

**Testimony of
Richard A. Moccia, Mayor, City of Norwalk**

**SB 24: AN Act Concerning Educational Competitiveness
February 22, 2012**

Chairwoman Stillman, Chairman Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony regarding reforming or replacing the current education funding model.

I am writing to explain Norwalk's frustration with the current Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula. The existing formula unfairly penalizes the City of Norwalk and severely impacts the ability of Norwalk to provide services and penalizes our local taxpayers. As I have tried to analyze the formula over the years it is has become abundantly clear that for whatever reason, be it lack of information, partisan politics or other reasons, that we have been severely shortchanged.

As we saw recently with Norwalk, when districts and school systems are treated differently from one another for arbitrary reasons, it is the students who lose out. Students' funding for their education should not be subject to political or other circumstances as they arise. We need one fair, streamlined funding formula for all public school students that is transparent and uses accurate, reasonable data to inform the distribution of state money.

Based on Norwalk's poverty rate, median household income, and ESL demands, it seems that Norwalk is a much needier community than other communities that receive far more funding than Norwalk. It seems that the socio economic and demographic factors that Norwalk faces are similar to other cities in the State, yet there is an overreliance on the Equalized Net Grand List Per Capita, which is a flawed and an imperfect measure of wealth, which does a poor job of capturing the actual ability of taxpayers to support education expenditures.

I believe a comparison of several other cities and the amount of aid received will dramatically point out the disparity that I have mentioned previously:

ECS Aid per Student

Norwalk	\$930
Ansonia	\$5,516
Danbury	\$2,246
Derby	\$4,738
East Hartford	\$5,760