

Although positive steps have been taken by the General Assembly over the past few years to improve how Connecticut funds K-12 public education, the state's education finance system remains inequitable, disjointed, and inadequate for addressing the systemic racial disparities and wide gaps found in Connecticut education funding.

These longstanding challenges are why we are working collaboratively with legislative, education, community, and municipal stakeholders across Connecticut to advance a student-centered funding system that:

- **Accelerates the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula's phase-in schedule and fully funds all districts** beginning in FY 2025 when one-time federal COVID relief funds expire;
- **Expands ECS weighted funding to students attending public schools of choice** (magnet schools, charter schools, Vo-Ag programs) while protecting funding for local public schools; and
- **Provides school districts the ability to leverage historic, but temporary, federal funding** for on-going expenses.

Currently before the General Assembly, H.B. 5283 is a proposed bill that would implement such a student-centered funding system.

Below is a brief summary of each section of the proposed bill.

Section	Policy Change(s)
1 & 2 <i>CGS 10-262h</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides full funding of the ECS formula <u>for underfunded districts receiving an ECS increase in FY 2025</u>, rather than in FY 2028. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The ECS phase-out schedule for overfunded districts receiving a decrease in ECS is maintained through FY 2030 and is not impacted as a result of this bill. • Implements the Governor's technical adjustments to the ECS phase-in and phase-out to ensure grants are consistent and predictable annually.
3 <i>(NEW)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a choice program grant for students attending interdistrict magnet schools and vocational agriculture programs starting in FY 2025. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The grant is calculated using the ECS foundation of \$11,525 multiplied by the Total Need Student count based on the prior year enrollment ○ Total Need Students has the same definition as that employed in the ECS formula. The base is the resident

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	<p>student count, which is then modified as follows: an additional weight of 30% for each student who is eligible for free or reduced-price Lunch (FRPL), an additional 15% for each student who resides in a district where 60% or more of the students qualify for FRPL, and an additional 25% for each student who is an English Learner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Districts participating in interdistrict magnet schools operated by local or regional boards of education and vocational agriculture programs will receive a choice program grant for each student that is in an amount equal to the ECS grant of the sending district, which is reflective of community need. • Operators of interdistrict magnet schools not operated by local or regional boards of education receive the following choice program grant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ECS foundation multiplied by Total Need Students based on the prior year enrollment of the magnet school ○ The calculation of Total Need Students is the same for other public choice programs as summarized above. However, an additional 15% per student is added to an interdistrict magnet school operator's Total Need Student count if the magnet school is assisting the State in meeting its obligations under the <i>Sheff v. O'Neill</i> court case. • Provides annual growth for RESC choice grants starting in FY 2026 by increasing the foundation by the greater of the increase in personal income or the percentage increase in inflation.
<p style="text-align: center;">4 (NEW)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires the State Department of Education to calculate estimated choice program grants for FY 2025, and annually thereafter, for local public school districts, interdistrict magnet schools, vocational agricultural programs, and charter schools, and provide estimated grants to each district or choice program operator by January 1, 2024.
<p style="text-align: center;">5 CGS 10-264I</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarifies current practice that students enrolled in interdistrict magnet schools are counted in the ECS Resident Student Count of the district in which the student resides, starting in FY 2025. • Eliminates the existing interdistrict magnet school state operating grant, starting in FY 2025. • Eliminates the requirement that sending towns must support the education of interdistrict magnet school students by paying regular education K-12 tuition, starting in FY 2025.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removes the ability for interdistrict magnet school operators to charge regular education K-12 tuition, starting in FY 2025. Entitles interdistrict magnet school operators to the choice program grant created in Sec. 2 in FY 2025 and future years. Holds interdistrict magnet school operators harmless if choice grant is less than FY 2024 state aid plus tuition per student. Prohibits local or regional boards of education operating <i>Sheff</i> interdistrict magnet schools from charging K-12 regular education tuition starting in FY 2025. To the extent the foundation increases are not provided by the General Assembly, the bill allows RESCs to charge tuition in that year in an amount equal to the foundation increase.
<p style="text-align: center;">6 CGS 10-264o(b)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prohibits RESCs operating <i>Sheff</i> interdistrict magnet schools from charging K-12 regular education tuition starting in FY 2025.
<p style="text-align: center;">7 CGS 10-66ee(d)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continues the phase-in of the charter school weighted grant formula based on student need, established in PA 21-2, into FY 2024. Provides full funding of the charter school weighted grant formula in FY 2025 and future years. Provides annual growth for charter school grants starting in FY 2026 by increasing the foundation by the greater of the increase in personal income or the percentage increase in inflation.
<p style="text-align: center;">8 CGS 10-65</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminates the existing state vocational agriculture program grant, including bonus grants above the basic per-student amount, starting in FY 2025. Entitles operators of vocational agriculture programs to per student grants based on Sec. 2 ((ECS Foundation X Total Need Students) / Resident Student Count of the sending town), starting in FY 25. Holds operators of vocational agriculture programs harmless if choice grant is less than FY 2024 state aid plus tuition per student. Prohibits operators of vocational agriculture programs from charging full-time regular education tuition starting in FY 2025. Clarifies that students enrolled in vocational agriculture programs are counted in the ECS Resident Student Count of the district in which the student resides.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removes the statutory limit for the number of students who can enroll in a vocational agriculture program from each sending town, as the responsibility for regular education tuition is eliminated.
<p>9-10 CGS 10-64(d) and CGS 10-97(b)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminates the requirement that sending towns must support the education of vocational agriculture students by paying regular education K-12 tuition starting in FY 2025.
<p>11 (NEW)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates a task force to study accountability related to increased funding entitled under the act. Requires task force to study Alliance District program, Next Generation Accountability System, and other accountability concepts in connection with increased funding provided by this act to improve student outcomes. Requires task force to submit a report of findings and recommendations to the Education Committee by July 1, 2023.