

Raised Bill 948: An Act Addressing Education Funding and Racial Equity in Connecticut

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 the state to advance a Student-Centered Funding System that:

- **Eliminates the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula's phase-in schedule and fully funds all districts** beginning in FY 2022;
- **Increases and expands the ECS formula's existing weights** for English Learners and students in districts with concentrated poverty;
- **Provides ECS weighted funding for all public school students** while protecting funding for local public schools;
- **Significantly strengthens and improves the ECS formula** while keeping intact the formula's overall structure; and
- **Mitigates the volatility in student enrollment** caused by COVID-19 by using October 2019 or 2020 data, whichever is greater.

The proposed bill implements the Student-Centered Funding System: Please find a brief summary of each section of the proposed bill below.

Section	Policy Change(s)
1 CGS 10-262f(25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigates student enrollment volatility in FY 22 by using the greater of Oct. 2019 or 2020 resident student counts in the ECS formula calculation.
2 CGS 10-262h	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides additional resources for districts educating high-need students by increasing the following student weights in the ECS formula in all future years. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ English Learner weight from 15% to 25% ○ Concentrated Low-Income weight from 5% to 15% • Provides additional resources for districts educating high-need students by decreasing the ECS concentrated poverty threshold from 75% to 60% in all future years. • Mitigates student enrollment volatility in FY 22 by using the greater of Oct. 2019 or 2020 low-income student counts, English Learner counts, and concentrated poverty percentages in the ECS formula.
3 New Section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides full funding of the ECS formula <u>for under-funded districts receiving an ECS increase in FY 22</u>, rather than FY 28.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The ECS phase-out schedule for over-funded districts receiving a decrease in ECS is maintained.
<p style="text-align: center;">4 CGS 10-264I</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Creates a choice program grant for students attending Open Choice, interdistrict magnet schools, state charter schools, vocational agriculture programs. ● Operators of Open Choice, interdistrict magnet schools operated by local or regional boards of education, vocational agriculture programs receive the following choice program grant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For each student, the weighted funding amount per pupil, which equals (ECS Foundation X Total Need Students) Resident Student Count of the sending (resident) town of the student. ○ Total Need Students calculation includes increased weights and decreased threshold from Sec. 1. ● Operators of state charter schools and 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 X Total Need Students based on the prior year enrollment of the magnet or charter school. ○ Total Need Students calculation includes increased weights and decreased threshold from Sec. 1, as well as a 15% weight for students enrolled in an interdistrict magnet school program that is assisting the State in meeting its obligations pursuant to the <i>Sheff v. O'Neill</i> decision or a related stipulation or order. ● Grant program begins in FY 22.
<p style="text-align: center;">5 CGS 10-264o(b)</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. ● Eliminates the existing interdistrict magnet school state operating grant. ● Eliminates the requirement that sending towns must support the education of interdistrict magnet school students by paying regular education K-12 tuition. ● Removes the ability for interdistrict magnet school operators to charge regular education K-12 tuition. ● Entitles interdistrict magnet school operators to the choice program grant created in Sec. 4 in FY 22 and future years. ● Prohibits local or regional boards of education operating <i>Sheff</i> interdistrict magnet schools from charging K-12 regular education tuition in FY 22.

<p>6 CGS 10-66ee(d)(1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prohibits RESCs operating <i>Sheff</i> interdistrict magnet schools from charging K-12 regular education tuition in FY 22.
<p>7 CGS 10-65</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminates the existing state charter school grant. • Provides operators of state charter schools grants based on Sec. 4 (Foundation X Total Need Students, based on prior year enrollment) starting in FY 22.
<p>8 CGS 10-64(d)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminates the existing state vocational agriculture program grant, including bonus grants above the basic per-pupil amount. • Entitles operators of vocational agriculture programs to grants based on Sec. 4 (ECS Foundation X Total Need Students) / Resident Student Count of the sending (resident) town per student starting in FY 22. • Prohibits operators of vocational agriculture programs from charging full-time regular education tuition. • Clarifies that students enrolled in vocational agriculture programs are counted in the ECS Resident Student Count of the district in which the student resides.
<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.
<p>11 CGS 10-66aa(g) and (h)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides operators of Open Choice programs grants based on Sec. 4 (ECS Foundation X Total Need Students) / Resident Student Count of the sending (resident) town per student starting in FY 22. • Eliminates existing tiered Open Choice grant program. • Clarifies that Open Choice student is removed from Resident Student Count of sending town for the purposes of ECS.