

Education Funding for
Local School Districts and
Charter Schools

2005-2006



CEA

Advocating for teachers
and public education

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As the debate about funding for charter schools has heated up in recent months, it has become necessary to publish the facts about school funding in Connecticut with specific attention to funding for local public schools and charter school programs.

What we have found is that per pupil spending in charter schools exceeds the state average for per pupil spending in Connecticut.¹ Three of Connecticut charter schools are among the top ten districts in Connecticut² in spending per pupil.

In recent years, some charter school advocates have been especially aggressive in suggesting that even more dramatic increases in funding are needed.³ It has been stated repeatedly that these schools spend far less than traditional public schools and achieve higher levels of results. That is simply not true with respect to either achievement or funding. Regarding achievement, researchers Peter Behuniak and Jessica Goldstein, have found that:

The examination of the entire distribution of school results suggests...that charter and magnet schools are quite varied in the achievement levels, improvement and performance gains that they demonstrate, with some schools producing low results, some producing high results, and others falling in between. This is, of course, true of traditional public schools as well.⁴

On the funding side, the picture is equally complex. Connecticut's charter schools are among the most well-funded of Connecticut's schools and the worst-funded. Table 1 contains the net current expenditures per pupil (minus special education costs) in Connecticut school districts.⁵ This measure was used because charter schools do not pay special education costs (which are assumed by their surrounding districts). This measure therefore is the only fair and reasonable means to compare what traditional public schools and charter schools are spending per pupil for regular education. In the following findings, statements regarding per pupil expenditures refer to net current expenditures per pupil (minus special education costs).

¹ This is measured by using net current expenditures per pupil (minus special education costs). Unlike local public schools, charter schools do not pay for special education costs.

² Charter schools represent separate school districts in Connecticut.

³ Among other venues, these suggestions were evident in the deliberations of the Governor's Commission on Education Finance.

⁴ Peter Behuniak and Jessica Goldstein, "A Review of the ConnCAN Research Report," January 2007 (unpublished).

⁵ The net current expenditures per pupil (minus special education costs) in Connecticut districts were compiled by Bob Brewer. CEA is solely responsible for any interpretation of the numbers presented.

**Net Current Expenditures (Minus Special Education)
In Connecticut School Districts and Charter Schools
2005-2006**

Ranking	District Name	Net Current Expenditure Per Pupil Minus Special Education Cost	
1	Stamford Academy	\$18,876	*
2	Trailblazers Charter School	\$17,093	*
3	Canaan	\$14,741	
4	Cornwall	\$14,033	
5	Sharon	\$13,824	
6	Amistad Charter School	\$13,240	*
7	Salisbury	\$13,163	
8	Hampton	\$13,113	
9	Chaplin	\$13,102	
10	Scotland	\$12,632	
11	Greenwich	\$12,416	
12	Bridgewater	\$11,972	
13	Roxbury	\$11,972	
14	Washington	\$11,972	
15	Norfolk	\$11,969	
16	Weston	\$11,921	
17	Kent	\$11,912	
18	Westport	\$11,834	
19	New Haven	\$11,698	
20	Redding	\$11,599	
21	Mansfield	\$11,507	
22	Stamford	\$11,358	
23	Colebrook	\$11,236	
24	Hartford	\$11,218	
25	New Canaan	\$11,175	
26	Lyme	\$11,071	
27	Old Lyme	\$11,071	

**Net Current Expenditures (Minus Special Education)
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57	Barkhamsted	\$9,314
58	Ridgefield	\$9,281
59	Durham	\$9,248
60	Middlefield	\$9,248
61	Westbrook	\$9,229
62	Milford	\$9,224
63	Cromwell	\$9,217
64	Andover	\$9,170
65	Portland	\$9,159
66	Windsor	\$9,156
67	Clinton	\$9,139
68	Winchester	\$9,117
69	Bolton	\$9,081
70	Hamden	\$9,067
71	Haddam	\$9,040
72	Killingworth	\$9,040
73	Marlborough	\$9,012
74	New London	\$8,987
75	Middletown	\$8,973
76	Farmington	\$8,930
77	Old Saybrook	\$8,928
78	Litchfield	\$8,927
79	Integrated Day Charter School	\$8,903
80	Windsor Locks	\$8,858
81	Newington	\$8,826
82	Salem	\$8,814
83	Branford	\$8,803
84	Plainville	\$8,722
85	Waterbury	\$8,716
86	Trumbull	\$8,711

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**Net Current Expenditures (Minus Special Education)
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117	Montville	\$8,310	
118	Meriden	\$8,301	
119	Stafford	\$8,297	
120	Voluntown	\$8,294	
121	Enfield	\$8,282	
122	Bethlehem	\$8,266	
123	Woodbury	\$8,266	
124	Explorations Charter School	\$8,263	*
125	Avon	\$8,237	
126	Odyssey Charter School	\$8,227	*
127	East Hartford	\$8,195	
128	Granby	\$8,186	
129	South Windsor	\$8,171	
130	West Haven	\$8,151	
131	Stratford	\$8,077	
132	Bristol	\$8,053	
133	Sprague	\$8,037	
134	Newtown	\$8,008	
135	Derby	\$8,006	
136	Ledyard	\$7,962	
137	Sherman	\$7,954	
138	ISAAC Charter School	\$7,953	*
139	Torrington	\$7,951	
140	Wallingford	\$7,924	
141	Southington	\$7,904	
142	Berlin	\$7,878	
143	Glastonbury	\$7,868	
144	Monroe	\$7,862	
145	Hebron	\$7,858	
146	Brooklyn	\$7,848	

**Net Current Expenditures (Minus Special Education)
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177	Woodstock	\$7,351
178	Oxford	\$7,326
179	Griswold	\$7,234
180	Ansonia	\$7,055
181	Wolcott	\$7,046
182	Colchester	\$6,985
183	Watertown	\$6,712

Footnote: "Net current expenditures" means total current educational expenditures, less expenditures for (A) pupil transportation; (B) capital expenditures for land, buildings, equipment otherwise supported by a state grant pursuant to chapter 173 and debt service, provided that, with respect to debt service, commencing with the fiscal year ending June 30, 1987, the principal amount of any debt incurred to pay an expense otherwise includable in net current expenditures may be included a part of net current expenditures in annual installments in accordance with a schedule approved by the Department of Education based upon substantially equal principal payments over the life of the debt; (C) adult education; (D) health and welfare services for nonpublic school children; (E) all tuition received on account of nonresident pupils; (F) food services directly attributable to state and federal aid for child nutrition and to receipts derived from the operation of such services; and (G) student activities directly attributable to receipts derived from the operation of such services. In this comparison of spending across districts (in which Charter Schools are included as school districts), we have subtracted special education costs from the NCEP. This is because Charter Schools, by statute, are not responsible for special education costs, which are borne by the sending districts. It is therefore, the only way to get an "apples to apples" comparison of per pupil spending among Connecticut school districts and Charter Schools.