



Analysis of Appropriations Committee Biennial Budget Proposal **April 27, 2015**

On April 27, 2015, the Appropriations Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly released its biennial budget proposal that included education funding for fiscal year 2016 and 2017 (FY16 and FY17). The proposal shows the Committee's commitment to improving education by providing additional funding for early childhood education programs and maintaining funding for other critical improvement efforts. However, the Committee's proposed budget blocks children's access to new high-quality schools and falls short of the bold changes needed to improve outcomes and opportunities for the nearly 40,000 children currently attending chronically low-performing schools.¹ It eliminates funding for two already approved charter schools, significantly reduces funding for educator evaluation and support, and fails to address the larger problem of fixing our broken school finance system. **In comparison to Governor Malloy's budget proposal, the Appropriations Committee budget would:**

Reduce funding:

- **Charter Schools:** The proposal maintains funding to enable existing state charter schools to add grade levels as scheduled. Hundreds of students would have been displaced had the committee not made this a priority. However, the Appropriations Committee budget cuts funding for the two already approved new public charter schools in Bridgeport and Stamford that were included in the Governor's budget proposal. This proposal would deny access for hundreds of students who hope to attend these schools. The budget does not include a per-pupil funding increase for charter school students, leaving per-pupil funding for charter schools flat and lower than most traditional schools (at \$11,000 per student).
- **School Choice Programs:** Proposed funding for magnet schools decreased slightly from the Governor's proposal, but the overall proposed FY16 funding level still represents an increase of \$33.5 million above FY15 funding. FY16 proposed funding for Open Choice would decrease by 3.6% and fall nearly 2% below FY15 funding levels.
- **Talent Development:** The Committee proposes a reduction of more than 26% from the Governor's FY16 proposed funding levels for Talent Development funds that support implementation of the state's teacher and principal evaluation program.
- **Standards and Accountability:** The Committee budget proposal zeroes out the School Accountability line item. These funds would be used to support the development of a much-needed improved system of accountability and support to schools.

Increase funding:

- **Education Cost Sharing (ECS) Grant and Priority School District programs:** The Governor's budget proposes flat funding levels for districts through the Education Equalization Grants line item based on amounts they previously received for ECS and the Alliance District program for the 30 lowest-performing districts. The Appropriations Committee's budget proposes ECS funding increases of \$3.7 million in FY16 and \$10.6 million FY17 for underfunded towns. The Committee proposes restoring more than \$4 million each year to the Priority School District program that was eliminated in the Governor's budget proposal.
- **Early Childhood Education:** The Committee proposes an increase in School Readiness funding by about \$4.2 million for FY16, an increase of nearly 5% more than the Governor's proposed \$3.4 million increase. The Committee also proposes a 5.5% increase in the Early Childhood Program and a 10.4% increase in Head Start funding compared to the Governor's proposed funding for FY16.

Maintain level funding: The Appropriations Committee proposes no funding changes to the Governor's proposed funding for the **Commissioner's Network**, implementation of the **Common Core State Standards**, **Sheff Settlement**, and local charter schools (i.e. **New or Replicated Schools**).

¹ ConnCAN. *A Crisis We Can Solve: Connecticut's Failing Schools and Their Impact*. Nov. 2014. <http://www.conncan.org/media-room/2014-11-connecticut-education-in-crisis-40000-children-trapp>



Proposed Education Budget Summary for FY16 and FY17 - April 27, 2015

Budget Item	Current FY15 ¹ (Reflects all rescissions to date)	Budget Year	Governor Malloy Initial Budget Proposal Feb 18, 2015	Appropriations Committee Budget Proposal April 27, 2015	Change Between Appropriations and Governor Proposals (FY16 Only)
Education Equalization Grants ²	\$2,130,644,892	FY16 FY17	\$2,142,371,422 \$2,151,603,422	\$2,138,871,422 \$2,149,503,422	↓ -\$3,500,000 -0.2%
Magnet Schools	\$293,750,025	FY16 FY17	\$329,604,896 \$327,035,401	\$327,214,896 \$324,645,401	↓ -\$2,390,000 -0.7%
School Readiness ³	\$83,139,145	FY16 FY17	\$86,566,572 \$86,566,572	\$90,725,039 \$90,725,039	↑ \$4,158,467 4.8%
Priority School Districts	\$47,197,022	FY16 FY17	\$40,702,571 \$40,702,571	\$44,837,171 \$44,837,171	↑ \$4,134,600 10.2%
Open Choice Program	\$38,116,736	FY16 FY17	\$38,796,250 \$43,714,700	\$37,396,250 \$40,914,700	↓ -\$1,400,000 -3.6%
Sheff Settlement	\$20,953,473	FY16 FY17	\$11,861,044 \$12,192,038	\$11,861,044 \$12,192,038	⇒ \$0 0.0%
Commissioner's Network	\$17,500,000	FY16 FY17	\$12,800,000 \$12,800,000	\$12,800,000 \$12,800,000	⇒ \$0 0.0%
Early Childhood Program	\$11,235,264	FY16 FY17	\$10,609,270 \$10,609,270	\$11,191,021 \$11,191,021	↑ \$581,751 5.5%
Talent Development	\$9,518,564	FY16 FY17	\$9,552,199 \$9,559,701	\$7,000,000 \$7,000,000	↓ -\$2,552,199 -26.7%
Head Start ⁴	\$6,430,593	FY16 FY17	\$6,930,593 \$6,930,593	\$7,650,593 \$7,650,593	↑ \$720,000 10.4%
Common Core	\$5,985,000	FY16 FY17	\$5,985,000 \$5,985,000	\$5,985,000 \$5,985,000	⇒ \$0 0.0%
K-3 Reading Assessment Pilot	\$3,039,944	FY16 FY17	\$2,619,944 \$2,619,944	\$2,947,947 \$2,947,947	↑ \$328,003 12.5%
School Accountability	\$1,852,749	FY16 FY17	\$1,786,639 \$1,794,808	\$0 \$0	↓ -\$1,786,639 -100.0%
New or Replicated Schools ⁵	\$855,000	FY16 FY17	\$339,000 \$420,000	\$339,000 \$420,000	⇒ \$0 0.0%

Notes:

1. Based on FY15 revised budget and latest rescissions (See OFA Analysis of Rescissions, Jan. 22, 2015).

2. As of FY13, the Charter Schools line item was consolidated into the Education Equalization Grants line. This line includes funding for Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grants, state charter schools, and funding to phase in full-day kindergarten.

3. Includes School Readiness Quality Enhancement and School Readiness.

4. Includes Head Start Services, Head Start Enhancement, Head Start - Early Childhood Link, and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership.

5. Reflects funding for local charter schools.

Sources:

Conn. Office of Fiscal Analysis. [Conn. State Budget: FY15 Revisions](#). Oct. 15, 2014; Conn. Office of Fiscal Analysis. [Analysis of January 22, 2015 Governor's FY15 Rescissions](#). Feb. 3, 2015; Conn. Office of Policy and Management. Conn. FY16 - FY17 Biennium. [Governor's Budget Summary](#). Feb. 18, 2015; Conn. Gen. Assembly, [Appropriations Committee Budget FY16 & FY17](#), April 27, 2015. All sources available at: www.cga.ct.gov.