

What will our children lose?

created by the collaborative efforts of



WWOCL POSITION ON STATE FUNDING FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

School year 2014-15 will be the first year when full implementation of the new principal and teacher evaluation and support system and full implementation of the Common Core of State Standards will take place. Both reforms require every school district in CT to allocate resources to the implementation of the reforms.

This comes at a time when CT school districts have, for the most part, just begun to recover from five straight years when, in effect, the State of CT did not increase funding for public schools. From school year 2008-09 through school year 2011-12, the Education Cost Sharing Program (ECS), the vehicle whereby the State helps municipalities cover the costs of the school systems that serve those municipalities, was level funded. During those years, the State used CT's over \$1B from the federal recession recovery program to supplant state funds in ECS. The last year when the State received these federal funds was 2011-12.

In 2012-13, the state allocated the funds needed to plug the funding hole in ECS that had been caused by the practice in previous years. While the What Will Our Children Lose (WWOCL) coalition was appreciative of this action by the Governor and the Legislature, the action still resulted in a fifth straight year of level funding in non-local money for public education.

During these five years, costs in public schools have increased on the average approximately 3% a year. So over five years, there has been an approximate 15% increase in the cost of public education all of which had to be covered by local municipalities.

In the present school year, 2013-14, there has been an increase in state funding for public education but many districts did not receive any increase in state funds. So, we still are nowhere near recovering for public schools the buying power that they lost over the previous five years. The result in

terms of the impact on children has been program elimination and/or reduction and increases in class size.

This situation alone calls for an increase in state funding for education in school year 2014-15. The required implementation of the evaluation system and the Common Core, however, raises the need for an increase in state funding from a needed action to one that is absolutely required if the new reforms are to be implemented well if at all.

Specifically, then, WWOCL calls for:

- A 3% increase in the ECS Program. Such an increase would at least be commensurate with the projected increase in expenses for state school districts. While buying power would not be restored to what it was six years ago, there would be no additional loss of buying power.
- Removal of the cap from the State's excess special education cost grant program. Particularly expensive mandated placements for children who have special needs noticeably reduce the capacity of school districts to serve well all of the students enrolled in the district. Presently, the state places an arbitrary cap on the amount that it will pay for these expensive placements. Removal of this cap is required to enable districts to meet their mandated obligations not only to all their special needs students but also the obligations that districts have to their regular needs students as well.

ABOUT THE COALITION

Created by the collaborative efforts of the Connecticut Association of Board of Education, Connecticut School Business Officials, Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents and Connecticut Association of Schools. As advocates for public education, these organizations pledge to provide information to the community and statewide education leaders in order to find attainable results for their school districts.
