



Connecticut Education Association
Capitol Place, Suite 500
21 Oak Street, Hartford, CT 06106
860-525-5641 • 800-842-4316 • www.cea.org
An affiliate of the National Education Association

Governance
Jeff Leake • President
Thomas Nicholas • Vice President
Stephanie Wanzer • Secretary
Kevin Egan • Treasurer

Executive Director
Donald E. Williams Jr.

Comments from

Tom Nicholas, Vice President

Connecticut Education Association

Before the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus

February 19th, 2019

Re: Education Cost Sharing Grant (ECS)

Good afternoon Representative McGee, Representative Reyes and members of the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus. My name is Tom Nicholas and I serve as the vice-president of CEA, which is the largest teachers' union in Connecticut representing tens of thousands of active and retired teachers. CEA's Legislative Commission, which is composed of active and retired teachers, informs our legislative priorities.

This school year is the first time the ECS grant has been funded based on the ECS formula. The years of funding based on politics are hopefully over. The state is now using objective and current information to determine how the \$2 billion ECS grant is allocated among towns to achieve equitable funding across the state.

An additional \$30 million was appropriated for ECS for the current fiscal year. As the state moves to correct years of inequitable funding, roughly \$20 million of ECS monies were reallocated across the state from *overfunded* towns to *underfunded* towns. Among the many towns that have been underfunded, Connecticut's five largest towns received a total of \$6 million more in ECS funding. Waterbury and New Britain have been significantly underfunded for years, and the current ECS formula gave \$2.6 million more to Waterbury and \$1.6 million more to New Britain.

While the ECS formula has been significantly revised, some advocates argue that the current ECS formula can be further improved. Quite frankly, the resulting changes in funding would be minor. There will never be a perfect formula *all* legislators agree on, and revisiting the ECS formula runs the risk of returning to previous years when funding was based on politics instead of need.

The current ECS formula effectively allocates monies to towns based on the socioeconomics of residents and the number of resident students. When it is funded, ECS works. ECS is not broken so there is no need to fix it. Instead, CEA would like to collaborate with the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus to get state funding for a comprehensive cost study to determine the true cost of a K-12 education in Connecticut.

We thank you for your time and interest.