

CCM 2013 Testimony

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PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

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CCM is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 92% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate this opportunity to testify before this joint committee on the issue of mandates reform, a top priority of CCM's.

CCM supports HB 5438, "An Act Concerning Unfunded Mandates on Schools and Municipalities".

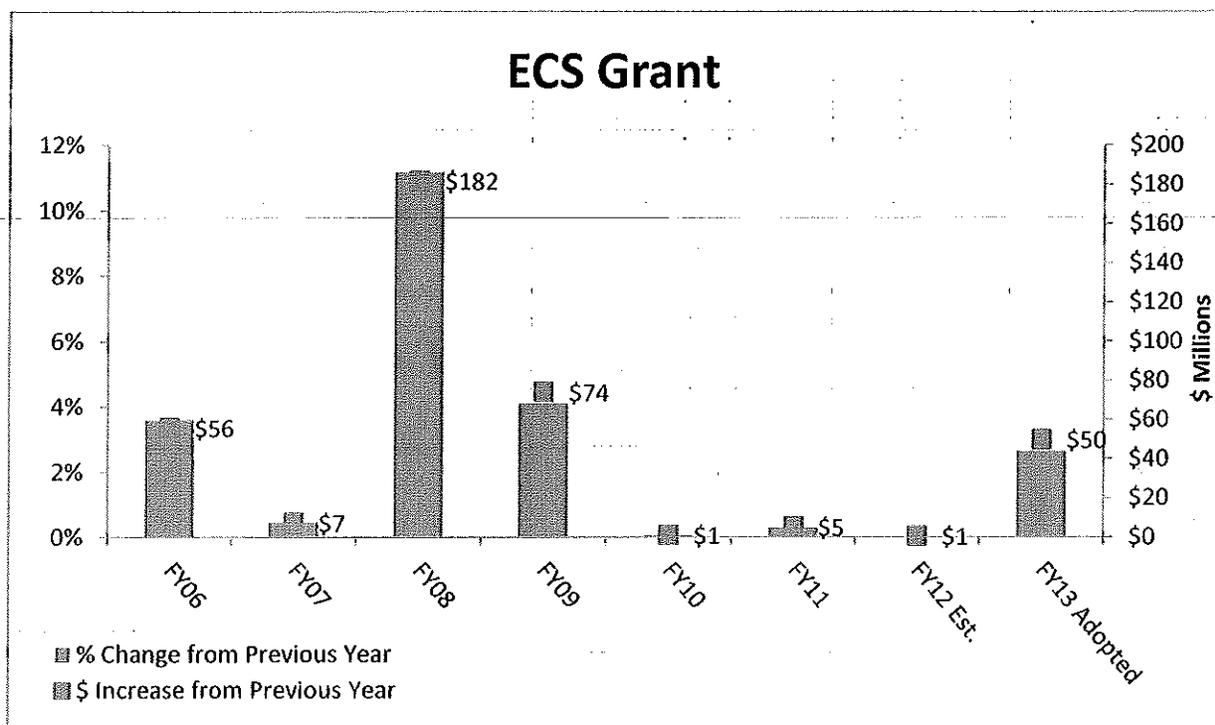
Although economists have declared that the "Great Recession" officially ended in June 2009, Hometown, Connecticut continues to cope with its crippling effects. This is most evident in the delayed improvements in Connecticut's local public education system. With no shortage of education reform advocates in the legislative and executive branches, there still remains significant and costly state-imposed requirements in the education area.

Let Local Education Breathe and Provide Education Mandates Relief:

The Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant is the State's largest general education assistance grant. It will total \$1.94 billion this year. This is a \$50 million increase over last year and the first significant increase in four years. While the increase is welcome, it will do little to address the chronic underfunding of ECS. The ECS grant is currently underfunded by at least \$700 million.¹

The education reform initiatives enacted in 2012 were not accompanied by significant increases in new state dollars. More will be asked of struggling districts in order to leverage modest increases in education aid.

¹ SDE data for 2011-12



Source: Adopted state budgets; State Comptroller reports

Special education is a significant cost driver for local government. These costs now surpass the \$1.7 billion mark statewide. This spending accounts for over 21 percent of total current expenditures for education in Connecticut, and annual costs have been growing as much as six percent in recent years.²

The State provides the **Excess Cost-Student Based** grant to help reimburse municipalities for the costs of special education. The grant provides a circuit breaker once the expenditures for a student exceed a certain level, currently 4.5 times the per pupil spending average of the district. So, for example, **if a municipality spends an average of \$10,000 per pupil, it must spend at least \$45,000 for a special-education student before being eligible for any state reimbursement.**

Unfortunately, the grant has been level-funded for four years. This means that the state reimbursement has not kept pace with the escalating costs of special education. The State Department of Education estimates that **it will cost an additional \$101 million to fully fund the state share of special education costs for the 2013-14 school year.**³ Without full funding, towns and cities are forced to find other ways to pay for special education. Not surprisingly, the burden falls on residential and business property taxpayers and non-education services.

These underfunding issues are compounded by the **minimum budget requirement (MBR)**, a significant education mandate that puts additional pressure on the property tax. This state mandate essentially requires towns and cities to spend at least as much on education in the current year as they did the previous year.

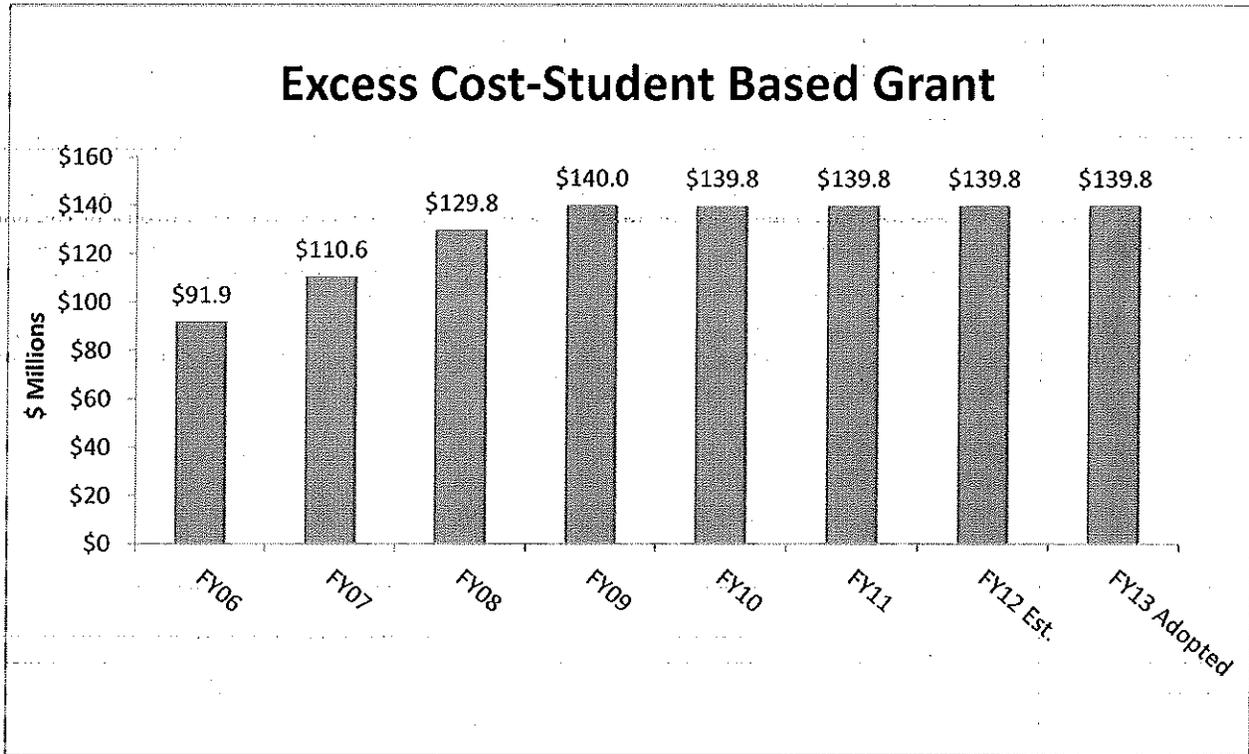
The imposition of the MBR has meant that no matter what efficiencies have been found in education budgets, the budgets cannot be significantly reduced. In an era in which every other state and local agency are having

² State Department of Education (SDE)

³ *CT Mirror*, "Panel Looks to Tackle Skyrocketing Special Education Costs," September 17, 2012

their budgets closely examined, one entity – boards of education – have been held to a different standard and shielded from taxpayer and voter control.

The State, which has chronically underfunded PreK-12 public education, instead forces municipalities through the MBR and other mandates to pay for state underfunding. The result: non-education service cutbacks and even higher property taxes.



Source: Adopted state budgets; State Comptroller reports

The 2013 General Assembly should eliminate or modify the MBR mandate on local education spending. Additionally, state lawmakers should consider suspending, for two years, the myriad of costly unfunded state mandates on school districts, unless necessary to comply with court orders or federal law.

The Bristol Public Schools conducted an analysis of the cost of mandates on their district. It estimated that complying with state education mandates costs the district almost \$15 million. See appendix A for an illustrative example. Surely state lawmakers can muster the political will to at least suspend, repeal or fund some of these education mandates, in order to free up desperately-needed local resources.

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If you have any questions, please contact Jim Finley (jfinley@ccm-ct.org) or Ron Thomas (rthomas@ccm-ct.org) at (203) 498-3000.

APPENDIX A

Cost of Unfunded and Partially Funded Mandates for 2008-09 Bristol Public Schools Philip A. Streifer, Ph.D.

Partially Funded Mandates	Estimated Funds/ Hours for 2008-2009	Hourly Rate Applied	Extended Cost
Adult Education - Bristol Share (Total: \$512,000)	\$308,581		\$308,581
CAPT Testing - Grade 10	100+ hours per year	\$8,300	\$8,300
CMT Testing - Grades 4/6/8 Expanded Testing	500+/ 45 hours per year	\$45,235	\$45,235
Preparation for mandated science testing in grades 5/8 (2007)	60 hours	\$4,980	\$4,980
English Language Learners - ELL & Bilingual	\$547,916		\$547,916
Special Education District Share (65%)	\$7,549,694		\$7,549,694
Un-Funded Mandates			
ADA accommodations (transportation/signs/elevators)	\$100,000		\$100,000
Alternate Education for Expelled Students (\$12,000 per student)	\$33,300		\$33,300
Air Quality	\$4,000		\$4,000
Asbestos Training for Building Grounds Staff (1 day per year)	\$200		\$200
Background Checks and Finger Printing (Follow-up)	\$1,250		\$1,250
BEST Program (Subs & Oversight)	\$17,000		\$17,000
Bullying Policy (investigations/record keeping/follow-up)	\$7,500		\$7,500
Child Abuse Reporting (200 per year @ \$120 per)	\$24,000		\$24,000
Continuing Education Units (CEU Professional Development) 18 hours per year	\$870,166		\$870,166
CPR/First Aid and Heimlich Training (nurses/coaches/staff)	\$2,000		\$2,000
Hepatitis B (@ \$120)	\$120		\$120
Drug Education (health staff)	\$130,000		\$130,000
ED-001 END OF YEAR SCHOOL REPORT (audit cost)	200 hours and \$30,000	\$16,600	\$46,600
ED-014 MINIMUM EXPENDITURE COMPLIANCE CHECK	2 hours per year	\$166	\$166
ED-156 FALL HIRING SURVEY	2 hours per year	\$166	\$166
ED-163 CONNECTICUT SCHOOL DATA REPORT	64 hours per year	\$5,312	\$5,312
ED-166 DISCIPLINE OFFENSE REPORT	360 hours per year	\$29,880	\$29,880
ED-525 STUDENT DROPOUT REPORT	30 hours per year	\$2,490	\$2,490
ED-540 GRADUATION CLASS REPORT	30 hours per year	\$2,490	\$2,490
ED-006S PUBLIC SCHOOL INFORMATION (PSIS)	\$35,000		\$35,000
ED-612 LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT SCALES DATA COLLECTION	100 hours per year	\$8,300	\$8,300
ED-003 TEACHER/ADMINISTRATORS NEGOTIATIONS	\$25,000		\$25,000
ED-162 NON-CERTIFIED STAFF	8 hours per year	\$664	\$664
ED-607 SURVEY OF TITLE IX COORDINATORS	2 hours per year	\$166	\$166
ED-172 REQUEST 90 DAY CERTIFICATION	10 hours per year	\$830	\$830
ED-1723 REQUEST TEMPORARY AUTHORIZATION FOR MINOR ASSIGN.	5 hours per year	\$415	\$415
ED-175 SPECIAL WAIVER FOR SUBSTITUTE	4 hours per year	\$332	\$332

ED-177 REQUEST-DURATIONAL SHORTAGE AREA PERMIT	2 hours per year	\$166	\$166
ED-186 APPLICATION-TEMP/EMERGENCY COACHING PERMIT	2 hours per year	\$166	\$166
ED-017 GRANT APPLICATION NONPUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES	2 hours per year	\$166	\$166
ED-021 OUT OF TOWN MAGNET SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION	6 hours per year	\$498	\$498
ED-111 CASH MANAGEMENT REPORT	60 hours per year	\$4,980	\$4,980
ED-114 GRANT BUDGET REVISION	100 hours per year	\$8,300	\$8,300
ED-141 STATEMENT OF EXPENDITURES FED/STATE PROJECTS	60 hours per year	\$4,980	\$4,980
ED-042 REQUEST FOR REVIEW OF FINAL PLANS	100 hours per year	\$8,300	\$8,300
ED-042CO NOTICE OF CHANGE ORDER	20 hours per year	\$1,660	\$1,660
ED-046 REQUEST FOR SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS PAYMENT	20 hours per year	\$1,660	\$1,660
ED-049 GRANT APP FOR SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT	100 hours per year	\$8,300	\$8,300
ED-050 SCHOOL FACILITIES SURVEY	2 hours per year	\$166	\$166
ED-053 SITE ANALYSIS	20 hours per year	\$1,660	\$1,660
ED-099-AGREEMENT FOR CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS	2 hours per year	\$166	\$166
ED-103 REIMBURSEMENT CLAIM NAT. SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM	12 hours per year	\$996	\$996
ED-205 TITLE I EVALUATION REPORT	30 hours per year	\$2,490	\$2,490
SEDAC (SPECIAL EDUCATION INFORMATION SYSTEM)	2,100 hours and \$65,000	\$174,300	\$ 239,300
ED-229 BILINGUAL EDUCATION GRANT APPLICATION	30 hours per year	\$2,490	\$2,490
ED-241/241A ADULT EDUCATION SUMMARY REPORT	30 hours per year	\$2,490	\$2,490
ED-244/244A GRANT APPLICATION FOR ADULT EDUCATION	30 hours per year	\$2,490	\$2,490
ED-245/245A GRANT APPLICATION REVISION-ADULT EDUCATION	10 hours per year	\$830	\$830
ED-236 IMMIGRANT STUDENT SURVEY REPORT	2 hours per year	\$166	\$166
ED-613A STATE DISTRICT CONSOLIDATION APPLICATION	30 hours per year	\$2,490	\$2,490
ED-613B FEDERAL DISTRICT CONSOLIDATION APPLICATION	200 hours per year	\$16,600	\$16,600
Family and Medical Leave Act (@\$6,000 per plus cost of sub)	\$254,200		\$254,200
Sub-cost	\$246,000		\$246,000
Freedom of Information Legal Costs & Administration	\$12,000		\$12,000
Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)	5 hours per year	\$415	\$415
Internet Protection Act for Children(software and staff cost)	\$9,000		\$9,000
Jury Duty (50@ cost of sub)	\$3,250		\$3,250
Medicaid Reimbursement (OT/PT/Speech/Psy)	\$60,000		\$60,000
Minority Staff Recruitment	\$7,000		\$7,000
No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) Report	100 hours per year	\$8,300	\$8,300
Paraprofessional Mandates for Title 1 Schools (highly qualified)	20 hours per year	\$1,660	\$1,660
McKenny-Vento Act	200 hours per year	\$16,600	\$16,600
AYP Reporting/action	350 hours per year	\$29,050	\$29,050
Military Recruitment	40 hours per year	\$3,320	\$3,320
Homeless Transportation (@ \$150 per day for a school year, per student)	\$65,000		\$65,000
Data Collection	750 hours per year	\$62,250	\$62,250
Policy related expenses	300 hours per year	\$24,900	\$24,900
Non-public school transportation	\$982,522		\$982,522

Pesticide Applications Policy	6 hours per year	\$498	\$498
Promotion and Graduation Requirements	500 hours per year	\$41,500	\$41,500
Restraint Training for Special Education and Support Staff	\$10,000		\$10,000
Residency investigation	\$10,000		\$10,000
Restaurant Safety Act (signs)	\$600		\$600
School Records and Retention	\$5,000		\$5,000
School Transportation Safety Reporting	\$5,000		\$5,000
Sexual Harassment Training	\$1,250.00		\$1,250
Student Survey	20 hours per year	\$1,660	\$1,660
Special Education Due Process (proactive)	\$70,000		\$70,000
Special Education Excess Cost our share plus 5% state Reduction	\$700,000		\$700,000
Special Education Coverage at PPT's	5000 hours per year	\$415,000	\$415,000
Gifted and Talented	\$127,722		\$127,722
Strategic School Profiles (SSP) (data collection/reporting)	200 hours per year	\$16,600	\$16,600
Student Physicals and Immunizations (Grades K, 7, 10)	1000 hours per year	\$83,000	\$83,000
Hearing Screenings	\$30,000		\$30,000
School Medical Advisor	\$6,000		\$6,000
Related Medical Equipment	\$150,000		\$150,000
Summer School or other supplemental services for intervention	\$86,804		\$86,804
Teacher/Administrator Evaluations	\$500,000		\$500,000
Transportation to Regional Vo/AG/Technical Schools	\$297,000		\$297,000
Truancy Reporting (10 per year)	\$30,000		\$30,000
Tuition to Regional Vo/AG schools	\$200,000		\$200,000
Vending Machines	20 hours per year	\$1,660	\$1,660
504 Accommodations	\$35,000		\$35,000

TOTAL COSTS FOR MANDATES: \$14,733,344