

In September 2020, the School and State Finance Project released a report examining racial disparities in Connecticut education funding and segregation across the state's school districts. The report found Connecticut's public school districts remain deeply segregated and significant funding gaps continue to exist between districts that predominantly serve students of color and districts that serve largely White student populations.

This fact sheet contains additional findings¹ from the report and more information about district segregation in the state. For the purposes of the report, and this fact sheet, Connecticut's public school districts were grouped into three different demographic classifications:

- **Majority BIPOC Population:** Districts with a BIPOC² student population that is greater than 75% of the district's total enrollment;
- **Majority White Population:** Districts with a White student population that is greater than 75% of the district's total enrollment; and
- **Diverse Population:** Districts with a BIPOC student population that is between 25% and 75% of the district's total enrollment.

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\$639 Million Funding Gap

- Majority BIPOC Population districts spend roughly **\$2,300 less per student** than Majority White Population districts.
- When this per-student difference is aggregated across the entire Connecticut public school student population, it translates to a **\$312 million funding gap** between districts with the highest populations of BIPOC students and districts with the highest percentages of White students.
 - Of this funding gap, **\$338 million (108%)** is attributable to local and regional public school districts and **\$52 million (17%)** is attributable to the state's charter schools.
 - **Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs)** that serve student populations made up of more than 75% BIPOC students **do not account for any of the funding gap** as they, on average, spend more per student than Majority White Population districts.

¹ More information about each of the findings below, as well as citations, can be found in the School and State Finance Project's full report, *Racial Disparities in Connecticut Education Funding*, available at <http://ctschoolfinance.org/resources/racial-disparities-in-connecticut-education-funding>.

² BIPOC is an acronym that stands for "Black, Indigenous, People of Color." In this report, BIPOC is used to represent students who, according to Connecticut State Department of Education data, identify as: American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; Black or African American; Hispanic/Latino of any race; Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander; or two or more races.

- This high per-student spending is the result of **RESC spending including both magnet schools and specialized special education programs**, the latter of which often have high expenditures due to the needs of the students they serve.
- A **\$327 million funding gap** also exists between Diverse Population districts and Majority White Population districts.
- Combined, this amounts to a **total funding gap of \$639 million** between all districts with BIPOC student populations of at least 25% and districts with White student populations greater than 75%. **To close this gap would take an increase in total education spending of approximately 6.6%**
- If the **Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant³ were currently fully funded**, it is *estimated* the **combined funding gap between local and regional public school districts** that are either Majority BIPOC Population or Diverse Population and those local and regional public school districts that are Majority White Population would be **reduced by \$385 million from \$666 million to \$281 million**.
- Based on current data, if the ECS grant were fully funded, it is *estimated* the **gap between Majority BIPOC Population local and regional public school districts and Majority White Population local and regional public school districts would decrease by \$187 million from \$338 million to \$151 million**.
- It is also *estimated* that the gap between **Diverse Population local and regional public school districts and Majority White Population local and regional public school districts would decrease by \$197 million from \$328 million to \$131 million**.

Racial Segregation Across School Districts

- Connecticut's public school districts are **highly segregated** with most students attending a district where **more than 75% of the students are White**, or a district where **more than 75% of the students are BIPOC**.
- While the racial demographic makeup of the state's student population is roughly **50% White and 50% BIPOC**, most students attend a school district where the **enrollment difference between White and BIPOC students is at least 50 percentage points**.
- Approximately **60% of all Black students** attend a district where the White student population is less than 25% of the district's total enrollment.

³ The ECS grant is the State of Connecticut's primary source of education funding aid to local and regional public school districts. The State of Connecticut distributes approximately \$2 billion annually through the ECS grant with each local and regional public school district receiving some funds through the grant. More information is available at <http://ctschoolfinance.org/ecs-formula>.

- A majority of the state's BIPOC students are **concentrated in less than 10 districts**, and **over 40% of Connecticut's BIPOC students** who attend a local public school district attend one where the total student population is over 75% BIPOC.
- Currently, **seven Majority BIPOC Population** local public school districts **border at least one Majority White Population** local or regional school district. These districts are: Bloomfield, Bridgeport, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Waterbury, and Windham.
 - There are **25 instances across Connecticut** where this segregation occurs.
 - Two of the seven school districts, **Windham Public Schools and Waterbury Public Schools**, border eight and seven, respectively, Majority White Population school districts.
- Throughout Connecticut, there are **112 instances** where the difference between a local public school district's percentage of BIPOC students and the percentage of BIPOC students in a bordering school district is **greater than 30 percentage points**.

Disparities & Student Learning Needs

- Districts with **higher percentages of BIPOC students** generally **serve students with greater learning needs but spend less per student**.
- Oppositely, Connecticut public school districts with **higher percentages of White students** serve students with **less learning needs but spend more per student**.
- Student **poverty rates are also inversely proportional to per-student spending**, regardless of the low-income metric used.
- Despite tending to have the highest poverty rates, **per-student spending is lowest in districts** with enrollments made up of **more than 75% BIPOC students**.