

Education Committee Public Hearing 03/03/21
Talking Points for Testimony
[SB 949](#), [SB 948](#), [SB 886](#)

TESTIFY IN FAVOR OF SB 949: Pure Bill: "Money Follows the Child"

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- In CT, it is estimated that more than \$380 million are left behind in traditional public school districts when students transfer to a public school of ANOTHER district or type. Without money following the child, students suffer when they attend schools that are expected to do more with much less.
- The City of Hartford reports it has 19,000 students, when in reality 11,000 of its students attend a school of choice (charter, magnet, open choice and vocational/tech) instead. That means 60% of Hartford's ECS funding they receive is for students THEY DO NOT TEACH! So contrary to what equity activists say, Hartford students are not really underfunded with only \$17K per pupil - they are actually grossly double funded at \$40K per pupil on the students that actually attend in the district!
- We believe that children of color have been systematically denied access to a quality education as part of a broader system of oppression in this country, including here at home in Connecticut.
- Our state is home to the largest opportunity gap in the country, due in no small part to a status quo system that protects - and even rewards - the bigotry of low expectations for Black and Brown children.
- 2 out of 3 Bridgeport schools have the lowest success rate, can predict by address which kids will end up being incarcerated just by their address. If you can extract them from these underperforming schools and place them into schools of choice, they have an excellent opportunity to rise into the middle class.
- Many black and Latino legislators send their children to a school of choice. All children of CT should have the same opportunities as the legislators.
- It's time for parents, educators, and community leaders to come together and speak out against this system. To stand up and say "enough is enough". That is the mission of My Child. My Choice. - to disrupt this unacceptable status quo and demand better for our children.

TESTIMONY AGAINST SB 948

- This bill legislates double funding of ECS education costs to cities (Lines 307-311 & Lines 1095-1098.)

TESTIMONY TO REQUEST CLARIFICATION OF SB 886

- Section 15 - THIS OPEN CHOICE BILL IS IN NEED OF GREATER CLARIFICATION BEFORE CONSIDERATION OF ACCEPTING STUDENTS BY TOWNS.
- Lines 595-600 states Pilot Program: **Norwalk students can attend schools in: Darien, New Canaan, Wilton, Weston and Westport. Danbury students can attend schools in: New Fairfield, Brookfield, Bethel, Ridgefield and Redding;** None of the students

from these towns can attend Norwalk or Danbury schools.

- Line 691-696: In the first year, the receiving school district will receive \$4000 grant per pupil. The towns must absorb the remainder cost for each student received. Subsequent years the State will use a sliding tuition scale that provides districts up to \$8000 per student, which is much less than the cost per pupil in most districts.
- Lines 714-723: In the case of an "out-of-district Special Ed" student, sending district pays difference of reasonable cost of services less amount received by district is subsection G of this section (the annual open choice grant received by the district).

Does "out-of-district" mean out-placed? What does "reasonable cost of services" mean? Who decides what is reasonable?

What about SP ED services that exceed the Open Choice Grant? Are those costs reimbursed by the sending district?

- Students are accepted by LOTTERY, but also in this order:
 1. siblings of students already in the program
 2. student in a school that has lost NEASC Accreditation
 3. student "in need of improvement pursuant to the No Child Left Behind Act, P.L. 107- 110" (meaning students who are two years behind their grade-level)
 4. racial/ethnic/economic diversity

Cost per student will likely be higher than average given the "Lottery System" and some will need Special Education, which is even more expensive than the average cost per pupil.

THE ECS FUNDING MUST FOLLOW THE CHILD! STOP THE DOUBLE COUNTING! Why does the sending district get to keep half of the ECS funding when it is not educating the child?