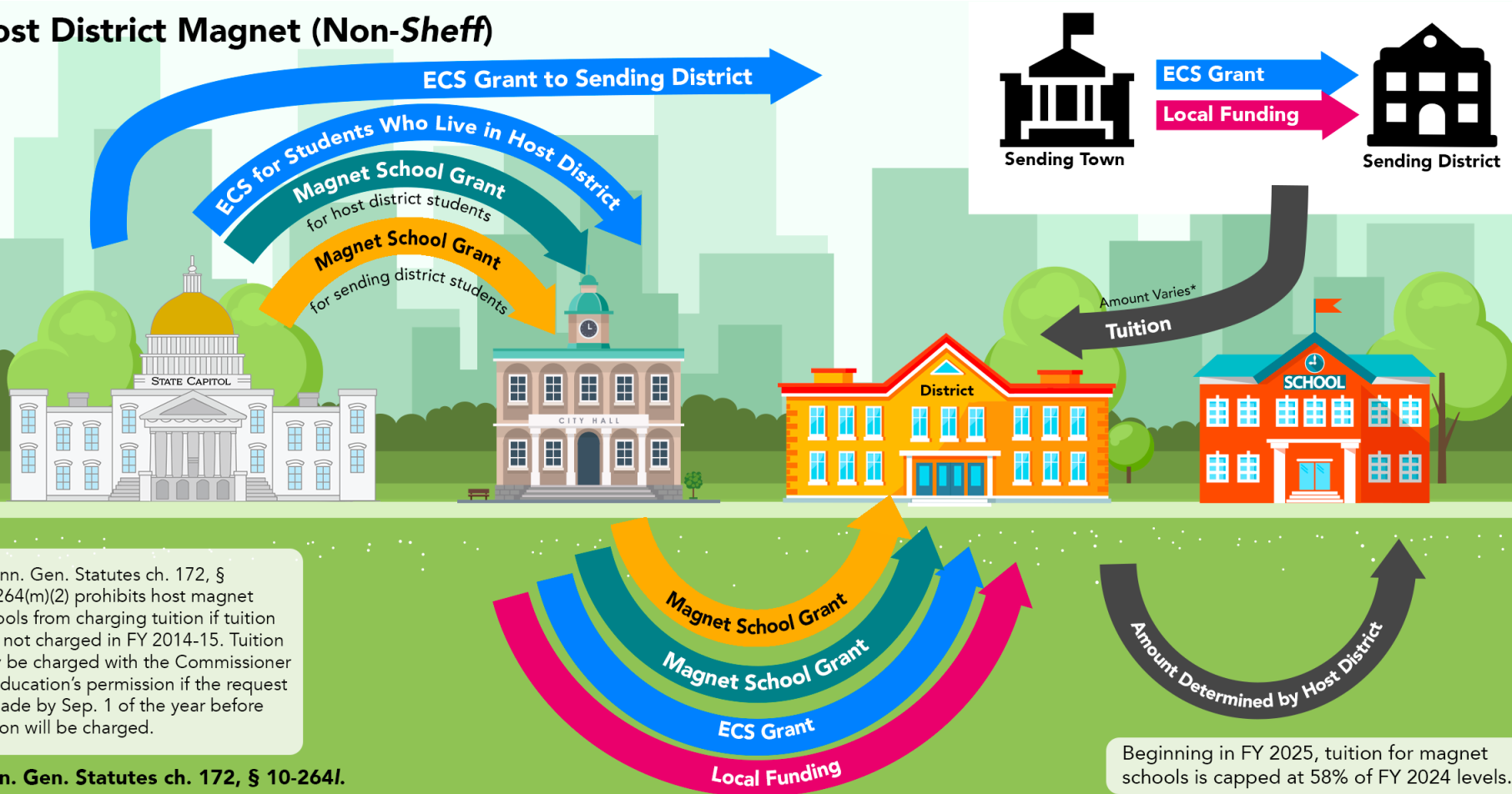
Beginning in FY 2025, tuition for magnet schools is capped at 58% of FY 2024 levels.

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

\*Amount depends on enrollment composition

# Host District Magnet (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.

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

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