

GLOSSARY OF SCHOOL FINANCE TERMS

- **Alliance Districts** are the 33 lowest performing school districts in Connecticut.
- **Base Aid Ratio** is the variable in the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula that determines each community's ability to financially support its public schools. Based on the ECS formula scheduled to be implemented beginning in FY 2019, the Base Aid Ratio uses property wealth (weighted at 70 percent) and income (weighted at 30 percent) to determine each community's ability to raise money from property taxes to pay for its local public schools.
- **Charter Schools** are publically funded schools that are managed by private organizations. In Connecticut, all charter schools are managed by nonprofit organizations. State charter schools are authorized by the State Board of Education and local charter schools are authorized by local or regional boards of education.
- **Connecticut Technical High School System (CTHSS)** operates 17 regional technical high schools in Connecticut. Technical high schools are operated under the authority of the State Board of Education and are funded entirely by state tax dollars.
- **Education Cost Sharing (ECS) Formula** is the school funding formula intended to equalize state education funding to towns by taking into account a town's wealth and ability to raise property taxes to pay for education. After several years of not faithfully using an ECS formula and instead funding local public schools through block grants, in October 2017, the Connecticut General Assembly passed a new ECS formula as part of the state's biennial budget for fiscal years 2018 and 2019.
- **Education Cost Sharing (ECS) Grant** is the primary funding mechanism for state funding of local Connecticut public school districts. The ECS grant is calculated using the ECS formula.
- **English Learner (EL)** is a student who is learning the English language in addition to his or her native language and has a limited proficiency in English. ELs are also known as English Language Learners (ELLs).
- **Equalized Net Grand List Per Capita (ENGLPC)** is the amount of taxable property (at 100 percent of fair market value) per person in a city or town. ENGLPC values are the primary measure used in the Base Aid Ratio portion of the ECS formula to determine how much state education funding is owed to a given town.
- **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)** is federal legislation signed into law by President Barack Obama in 2015. The ESSA replaces the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act, and reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the nation's national education law.

- **Foundation Amount** in the ECS formula is supposed to represent the average estimated cost of educating a child in Connecticut. The current foundation amount is \$11,525.
- **Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL)** is the federal program that reimburses school districts for providing meals to low-income students. The threshold for free lunch is a household income at or below 130 percent of the federal poverty line. The threshold for reduced price lunch is a household income at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty line. FRPL is the most commonly used proxy for determining levels of poverty in student populations.
- **Grand List** is the total value of all taxable property within a given town.
- **In-kind Contributions** are non-monetary municipal contributions to the budgets of school districts. In-kind contributions can include a wide array of services, including snow and trash removal, fire and police services, staff benefits, etc. Some in-kind contributions count toward a town's Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR) calculation.
- **Local Education Agency (LEA)** is a public board of education, or other public authority, with administrative control or direction of public schools. Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs) and state charter schools are each their own LEA.
- **Magnet Schools** are public schools that draw students from multiple districts, or across a given district. Magnet schools usually have a "theme," or specialized instruction and programs designed to attract a more diverse student body. Magnet schools in Connecticut are operated by traditional school districts and Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs).
- **Mill Rate** is the rate at which personal property is taxed by a municipality. Property tax is equal to 70 percent of the assessed value of the property (except in Hartford, where it is 30 percent) multiplied by the mill rate, divided by 1,000. As a result, 1 mill is equal to \$1 of tax per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Grand lists are used in calculating the mill rate of a given town.
- **Minimum Aid Ratio** was established to ensure that every town, no matter how wealthy, receives some amount of state education funding, even when the result of the ECS formula calculation would be that the town would be ineligible to receive ECS grant funding.
- **Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR)** is a statutory requirement that towns commit no less municipal funding to their local public schools than the previous fiscal year, with some very limited exceptions.
- **National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)** is the largest nationally representative and continuing standardized assessment of elementary and secondary students. The NAEP is also known as "The Nation's Report Card."
- **Need Students** is the calculation in the ECS formula that considers the number of students within a town that are typically more costly to educate because they have greater learning needs. The new ECS formula scheduled to be implemented beginning in FY 2019 contains three "need-student" weights, which increase per-student state

education aid for students with additional learning needs. Below is a description of each of the weights in the new ECS formula.

- **Low-income student weight**
 - Increases foundation amount by a certain percentage for students who live in low-income households as identified by a designated eligibility metric.
 - Formula includes a low-income student weight of 0.3
 - Increases foundation amount by 30 percent for students who live in low-income households as measured by eligibility for free and reduced price lunch (FRPL).
- **Concentrated poverty weight**
 - Increases foundation amount by a certain percentage for students who reside in a district where the percentage of the district's enrollment of low-income students is above a designated threshold.
 - Formula includes a concentrated poverty weight of 0.05.
 - Increases foundation amount an additional five percent (for a total of 35 percent) for low-income students residing in districts with concentrations of low-income students of over 75 percent of district enrollment.
- **English Learner weight**
 - Increases foundation amount by a certain percentage for students who are identified as needing additional English-language skills.
 - Formula includes weight of 0.15 for English Learners.
 - Increases foundation amount by 15 percent for students needing additional English-language skills.
- **Net Current Expenditures Per Pupil (NCEP)** is the amount of money a given local public school district spends to educate one student, including federal, state, and local sources. The NCEP does not include costs associated with reimbursable regular education transportation, tuition revenue, capital expenditures for land, buildings and equipment, pensions, and/or debt service.
- **Open Choice** is a program that allows urban students in Hartford, Bridgeport, and New Haven to attend public schools in suburban towns, and suburban students to attend schools in these urban centers. Districts that accept Open Choice students are eligible for tiered reimbursements from the state, depending on the number of Open Choice seats offered by the district.
- **Per-pupil Expenditure:** The Connecticut School Finance Project calculates the per-pupil expenditure for magnet schools and charter schools using the End of Year School Report Form ED001. We calculate these numbers using the ED001s because the Connecticut State Department of Education only releases per-pupil expenditures figures for local public school districts (see NCEP), it does not release per-pupil expenditures amounts for magnet or charter schools.
- **Priority School Districts/Education Reform Districts** are terms referring to the 10 lowest performing Connecticut local school districts.
- **Regional Agriscience (vo-ag) Schools** are comprehensive high schools that provide educational programs in the field of agriculture and related occupations. There are 19 regional vo-ag schools in Connecticut that draw students from multiple towns.

- **Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs)** are six school-based partnerships created to provide high-quality, cost-effective services to Connecticut's school districts. RESCs' primary function is to provide cooperative purchasing for public school districts, and many of them operate magnet schools, special education programs, transportation services, etc.
- **School of Choice/Choice Program** is a public school or program that requires a student elect to attend, and that may draw students from multiple school districts. Choice programs in Connecticut include magnet schools, charter schools, technical high schools, regional agriscience schools, and Open Choice. Placement in magnet schools, charter schools, and Open Choice is determined by lottery. Placement in technical high schools and agriscience schools is determined by selective application.
- **Sheff v. O'Neill** is a 1996 Connecticut Supreme Court case that determined the state has an affirmative obligation to provide Connecticut's school children a racially integrated education. The lawsuit specifically names 22 districts in the greater Hartford region, and is the impetus for the creation of a number of magnet schools in Hartford and the surrounding towns.
- **Special Education Excess Cost Grant** provides support for special education placements when the cost exceeds 4.5 times a given school district's net current expenditures per pupil (NCEP). The Excess Cost grant is the only defined mechanism by which the State of Connecticut funds special education.
- **Special Education Student** is a student who requires specially designed educational services due to a learning, intellectual, physical, social, or emotional delay.
- **State Education Agency (SEA)** is the formal, governmental label for the state department of education.
- **Student-based Budgeting** is a method of allocating money to schools based on the number of enrolled students where each student receives a funding weight based on student needs. Student-based budgeting can be used on both the state and district levels.