

Testimony Regarding

H.B. 5005, An Act Adjusting the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2021

Katie Roy, Executive Director & Founder
School and State Finance Project

Chairwomen Osten and Walker, Ranking Members Formica and Lavielle, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on H.B. 5005 and discuss education funding in Governor Ned Lamont's recommended budget adjustments for fiscal year 2021.

My name is Katie Roy and I am the executive director and founder of the School and State Finance Project, a nonpartisan, nonprofit policy organization based in New Haven that is focused on education funding and state finance issues, with a commitment to providing independent analysis, building public knowledge, improving transparency, and developing fair, sustainable solutions.

By maintaining the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula phase-in, the governor's recommended budget adjustments for fiscal year 2021 continue the positive work started by the General Assembly in 2017 to improve Connecticut's school finance system by making the distribution of state education funding more equitable and more transparent by ending the practice of funding local public schools through arbitrary block grants.

Specifically, the governor's recommended budget adjustments maintain the structure of the ECS formula, use updated student and town data, and continue to faithfully follow the formula's 10-year phase-in schedule, which is currently in year two.

The continued faithful implementation of the ECS formula helps to increase education funding equity in Connecticut by providing an additional \$41 million to Alliance Districts in fiscal year 2021.

The School and State Finance Project is encouraged that the governor's recommended budget adjustments faithfully follow the structure of the ECS formula and stick to a realistic phase-in schedule that reflects Connecticut's current economic and fiscal needs.

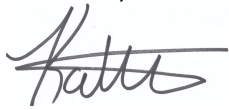
We are also encouraged that the governor's recommended budget adjustments use updated district and town data in calculating town ECS grants. Using annually-updated student and town data when distributing ECS grants to towns is critical to the successful implementation and execution of the formula, and ensures the formula is effectively

distributing state education aid to the students and communities with the greatest needs.

These are steps forward for state education funding and are critical for Connecticut to ensure public school students are being funded fairly and based on their learning needs. We applaud the governor's recommended budget adjustments for faithfully following and funding the ECS formula, and encourage the Appropriations Committee to build on its positive work surrounding education funding by doing the same.

Thank you again for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony on H.B. 5005 and ECS funding in the governor's recommended budget adjustments. Please feel free to reach out to me via the contact information below should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Katie Roy
Executive Director & Founder
School and State Finance Project
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About the School and State Finance Project

Founded in 2015, the School and State Finance Project is a nonpartisan, nonprofit policy organization, focused on education funding and state finance issues, with a commitment to providing independent analysis, building public knowledge, improving transparency, and developing fair, sustainable solutions.

The organization strives to serve as a trusted, independent source of accurate data, information, and research, and is focused on:

- Increasing awareness and building public knowledge about Connecticut's education finance system, state budget, and overall fiscal health;
- Improving transparency around Connecticut's education and state finances;
- Working collaboratively to develop thoughtful, data-driven solutions that address Connecticut's education funding and state finance challenges; and
- Providing technical assistance to partner organizations seeking to solve education finance-related challenges.

For more information about the School and State Finance Project, visit www.schoolstatefinance.org.