



February 2023

Ellington Board of Education Endorses *An Act Concerning Education Funding in Connecticut*

House Bill 5003 is a student-centered funding system that will benefit rural, suburban and urban districts

The Ellington Board of Education recognizes the immense challenge legislators face in representing a diverse set of stakeholders with varied interests. We intentionally identify legislation that will benefit school districts in rural, suburban and urban communities. Ellington is part of Connecticut's solution; demonstrating on an annual basis that ten Board Members of different political parties are able to work together to develop a legislative platform for your consideration.

The Ellington Board of Education has unanimously approved this letter outlining our 2023 legislative priority.

HB 5003 - AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATION FUNDING IN CONNECTICUT

For decades, Connecticut's education funding system has had an over-reliance on [property tax and resident income](#). This has had a direct impact on local mill-rates across Connecticut. Adding to further economic strain, local school districts pay an increasing percentage of the annual tuition to important school programs of choice (magnet, AgriScience, etc.). To supplement this funding system, the state utilizes the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant, first developed in 1990. ECS is currently undergoing a formula adjustment to better align with the student needs of Ellington and many other urban, suburban and rural school districts across the state. This is beneficial to most school districts. However, this adjustment is not transformative because it maintains the current disjointed and inequitable funding system.

[House Bill 5003](#) - *An Act Concerning Education Funding in Connecticut* streamlines the funding system by simplifying it, aligning monies to student need and supporting school districts and municipalities to better project future spending. [More specifically](#), HB 5003 does the following:

- Accelerates the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant adjustments by several years fully funding the grant by FY 2025
- Expands the weighted funding to students attending public schools of choice (magnet, charter, AgriScience and Open Choice programs)
- Eliminates general education tuition billing for magnet school operators and AgriScience programs, effective FY 2025
- Maintains current schedule for towns receiving reductions in their ECS grants
 - Many of these districts will see net increases from the elimination of tuition and increased state aid for school choice programs

The fiscal year 2025 targeted in HB 5003 is strategic in that it anticipates a fiscal cliff for many school districts (*not Ellington*) who utilized American Rescue Plan (ARP) and Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Funding for vital staffing needs due to a significant increase in student mental health needs post-pandemic. Connecticut received \$1.1B in ARP ESSER funds with 71% of school districts

using approximately \$480M for staffing. Those funds are no longer available after September 2024 ([School + State Finance Project](#)).

In FY 2025, with the passage of HB 5003, the Ellington Public Schools gain approximately \$530K, based upon revenue increases and tuition savings. To learn more about your school district's financials [click here](#) for the HB 5003 (formerly HB 5083) calculations.

The current state budget projections show room of approximately \$900M under the spending cap. With an estimated cost of \$275M, HB 5003 is a major step in the right direction for streamlining and stabilizing Connecticut's school funding system and correcting the State's overreliance on property taxes.

Please do not hesitate to contact any Ellington Board of Education member or our Superintendent of Schools Dr. Scott Nicol (snicol@ellingtonschools.net) should we be of further support for this important bill.

Sincerely,



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