

**Appropriations Committee Public Hearing**  
**Tuesday, March 9th, 2021**  
**Yamuna Menon, Connecticut Charter Schools Association**

Good day Rep. Walker, Sen. Osten, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Yam Menon and I'm with the Connecticut Charter Schools Association. We represent the 11,000 mostly low-income, minority kids attending Connecticut's 21 public charter schools in 10 cities and towns, as well as the 6,000 names currently on waitlists for public charter schools across the state.

**We are here to support the Governor's proposed charter per-pupil increase and to call upon the legislature to apply the ECS formula to all public school students and bring true funding equity for all Connecticut's public school students.**

In his budget proposal, the Governor recognized that to send a message to charter school students that they are worth less is fundamentally unfair and shortchanging them, and so his budget proposes to raise the charter per-pupil funding amount from \$11,250 to \$11,525, which matches the foundation amount of the Education Cost Sharing Formula. This step acknowledges the long-standing funding inequities these students have faced for generations.

This is an important first step forward towards funding equity for the state's public charter schools, and we are grateful to the Governor for proposing this increase and urge the legislature to move this proposal forward.

But while an important first step, **we urge you to apply the ECS formula to public charter school students and all public school students. Taking this step would enact a single, unified funding formula and equitably invest in all our public school students.** Specifically, we ask the committee to apply both the foundation amount and the student need weights as well.

For additional context, charter school students - who are 64% low-income and 80% Black and brown - represent the very students that the weights of the ECS were intended to serve - students who are low-income, in concentrated poverty and have additional learning needs like English Learners. But because the ECS formula currently only applies to traditional public schools, they don't have access to this funding.

Moreover, these kids achieve at exceptional levels and charter schools have continued to deliver great results for kids for years.

The data tells the story: on average charter school students continue to meet or exceed performance targets compared to their district peers, they continue to receive numerous local and national awards and accolades, and perhaps most importantly, have risen to the occasion and deliver on the promise of a great education for their mostly low-income, Black and brown kids in the wake of a global pandemic that has had devastating consequences on our state's education system.

Again, we ask you to **enact a single, unified funding formula and equitably invest in all our public school students**. Because we must do everything we can to get our children the education and future they deserve. We have a moral and constitutional obligation to provide our most in need children with the quality educational opportunities many of us are privileged enough to take for granted.

Thank you for your time today, and for your consideration.