



GHIAA

Greater Hartford
— Interfaith —
Action Alliance

ADVOCACY GUIDE: EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

HB 5003: An Act Concerning Education Funding in Connecticut

ISSUE SUMMARY

The Connecticut state constitution guarantees an adequate education to every child growing up in this state. And yet, the zip code where a child grows up, the town where a family lives, has an enormous impact on whether or not that constitutional promise will be fulfilled.

For decades, our state has recognized that our public education systems are inequitable, and that the root of the problem is funding. Schools need resources to educate our students, but 67% of public school students don't receive full funding for a high-quality K-12 education.

In the 1980s, state leaders designed the Education Cost Sharing formula to address the glaring disparities in the opportunities our children receive. Over 30 years later, this formula has never yet been fully funded. Over 30 years later, children of color whose parents were educated in underfunded schools are still being denied this fundamental right.

Connecticut still has a shameful racial funding gap in our public education funding structure. Our state's K-12 students are 50% white and 50% BIPOC, but we spend \$720 million dollars more to educate kids in mostly white districts than in diverse or mostly BIPOC districts. This has to change.

GHIAA calls on our leaders to support HB 5003 to close the racial funding gap in public education by fully funding the ECS formula, and to allocate sufficient resources for its full implementation.

TALKING POINTS TO USE WITH LEGISLATORS

- **Education is a basic right for all children.**
 - The quality of education that children receive should not depend on the town or neighborhood where their family lives. Every child in every community should be able to attend a flourishing public school where they can receive an excellent educational experience.
 - We cannot accept continued delays and half measures when it comes to this essential right. Our state has acknowledged the detrimental impact of inequitable funding for over 30 years. It's time to fully fund the ECS formula now, close the racial funding gap, and fulfill our constitutional promise to all Connecticut children.
- **Our schools face a funding cliff when Covid relief funds run out.**
 - Many schools used federal pandemic-related funding both to make important physical infrastructure improvements and to hire much-needed staff. Without state action, when these funds expire, our children will lose essential services, and staff members will lose their jobs.
 - Districts will lose more than \$1 billion when these federal relief dollars run out. We can't treat temporary funds as a permanent solution.
 - Coming out of the trauma and learning loss of the pandemic, children need more resources, not fewer. It is time to invest in our young people so that they can be healthy, flourishing contributors to our state's present and future.
- **We need our leaders to act to make revenue available for this major and worthwhile investment.**
 - The annual cost of fully funding the ECS formula is estimated by the Office of Fiscal Analysis at \$357.5 million.
 - The budget proposed by the Appropriations Committee includes \$150 million designated for education finance reform. This is less than half the necessary amount.
 - At a time when the state has a budget surplus and overflowing rainy-day funds, we can afford to make this critical investment in our state's young people. In fact, we can't afford not to.