

SCHOOL + STATE
FINANCE PROJECT

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2026 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

**ECS DATA CHANGES,
DISTRICT GRANT IMPACTS,
AND POLICY OPTIONS**

K-12 Funding in CT – Where Are We?

- Local and Regional Public School Districts:
 - Municipalities that were considered “underfunded” according to the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula are fully funded this fiscal year (2026) for the first time in state history.
 - Municipalities that were considered “overfunded” according to the ECS formula are held harmless from reductions this fiscal year and next fiscal year (2027).
 - General education tuition remains capped at 58% of what it was in FY 2024.
 - This saves resources for districts that have students who attend public schools of choice.

K-12 Funding in CT – Where Are We?

- Districts operating magnet and AgriScience programs are receiving state support that is a percentage (42%) of an ECS-based grant, coupled with local general education tuition that is capped at FY 2024 levels (58%).
- Charter schools only receive state support and are currently receiving state support that is a percentage (56.7%) of an ECS-based grant.

Why Policy Action Now is Critical

- With the ECS formula at full funding, municipalities and school districts that were “underfunded” according to the formula will no longer receive year-over-year increases in support like they have enjoyed since 2019.
 - **This means all cost increases moving forward** — from contractual wage increases for staff to healthcare cost increases to pure inflationary impacts — **will need to be covered entirely by local property taxpayers.**
- The ability and desire to pay for these cost increases varies significantly across Connecticut’s communities.
 - Towns with large property tax bases could chose to increase their mill rates by relatively small amounts and generate the tax revenue necessary to cover increases.
 - Less affluent towns without significant tax bases, and towns who choose not to increase their mill rate, will not be able to cover the increases on their own. This will result in projected deficits and a reduction in support and services for students.

ECS DATA CHANGES

Significant Changes to ECS Data

- Year-over-year shifts in **enrollment, student need, and municipal wealth** have materially reduced the **fully funded ECS grant amounts** for most Connecticut municipalities for FY 2027.
- Current law prevents any town considered “overfunded” by the ECS formula from receiving a decrease to its ECS grant. As a result, **no town would see a decline in its actual ECS grant for FY 2027.**
- However, these shifts substantially **reduce the impact of current legislative proposals** to moderately increase the ECS foundation amount.

Impact of Data Changes

The updated ECS data has produced significant statewide and municipal-level changes in fully funded ECS grant calculations.

Statewide Impact

The cost to the State of fully funding ECS grants for all towns decreased by **\$135.5 M** from FY 2026 to FY 2027.

Municipal Impact

139 towns saw decreases to their fully funded grant amount from FY 2026 to FY 2027. Only **30 towns** saw increases.

Drivers of Change

Two factors are primarily driving these changes and reducing the impact of current legislative proposals to increase the ECS foundation amount: **declining enrollment** and **changes in town property wealth**.

Student Demographics



- **11,381** (2.4%) **Resident Student counts**
- **14,679** (2.7%) **Need Student counts**

Most towns experienced declines:

- **146 towns** experienced a decrease in their resident student count.
- **147 towns** experienced a decrease in their need student count.

Town Property Wealth



97 towns

Saw their final Base Aid Ratio decrease
(ECS grant decreases)

35 towns

Saw their final Base Aid Ratio increase
(ECS grant increases)

Changes in enrollment primarily drove decreases, while changes in town wealth primarily drove increases.

Examples of Town-Level Impacts

Town	ECS Fully Funded Grants <i>(if current hold-harmless provisions were not in effect)</i>		Change in Fully Funded Amount		Effects of Wealth Updates		Effects of Student Counts	
	FY 2026 Estimate	FY 2027 Estimate	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%
Hartford	226,674,245	217,699,334	(8,974,911)	-4.0%	(1,870,300)	20.8%	(7,104,611)	79%
Bridgeport	212,796,671	200,621,089	(12,175,582)	-5.7%	(5,346,318)	43.9%	(6,829,264)	56%
Waterbury	201,118,542	190,126,287	(10,992,255)	-5.5%	(3,486,482)	31.7%	(7,505,773)	68%
New Haven	170,824,330	157,174,928	(13,649,402)	-8.0%	(5,021,432)	36.8%	(8,627,970)	63%
New Britain	124,491,915	121,338,810	(3,153,105)	-2.5%	(1,553,784)	49.3%	(1,599,321)	51%
Meriden	83,706,615	80,545,488	(3,161,127)	-3.8%	(535,877)	17.0%	(2,625,250)	83%
East Hartford	70,969,366	68,609,193	(2,360,173)	-3.3%	643,546	-27.3%	(3,003,719)	127%
Danbury	62,336,919	57,496,445	(4,840,474)	-7.8%	(1,782,146)	36.8%	(3,058,328)	63%
West Haven	59,004,684	56,317,980	(2,686,704)	-4.6%	(1,511,913)	56.3%	(1,174,791)	44%
Bristol	55,102,941	52,514,403	(2,588,538)	-4.7%	(1,181,226)	45.6%	(1,407,312)	54%
Manchester	51,701,477	50,151,796	(1,549,681)	-3.0%	103,589	-6.7%	(1,653,270)	107%
Norwich	49,231,266	48,599,403	(631,863)	-1.3%	243,093	-38.5%	(874,956)	138%
Hamden	42,723,021	39,585,327	(3,137,694)	-7.3%	(2,722,570)	86.8%	(415,124)	13%
Windham	33,731,591	33,102,152	(629,439)	-1.9%	191,062	-30.4%	(820,501)	130%
Torrington	34,701,422	32,983,918	(1,717,504)	-4.9%	(865,151)	50.4%	(852,353)	50%
Naugatuck	33,853,739	31,293,363	(2,560,376)	-7.6%	(1,739,156)	67.9%	(821,220)	32%
New London	29,865,392	29,128,885	(736,507)	-2.5%	(64,428)	8.7%	(672,079)	91%
Stratford	28,316,492	27,673,640	(642,852)	-2.3%	(175,886)	27.4%	(466,966)	73%
Enfield	28,230,876	27,162,010	(1,068,866)	-3.8%	(349,823)	32.7%	(719,043)	67%
Middletown	28,184,338	27,159,420	(1,024,918)	-3.6%	(391,579)	38.2%	(633,339)	62%
West Hartford	25,567,128	25,002,919	(564,209)	-2.2%	(276,540)	49.0%	(287,669)	51%
Vernon	23,512,721	24,175,996	663,275	2.8%	949,020	143.1%	(285,745)	-43%
Stamford	22,003,161	20,646,542	(1,356,619)	-6.2%	0	0.0%	(1,356,619)	100%

Policy Implications

- H.B. 5002 and S.B. 7 now affect **fewer** districts and produce **smaller grant increases** than originally anticipated.
- To generate meaningful increases for districts, the General Assembly would need to increase the ECS foundation amount further.
- These changes also underscore the need to reexamine how the formula accounts for town wealth.

PROPOSED POLICY SOLUTION

Key Components of the Policy Proposal

ECS Changes

- **Raises the ECS foundation amount to \$16,000 in FY 2027** and indexes it to inflation in each fiscal year thereafter.
- **Begins a new ECS phase-in schedule** to fully fund “underfunded” town grants by **FY 2033** using the higher foundation amount.
- **Holds towns harmless in perpetuity** and eliminates decreases in ECS funding for “overfunded” towns set to begin in FY 2028.

Student-Centered Funding

- **Increases the foundation amount in FY 2027** for public schools of choice based on inflation and continues inflationary increases each year after.
- **Phases in student-centered funding over four years** from FY 2027 to FY 2030 for public school choice programs.
- **Phase out general education tuition** paid by local public school districts to choice program operators by **FY 2030**.

Note: To ensure district free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL) eligibility numbers are not artificially reduced due to policy changes at the federal level, the draft legislation will establish a floor of FRPL eligibility for each school district.

Estimated Impacts

This policy results in an increased state investment of **\$144.2 million** in **FY 2027** for all Connecticut public school students.

Year-Over-Year Increase in State Support by Operator Type (in millions), 2027-2030

Operator	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030
Local/Regional School Districts	\$95.5	\$121.7	\$154.9	\$194.8
RESC Magnets	\$18.5	\$23.3	\$28.8	\$32.2
BOE Magnets	\$11.1	\$12.4	\$14.7	\$15.8
AgriScience	\$3.3	\$3.7	\$4.4	\$4.8
State Charters	\$15.7	\$16.0	\$13.9	\$15.2
Total	\$144.2	\$177.1	\$216.8	\$262.8
# of Districts with Increases	165	172	179	181

Proposed Policy Details

	Current Law	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030
Phase-In Details					
ECS Phase-In	100%	14.29%	16.67%	20.00%	25.00%
ECS Phase-Out	-	-	14.29%	16.67%	20.00%

Foundation Adjustment					
Projected Inflation Adjustment %	-	0.00%	5.33%	5.33%	4.82%
Projected Foundation Amount	\$11,525	\$16,000	\$16,853	\$17,751	\$18,607

ECS-Based Funding Phase-In for Choice Programs					
Magnet and AgriScience Grant	42%	56%	70%	85%	100%
State Charter Grant	56.7%	67%	77%	87%	100%
Tuition Phase-Out	58%	44%	30%	15%	0%

Projected ECS Impact to Select Communities, FY 2027

District	Total Impact
Bridgeport	\$9,391,839
Bristol	\$2,543,918
Danbury	\$2,498,551
East Hartford	\$3,469,589
Hartford	\$10,796,776
Meriden	\$4,017,431
Middletown	\$1,360,510
New Britain	\$6,282,041

District	Total Impact
New Haven	\$6,770,527
New London	\$1,327,338
Norwich	\$2,574,006
Stamford	\$951,736
Torrington	\$1,584,718
Vernon	\$1,436,214
Waterbury	\$8,978,576
Windham	\$1,732,806

This modeling assumes no changes to enrollment or demographic data.

Projected Impact to RESCs & GUMSS, FYs 2027

District	Net Impacts, FY 2027
ACES	\$272,200
C.E.S.	\$314,729
CREC	\$1,794,460
EASTCONN	-
Goodwin	\$2,884,818
LEARN	\$953,874

This modeling assumes no changes to enrollment or demographic data.

Projected Impact to Vo-Ag Operators, FY 2027

District	Grant Phase-In	Tuition Phase-Out	Net Impact
Bloomfield	\$45,803	(\$22,925)	\$22,878
Bridgeport	\$393,033	(\$261,723)	\$131,310
Glastonbury	\$98,891	(\$55,401)	\$43,490
Killingly	\$196,982	(\$122,265)	\$74,717
Lebanon	\$107,711	(\$70,684)	\$37,027
Ledyard	\$184,527	(\$108,892)	\$75,635
Middletown	\$48,807	(\$32,477)	\$16,330
New Haven	\$201,473	(\$124,175)	\$77,298
Southington	\$186,842	(\$104,116)	\$82,726
Stamford	\$5,942	(\$3,821)	\$2,121
Suffield	\$137,276	(\$85,967)	\$51,309
Trumbull	\$226,457	(\$127,996)	\$98,461
Vernon	\$113,396	(\$73,550)	\$39,846
Wallingford	\$233,444	(\$134,682)	\$98,762
District No. 01	\$6,201	(\$3,821)	\$2,380
District No. 07	\$76,373	(\$43,939)	\$32,434
District No. 12	\$165,638	(\$104,116)	\$61,522
District No. 14	\$387,461	(\$246,440)	\$141,021
District No. 19	\$185,451	(\$100,295)	\$85,156
District No. 20	\$290,822	(\$170,024)	\$120,798

This modeling assumes no changes to enrollment or demographic data.

Projected Impact to Charter Schools, FY 2027

District	Net Impact	District	Net Impacts
Achievement First Bridgeport Academy	\$1,542,122	Highville Charter School	\$403,951
Achievement First Hartford Academy	\$1,378,634	Integrated Day Charter School	\$372,272
Amistad Academy	\$1,445,746	Interdistrict School for Arts and Communication	\$270,590
Booker T. Washington Academy	\$578,936	Jumoke Academy	\$117,732
Brass City Charter School	\$353,693	New Beginnings Inc Family Academy	\$275,045
Capital Preparatory Harbor School	\$913,168	Odyssey Community School	\$406,057
Common Ground High School	\$264,294	Park City Prep Charter School	\$508,957
Edmonds Cofield Preparatory Academy for Young Men	\$1,778,453	Side By Side Charter School	\$304,198
Elm City College Preparatory School	\$1,131,239	Stamford Big Picture Learning Academy	\$1,965,722
Explorations	\$127,556	Stamford Charter School for Excellence	\$637,939
Great Oaks Charter School	\$676,676	The Bridge Academy	\$264,995

This modeling assumes no changes to enrollment or demographic data.

NEXT STEPS

Coalition Building and a Unified Call

- It is critically important for all stakeholders invested in K-12 education to work together and push in the same direction.
- K-12 education is far too reliant on local property taxes. Enacting this policy will be transformative for Connecticut and its communities, and would statutorily require an increase in state support for all students in perpetuity.
- We also need to continue to invest in our students using a single, unified, need-based formula that supports the needs of all students — regardless of the type of public school they attend.

QUESTIONS?

Contact Us

For questions or comments about the information in this presentation, please contact:

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