



What is Educational Cost Sharing (ECS)

April 29, 2019

Educational Cost Sharing (ECS), not to be confused with the Excess Cost Grant which is specific to Special Education reimbursement, is the money that the state of Connecticut provides to towns and cities in order to help offset the cost of education that would otherwise be the sole responsibility of the town. The amount is calculated by the state on an individual

town basis each year based upon a variety of factors such as wealth, tax base, and ability to pay. ECS came about after several court rulings that stated that funding education solely using property taxes did not guarantee equal access and opportunity to all students. As a result, our legislature was forced to do something in order to assist municipalities so that assistance could be provided to all towns. The intent of ECS is to equalize state education funding to towns, however the long and short of the formula is that less wealthy towns receive more aid per student as compared to affluent towns which receive less aid per student.

The basic ECS formula multiplies the number of students in each school district (weighted for educational need) by the amount the state has determined a district should spend to provide an adequate education (the “foundation”) and by an aid percentage determined by the district's wealth. The initial promise was that the state would cover half of all education costs, distributing the money in a way that provided more resources to the poorest school districts. However, even though this was the state's intention, the truth is that the formula for ECS has rarely been fully funded and as a result, towns are left to cover the rest of the costs needed for education. In October 2017 the legislature passed a new formula which started to be used this school year. This new formula is being phased in over the next 10 years. Additional information on this phase-in and the formula components can be found here - <http://ctschoolfinance.org/ecs-formula>.

Even though the state does not fully fund ECS, the portion that is awarded to towns helps to offset the burden placed on taxpayers. In Seymour, we currently receive \$10,086,935 in ECS funding which represents roughly one-third of the total budget needed for education. This means that the Seymour taxpayers provide approximately two-thirds of the funding currently needed to educate all of our children.

Works Cited: CT School Finance Project - www.ctschoolfinance.org