



Advocating for teachers
and public education

*Testimony of
Mark Waxenberg, Director Government Relations
Connecticut Education Association*

*Before the
Education Committee*

Raised Bill #647 'An Act Concerning Charter Schools'

March 10, 2008

**Connecticut Education
Association**

Governance

Philip Apruzzese, President
Sheila Cohen, Vice President
Cheryl Prevost, Secretary
Jeff Leake, Treasurer
Rae Baczek, NEA Director
Maureen Honan, NEA Director

Executive Office

Dr. John Yrchik
Executive Director

Government Relations

Mark Waxenberg, Director
Capitol Place, Suite 500
21 Oak Street
Hartford, CT 06106-8001
860-525-5641, 800-842-4316
Fax: 860-725-6362
www.cea.org

Affiliated with the
National Education
Association

Good morning Senator Gaffey and Representative Fleischmann. My name is Mark Waxenberg, Director of Government Relations for the Connecticut Education Association.

The Connecticut Education Association opposes Raised Bill #647 "An Act Concerning Charter Schools". Bluntly stated this bill is earmarked for the Charter Management Organization, Achievement First and give the special treatment and considerable additional state money.

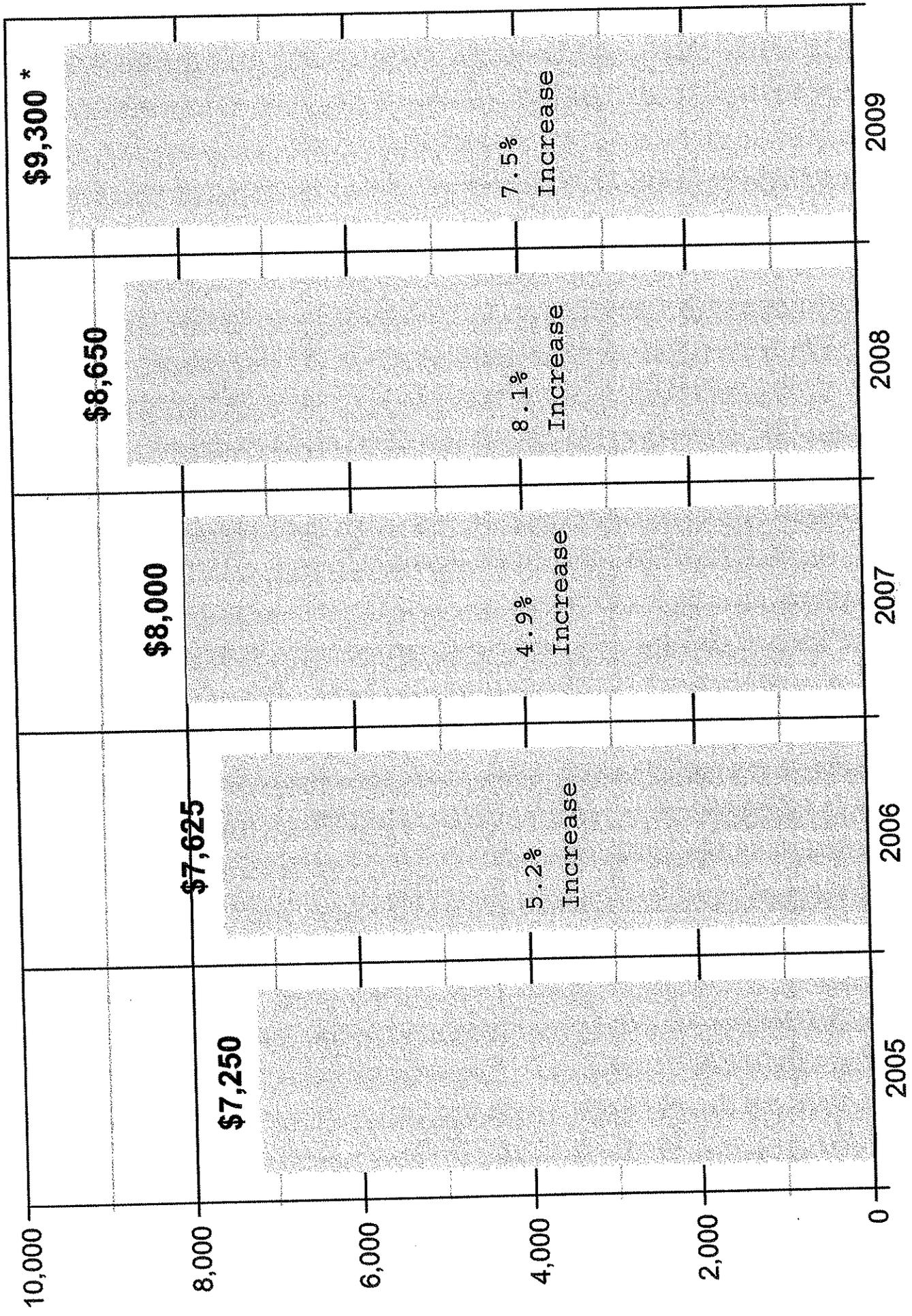
I have attached exhibits to show the expansion of Charter Schools and the considerable cost to the state. In fact, the annual increases for Charters exceeds the majority of increases to local public schools. Achievement Firsts request for net current expenditures is significantly flawed based on the monies for local schools provided to them and are Net Current Expenditures. Comparison that is attached also shows there agreement is flawed. Examples are: Even with special education costs deducted, NCE is not a great match because it includes other state and federal grants – some of which charters are eligible to receive and do receive. It's a kind of double counting.

Facilities expenditure is not a defined term as far as I know so what kinds of costs are we talking about? If it's just capital costs/debt service, it should say that. If it includes repairs, utilities and other current facilities costs, those are already in NCE. A separate grant for those types of costs would definitely be duplicative in the context of this proposal.

Putting in annual cost adjustment language clearly would put charters in a better place than school districts since the ECS foundation has no such provision – an ECE is only going to be 26% phased in toward the new foundation set at 2006-07 level.

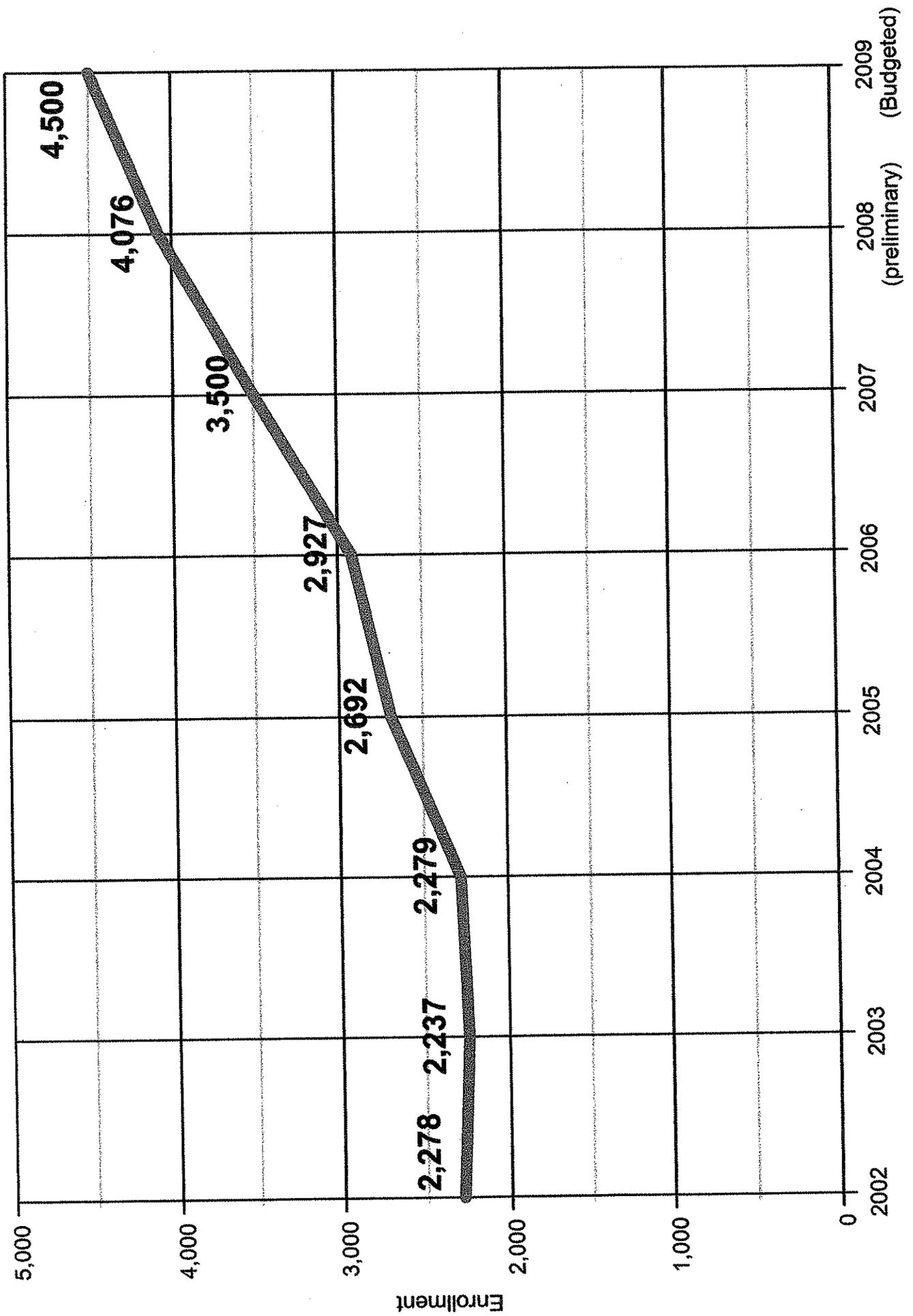
I would ask that you review the attachments and reject this blatant attempt to "rob from Peter to pay Paul."

Charter School Per Pupil Funding FY 2005- FY 2009 (Proposed)



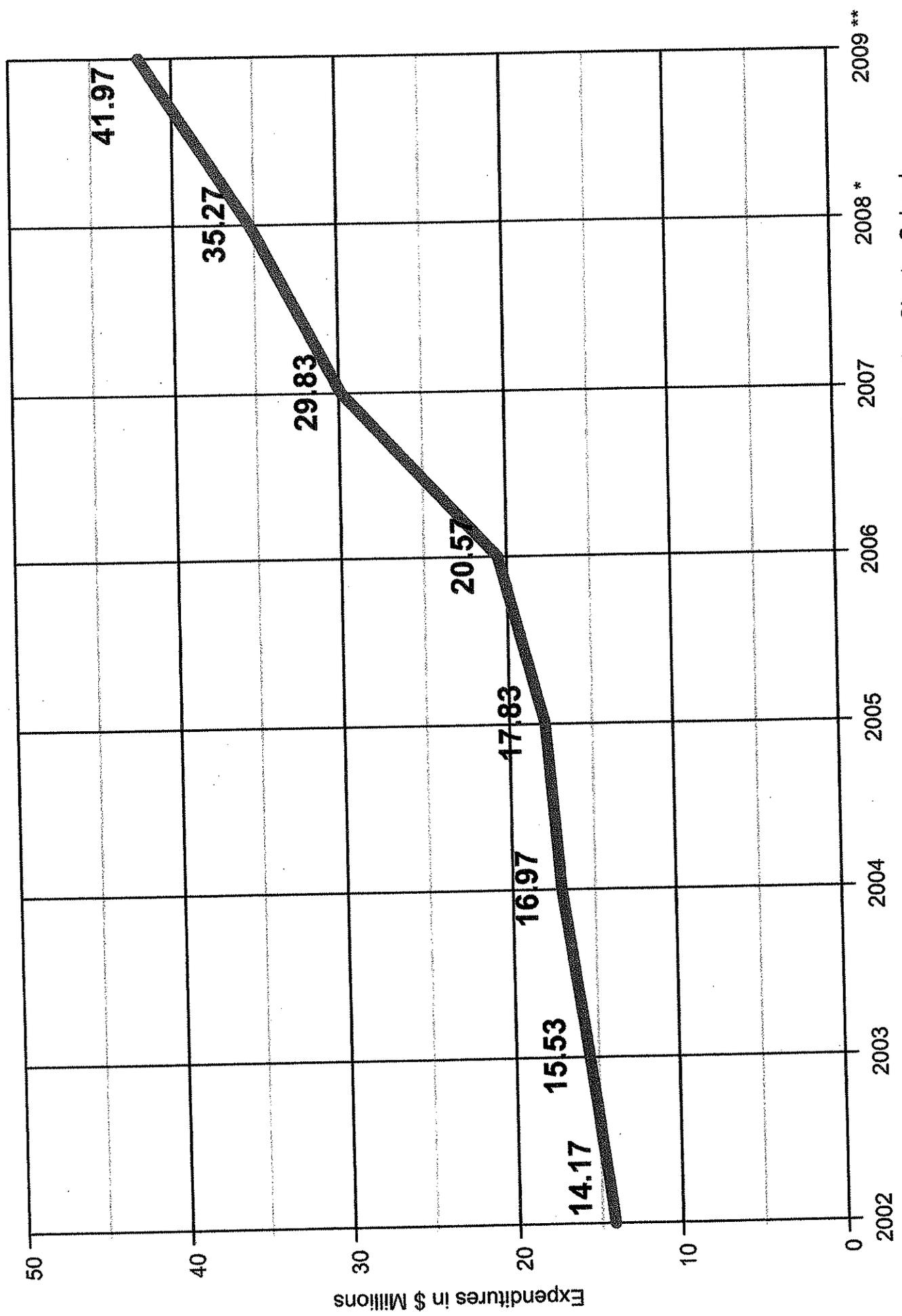
Source: State of Connecticut *FY09 Proposed State Budget

CT Charter School Student Enrollment 2002-2008 (Budgeted)



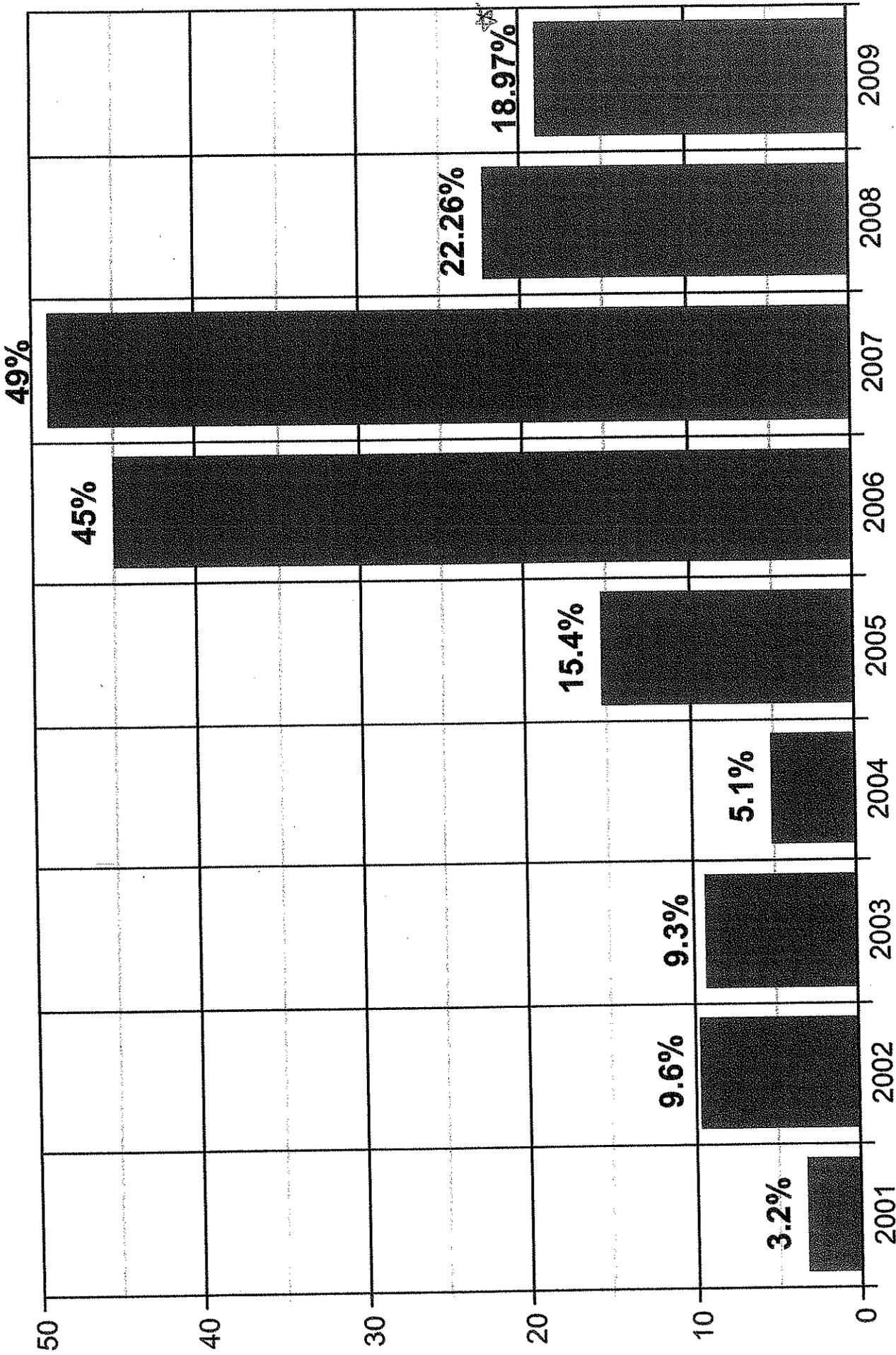
Source: State Department of Education

Charter School Funding 2002-2008 (Budgeted)



Source: SDE *Passed by ECS Committee 12/20/06 **This amount is with existing Charter Schools and projected enrollment increases

Annual Percentage Increase in Charter School Funding from Connecticut FY 2001-2009 (projected)



Source: State Department of Education - *Governor Reil's Budget Proposal February, 2008

Education Funding for Local School Districts and Charter Schools

2005-2006 ■ Updated March 2007

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 twenty 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. The tables contain 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).

- Three charter schools are among the top 20 school districts in spending per pupil in Connecticut.

- The average amount expended per pupil in charter schools (\$9,939) is greater than the average expenditure per pupil for towns (\$9,106).

- The median amount expended per pupil in charter schools (\$9,144) is greater than the state median expenditure per pupil (\$8,639).

Some charter schools are more dependent upon state funding than others for their operations. Through outside contributions, some have been able to spend far more per pupil than their state grants would indicate. Others, however, have languished in this area.

As legislators seek to establish state policy for how charter schools should be funded, it appears reasonable that the state of Connecticut should establish a funding level indexed to a real number, such as the median amount Connecticut school districts spend on regular education insofar as charter schools do not incur special education expenditures.⁶

Under the policy outlined here, if a substantial infusion of ECS funding were to bring up the median level of net current expenditures per pupil (minus special education costs) in a dramatic fashion, charter school funding would go up. If, by the same token, funding for regular education programs in local public school did not increase, charter school funding would likewise not increase.

In adopting a policy like this, the legislature could strike a balance between funding for local public schools and charter schools and remove the animus from the process of funding charter schools that has marked it in recent years.

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	\$19,180
2	Canaan	\$14,741
3	Cornwall	\$14,033
4	Sharon	\$13,824
5	Salisbury	\$13,163
6	Hampton	\$13,113
7	Chaplin	\$13,102
8	Scotland	\$12,632
9	Greenwich	\$12,483
10	Norfolk	\$12,013
11	Weston	\$12,010
12	Bridgewater	\$12,005
13	Roxbury	\$12,005
14	Washington	\$12,005
15	Kent	\$11,912
16	Westport	\$11,897
17	New Haven	\$11,836
18	Amistad	\$11,750
19	Redding	\$11,670
20	Trailblazers	\$11,573
21	Mansfield	\$11,535
22	Stamford	\$11,417
23	Hartford	\$11,369
24	New Beginnings	\$11,255
25	Colebrook	\$11,236
26	New Canaan	\$11,226

RANKING	DISTRICT NAME	NET CURRENT EXPENDITURE PER PUPIL MINUS SPECIAL EDUCATION COST
27	Lyme	\$11,099
28	Old Lyme	\$11,099
29	Bloomfield	\$10,932
30	Woodbridge	\$10,806
31	Deep River	\$10,790
32	Common Ground	\$10,784
33	North Canaan	\$10,741
34	Norwalk	\$10,613
35	Fairfield	\$10,505
36	Chester	\$10,313
37	Darien	\$10,226
38	Willington	\$10,125
39	Wilton	\$10,086
40	Easton	\$9,985
41	Essex	\$9,978
42	Putnam	\$9,949
43	North Stonington	\$9,898
44	Hartland	\$9,889
45	Bethany	\$9,786
46	Groton	\$9,757
47	New Hartford	\$9,718
48	East Granby	\$9,674
49	Orange	\$9,655
50	Franklin	\$9,584
51	Jumoke	\$9,582
52	Goshen	\$9,574

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
53	Morris	\$9,574
54	Warren	\$9,574
55	Elm City College Prep	\$9,504
56	Eastford	\$9,499
57	Barkhamsted	\$9,328
58	Ridgefield	\$9,325
59	Durham	\$9,307
60	Middlefield	\$9,307
61	Milford	\$9,272
62	Cromwell	\$9,250
63	Westbrook	\$9,247
64	Windsor	\$9,217
65	Andover	\$9,213
66	Hamden	\$9,192
67	Winchester	\$9,169
68	Portland	\$9,165
69	Clinton	\$9,160
70	Bolton	\$9,100
71	Haddam	\$9,054
72	Killingworth	\$9,054
73	Middletown	\$9,054
74	Marlborough	\$9,051
75	New London	\$9,046
76	Old Saybrook	\$8,985
77	Farmington	\$8,974
78	Litchfield	\$8,967

RANKING	DISTRICT NAME	NET CURRENT EXPENDITURE PER PUPIL MINUS SPECIAL EDUCATION COST
79	Windsor Locks	\$8,949
80	Branford	\$8,878
81	Newington	\$8,869
82	Salem	\$8,846
83	Plainville	\$8,833
84	Highville Chart	\$8,784
85	Waterbury	\$8,760
86	Wethersfield	\$8,746
87	Trumbull	\$8,733
88	Canterbury	\$8,695
89	Waterford	\$8,676
90	West Hartford	\$8,673
91	Bridgeport	\$8,666
92	Canton	\$8,657
93	Side By Side	\$8,652
94	Manchester	\$8,639*
95	Killingly	\$8,636
96	Windham	\$8,635
97	Vernon	\$8,625
98	East Haddam	\$8,622
99	Brookfield	\$8,608
100	East Lyme	\$8,589
101	East Haven	\$8,565
102	Danbury	\$8,553
103	Bethel	\$8,548
104	Preston	\$8,540

*Median

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
105	Rocky Hill	\$8,529
106	Ashford	\$8,489
107	Union	\$8,482
108	Plainfield	\$8,478
109	Stonington	\$8,420
110	Meriden	\$8,401
111	Voluntown	\$8,391
112	Guilford	\$8,386
113	Columbia	\$8,380
114	Simsbury	\$8,368
115	Stafford	\$8,360
116	Middlebury	\$8,333
117	Southbury	\$8,333
118	Montville	\$8,326
119	Enfield	\$8,315
120	Avon	\$8,279
121	Bethlehem	\$8,266
122	Woodbury	\$8,266
123	Granby	\$8,248
124	West Haven	\$8,237
125	East Hartford	\$8,232
126	South Windsor	\$8,231
127	Stratford	\$8,161
128	Integrated Day	\$8,143
129	Derby	\$8,136
130	Bristol	\$8,100

RANKING	DISTRICT NAME	NET CURRENT EXPENDITURE PER PUPIL MINUS SPECIAL EDUCATION COST
131	Newtown	\$8,071
132	Sprague	\$8,054
133	Sherman	\$8,038
134	Torrington	\$8,035
135	Ledyard	\$8,013
136	Wallingford	\$7,987
137	Southington	\$7,985
138	Norwich	\$7,925
139	North Haven	\$7,921
140	Glastonbury	\$7,920
141	Explorations	\$7,916
142	Brooklyn	\$7,912
143	Berlin	\$7,906
144	Monroe	\$7,890
145	Hebron	\$7,888
146	Naugatuck	\$7,841
147	Bozrah	\$7,833
148	Bridge	\$7,824
149	Burlington	\$7,820
150	Harwinton	\$7,820
151	Lisbon	\$7,812
152	Shelton	\$7,782
153	Somers	\$7,754
154	Beacon Falls	\$7,754
155	Prospect	\$7,754
156	New Britain	\$7,736

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
157	Thompson	\$7,735
158	Tolland	\$7,713
159	East Windsor	\$7,696
160	Ellington	\$7,694
161	Seymour	\$7,691
162	New Fairfield	\$7,663
163	North Branford	\$7,645
164	Suffield	\$7,627
165	Coventry	\$7,619
166	Madison	\$7,611
167	Thomaston	\$7,555
168	East Hampton	\$7,549
169	Cheshire	\$7,533
170	Pomfret	\$7,504
171	Lebanon	\$7,468
172	Sterling	\$7,466
173	New Milford	\$7,450
174	Plymouth	\$7,441
175	Woodstock	\$7,421
176	Oxford	\$7,362
177	Griswold	\$7,270
178	ISAAC	\$7,179
180	Ansonia	\$7,103
181	Wolcott	\$7,063
182	Colchester	\$7,026
183	Odyssey	\$7,025
184	Watertown	\$6,731

FOOTNOTES

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 Bchuniak 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. Students reported by towns to be in private special education placements have been excluded in computing the per pupil expenditures.

⁶ Special education costs represent approximately 20 percent of the average pupil cost of local school districts.