

SCHOOL + STATE  
FINANCE PROJECT

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

# ADVOCATING IN A DIGITAL WORLD

February 10, 2021

# Contact Us

For questions or comments about the information presented today,  
please contact us:

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To learn more about the  
School and State Finance Project, visit us at:

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

Or connect with us on social media    

# Agenda

- School & State Finance Project: Who we are.
- What is a public hearing?
- Providing testimony: what to expect.
- Written & Oral Testimony.
- Telling your story: S.B. 948

# 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. The Education Committee will hear testimony on Wednesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- 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](#).

<https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/Content/YourVoice.asp>

# 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 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 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: S.B. 948: An Act Addressing Education Funding and Racial Equity in Connecticut.
- 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 vote in support of S.B. 948. Explain why the legislation is important and its impact on you and the greater community.
- Use our [Digital Advocacy checklist](#)