

**Testimony in Support of  
S.B. 948, *An Act Addressing Education Funding and Racial Equity in Connecticut***

Dr. Joseph DiBacco  
Superintendent, Ansonia Public Schools

Chairmen McCrory and Sanchez, Ranking Members Berthel and McCarty, and distinguished members of the Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in strong support of S.B. 948, An Act Addressing Education Funding and Racial Equity in Connecticut. My name is Joseph DiBacco and I have had the honor and privilege of serving as superintendent for Ansonia Public Schools since July 2019.

I am testifying in support of S.B. 948 because it would finally bring full equitable education funding to our district, our students, and our teachers. Based on the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula that has been in place since fiscal year 2019, Ansonia is not scheduled to receive its full share of funding until fiscal year 2028. Seven more years is far too long for our students to wait to receive the education funding they need and deserve.

Ansonia is an Alliance District as well as a Priority School District. Sixty-eight percent of our students are economically disadvantaged. And according to the state's most recent Distressed Municipalities list, Ansonia is the most fiscally and economically distressed municipality in Connecticut.

Our community and our district have significant needs and we need proper state funding in order to provide our 2,300 students with the resources and educational opportunities they deserve.

S.B. 948 would provide this funding.

Based on S.B. 948's changes to the ECS formula, Ansonia would receive an estimated \$21.8 million in ECS funding in FY 2022 – roughly \$3.6 million more than current law spending levels. These are funds our students and teachers desperately need. Funds that could support counselors, paraprofessionals, and help address the social-emotional needs of students. Funds that could lower class sizes or be used to upgrade technological resources. Funds that would be a real tangible difference in the lives and education of our students.

This bill would also help our district by increasing and adjusting the concentrated poverty weight in the ECS formula. By lowering the eligibility threshold for the concentrated poverty weight to 60 percent, the General Assembly would be providing higher-need districts like Ansonia much-needed additional resources for our students with greater learning needs.

Additionally, I support S.B. 948 because it would mitigate the impact of student enrollment volatility caused by the COVID-19 pandemic by utilizing the greater of the October 2019 or October 2020 resident student counts when calculating ECS grants. The pandemic has been a significant challenge to our district and to districts across the state. By mitigating the impact of enrollment volatility as a result of the pandemic, S.B. 948 ensures our district, and districts throughout the state, do not see their funding shrink as a result of this temporary change in enrollment.

S.B. 948 would finally bring true equitable funding to our public schools and help ensure all of Connecticut's students have access to the resources they need to be successful in and outside of the classroom. I urge Committee members to support S.B. 948 and fully fund our students.

Thank you again for allowing me the opportunity to testify in support of this bill and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Joseph DiBacco". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "D" and "B".

Dr. Joseph DiBacco  
Superintendent, Ansonia Public Schools