



STUDENT-CENTERED FUNDING COALITION

February 17, 2021

Dear members of the General Assembly and Governor Lamont,

Connecticut has a racial injustice problem in education. For too long, we have collectively stood by as generations of students, many of whom are black and brown, have seen their potential extinguished due to systemic inopportunity. And, while passionate members of the community have stepped up and changed lives, the underlying inequitable systems remain.

One of the largest, most glaring examples of systemic inequity is Connecticut's education funding system. Therefore, we the undersigned collectively demand that during the 2021 legislative session, policymakers address funding disparities created by a history of underinvestment for our students with the greatest needs.

We must implement a student-centered funding system that truly accounts for student needs. Specifically, Connecticut must:

- Include all public schools (magnet, charter, vocational-agricultural) in the state's Education Cost Sharing formula (ECS);
- Increase ECS weights for English language learners from 15% to 25%, increase the concentrated poverty rate from 5% to 15% and lower the qualifying threshold for the Concentrated Poverty from 75% to 60%; and
- Accelerate the planned ECS phase-in so that all planned appropriations for 2028 are implemented in 2022.

We believe these additional funds must be spent on student instruction and student support services as they yield the greatest impact on student outcomes. For example, the funds would allow schools to reduce class sizes, hire interventionists to help students catch up and get on track, shrink caseloads for social workers and counselors who provide vital social-emotional supports, and provide 21st-century technology for students well into the future.

If Connecticut wants to make good on its promise of a world-class education, it must look to substantially improve student outcomes in many of its communities. We can no longer wait for another generation of students to enter and leave our doors. We must look them in the eyes and tell them with honesty that they matter, they have purpose, and that we will provide them with the resources and experiences necessary to thrive.