



GRISWOLD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Sean P. McKenna, Superintendent of Schools
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February 19th, 2025

Dear Appropriations Committee:

I am writing to express my serious concerns regarding the adjustments to the Educational Cost Sharing (ECS) grant, Connecticut's primary education aid program for public school districts. While notable efforts have been made to refine the ECS grant formula to better serve students and districts in need, these adjustments resemble a "catch-up," redistributionist approach amidst severe challenging economic conditions. Factors such as inflation, the termination of ARP ESSER funding, minimum wage increases, and changes to car tax assessments threaten the financial stability of municipalities and, by extension, school districts across Connecticut, as they plan to finalize budgets for the 2025-2026 school year.

Despite the ECS recalculations within Governor Lamont's proposed budget, public school districts face significant economic hurdles. Inflation persists at 3%, exceeding the Federal Reserve's target of 2%, which strains the operational budgets of school districts. Moreover, the minimum wage in Connecticut has risen sharply from \$13.00 an hour in 2021 to \$16.35 an hour in 2025, further tightening budget constraints for non-profit entities like public schools.

The expiration of ARP ESSER grants, which temporarily helped with funding pressures, has left districts grappling with additional challenges beyond typical "unfunded mandates." For example, the shift in car tax assessment from fair market value to MSRP, factoring depreciation, further reduces municipal revenues, thereby negatively affecting towns' abilities to support local budgets and their education systems.

In light of these circumstances, I urge you to maintain the current level of ECS funding. Governor Lamont's budget proposes a cut to Griswold of \$47,295 next year, followed by \$47,289 the following year—a total reduction of \$94,584 over two years. Griswold, like many other districts, cannot sustain such reductions amid the aforementioned, escalating economic challenges. I implore you to reconsider and preserve ECS funding at this year's level in the biennium budget to prevent devastating impacts on school districts during this unusually volatile economic climate.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Respectfully yours,

Sean P. McKenna
Superintendent of Schools

c: Griswold Board of Education