

SCHOOL + STATE  
FINANCE PROJECT

[www.schoolstatefinance.org](http://www.schoolstatefinance.org)

# ADVOCATING IN A DIGITAL WORLD

January 31, 2022

# Agenda

- School & State Finance Project: Who we are
- What is a public hearing?
- Providing testimony: what to expect
- Written & Oral Testimony
- Telling your story

# SCHOOL + STATE FINANCE PROJECT

# Our Goals & Objectives

- Serve as a trusted, independent source of accurate data, information, and research
- Increase awareness and build public knowledge about Connecticut's education finance system, state budget, and overall fiscal health
- Improve transparency around Connecticut's education and state finances
- Work collaboratively to develop thoughtful, data-driven solutions that address Connecticut's education funding and state finance challenges
- Provide technical assistance to partner organizations seeking to solve education finance-related challenges.

# PUBLIC HEARINGS

# What are public hearings?

- The various committees of the Connecticut General Assembly (CGA) hold public hearings prior to making decisions on legislation.
- The general public, state agencies, and legislators have the opportunity to provide testimony, or comments, on proposed Bills before committee members.
- Testimony provided at public hearings is recorded and becomes part of a Bill's legislative history.

# PROVIDING TESTIMONY

# What to expect

- Be prepared to testify multiple times on the same Bill.
  - Many Bills are heard in more than one committee. i.e. Education and Appropriations
- Due to the pandemic all public hearings will be conducted virtually.
- Testimony can be submitted:
  - In writing: Most Committees accept written testimony via email, prior to start of the hearing.
  - By video: Live testimony will be heard via Zoom. You will be required to pre-register prior to a deadline.
  - By phone: If you do not have internet access, you may provide testimony via telephone. To register to testify by phone, instructions are provided in the [CGA Bulletin](#).
- The general public may still watch every public hearing and committee meeting live. All events and login links can be found [here](#).

# Written Testimony

- Written testimony will be critical during this virtual legislative session.
- Limit your written testimony to one Bill at a time; 3-4 paragraphs on one page.
- Ensure that written testimony is submitted prior to the public hearing.
- Stay connected to the School + State Finance Project for relevant dates and deadlines as well as the specific email address to submit written testimony.

# Live Testimony

- The first part of a hearing is typically reserved for state officials after which the public may address the committee.
- The order in which members of the public will speak is determined by a random lottery.
- Members of the public typically have 3 minutes to provide comment but the Committee may specify a different time limit.
- Staff at the School + State Finance Project will support community members in making this process as smooth as possible. We can:
  - Assist you in writing your testimony.
  - Pre-register you for the hearing.
  - Monitor live hearings and contact you 30 minutes prior to your assigned time.

# TELLING YOUR STORY

# Your Story

- This is your time to let elected officials know that you care about an issue and how it directly impacts you and your community.
- Be sure to clearly state the action you want legislators to take. Include the Bill name and number.
- Remember to include:
  - Introduction: Your name, where you live, school your child(ren) attend, etc.
  - Personal Connection: How does the issue affect you? Your family? Community?
  - Action: Ask that your elected officials to support student-centered funding. Explain why the legislation is important and its impact on you and the greater community.
- Use our [digital Advocacy Checklist](#)