

**What will it take to  
provide all students  
a quality education?**

**Adequacy and Equity  
of School Funding  
in Connecticut**

Keynote Presentation by

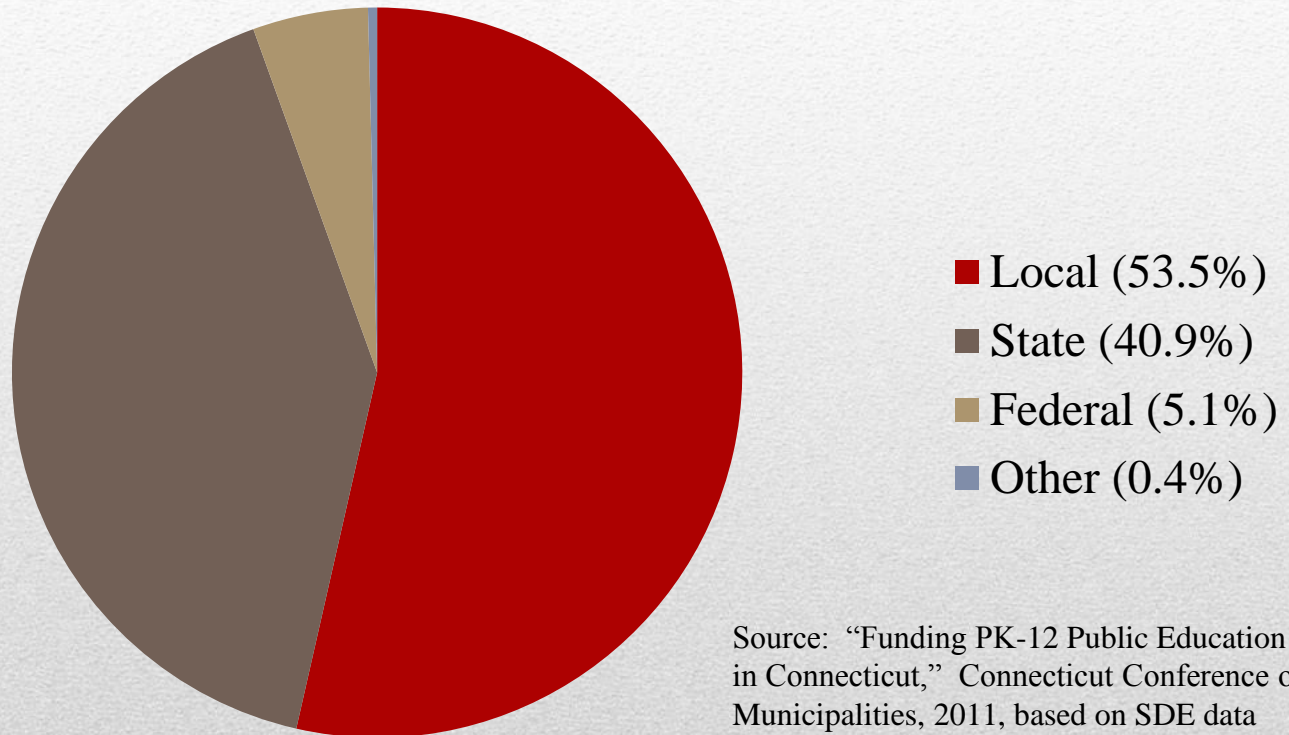
**Dianne Kaplan deVries, Ed.D.**

1. The PK-12 school funding system is broken and outdated — and it is inadequately and inequitably funded
2. The *CCJEF v. Rell* lawsuit seeks to hold the state accountable for its failure to adequately and equitably fund its schools and to ensure all children equal educational opportunity
3. Fixing the school funding system = Funding our future!

## **Key messages**

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## Estimated Share of School District Revenues FY 2012



# Funding our public schools

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## How does the ECS formula work?

- Number of students town is responsible for
- + poverty students (weighted at 33%)
- + LEP students (15%)
- - magnet students (25%)
- X the foundation \$9,687
- X the town's base aid ratio
- = fully funded ECS grant entitlement (NOT fully funded!)

### **NOTE: APA's 2005 education adequacy cost study**

- 87% of the state's PK-12 students attending traditional public schools are still inadequately funded

## **ECS formula at a glance**

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# What's wrong with the ECS?

- The education funding “pie” is too small
- Formula is not based on what it costs to educate students well
  - Not based on what it costs to meet state/federal standards, nor on what “best practices” research shows to be effective
  - Undercounts at-risk students with extra learning needs
  - Essentially ignores Special Education costs
  - Formula never fully funded and constantly tinkered with
  - No built-in inflation factor or regional cost adjustment
- The distribution of aid is flawed and inequitable
- Tied to the ECS, the Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR) for municipal contributions is similarly riddled with problems
- Formula allocations were capped for 13 years!

## **Broken, outdated ECS formula**

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## **How do we know the state's finance system is broken and that not all students are receiving equal educational opportunity?**

- State and federal standards
- Education adequacy cost study
- Stark disparities of inputs and student outcomes, including unconscionable achievement gaps
- Specialized research (fiscal and content-area studies) performed by experts
- Observable evidence, documented patterns of unmet needs, student/parent/community/school staff testimony

# **Equality of opportunity**

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## **Examples: What CT educators and parents say are needed:**

- Universal preschool and full-day kindergarten
- Smaller class sizes
- Longer school day and year, with free summer school for all
- Help for all students falling behind
- Up-to-date textbooks, materials, computer technology
- More/better assistance for ELL and SPED students
- Opportunities for advanced students, incl. college prep classes
- More/earlier foreign language options
- Expanded arts programming
- Guidance counselors, social workers, psychologists
- More/better professional development for teachers and all staff
- Improved buildings/grounds maintenance

# **Adequate resources**

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## The state has failed to adequately and equitably fund its public schools, and as a result, ...

- Plaintiff schoolchildren have been denied a reasonable opportunity to meet the state's own learning standards
- Plaintiff schoolchildren have suffered irreparable harm from the limitations that school underfunding has placed on their ability to:
  - Take full advantage of the nation's democratic processes and institutions
  - Secure meaningful employment in the competitive high-skills/high-wage global marketplace
  - Successfully continue their education beyond high school
  - Reap the monetary and intellectual rewards of the above
- Minority students have been disproportionately impacted

***CCJEF v. Bell, Nov 2005 -***

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# “The fundamental right to education is not an empty linguistic shell.”

- Refers to standards from CFE (NYC) lawsuit, namely:
  - "minimally adequate physical facilities and classrooms which provide enough light, space, heat, and air to permit children to learn"
  - "minimally adequate instrumentalities of learning such as desks, chairs, pencils, and reasonably current textbooks"
  - "minimally adequate teaching of reasonably up-to-date basic curricula such as reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies"
  - "sufficient personnel adequately trained to teach those subject areas"

## **CT Supreme Court weighs in**

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- A suitable education is one that prepares school children to ...
  - “participate fully in democratic institutions, such as jury service and voting”
  - “progress to institutions of higher education”
  - “attain productive employment”
  - “contribute to the state’s economy”
- **The standard is dynamic, dependent on “demands of an evolving world”**

## **Dynamic adequacy standard**

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## Current status of *CCJEF v. Rell*:

- CT Supreme Court remanded the full case to Hartford Superior Court where it was assigned to Judge Marshall Berger within the Complex Litigation
- Case is well into its discovery phase for plaintiffs, with expert studies, field data collection, and depositions of key state education staff underway or already completed
- State has filed a motion to exclude preschool education
- Other pre-trial motions likely
- Trial tentatively set for January 2014

# **Fight kids or fund the schools?**

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# What happens if nothing happens?

- More educated persons pay more state and federal taxes and impose lower public expenditures on government for health, criminal justice matters, welfare programs, etc.
- E.g., for every high school graduate, we would save nearly \$80,000 in federal and state expenditures on crime, including the related social cost to the state, versus what a dropout costs us; a college degree saves even more, nearly \$200,000 per graduate
- In terms of total social impact of education, our experts have found that the net social value of a high school graduate is some \$650,000 higher than that of a dropout; and the social value of a college graduate is \$1.8 million more than a dropout
- With approximately 8,350 dropouts per year, CT cannot afford to sit back and underfund its public schools!

## **Cost of inadequate education**

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- Fix the school funding system!
  - Adequate and equitable funding
  - Equal educational opportunity
- Stop fighting kids in courtrooms!
- Fund our future!

# **Message to state leaders**

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[dianne@ccjef.org](mailto:dianne@ccjef.org)

**(860) 461-0320 or (603) 325-5250**

[www.ccjef.org](http://www.ccjef.org)

**For more information ...**

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**Diane Orson, WNPR, Panel Facilitator**

**Abby I. Dolliver, Norwich Public Schools**

**Ronald Jakubowski, New Britain Public Schools**

**John Ramos, Sr., Bridgeport Public Schools**

# **Superintendents' Panel**

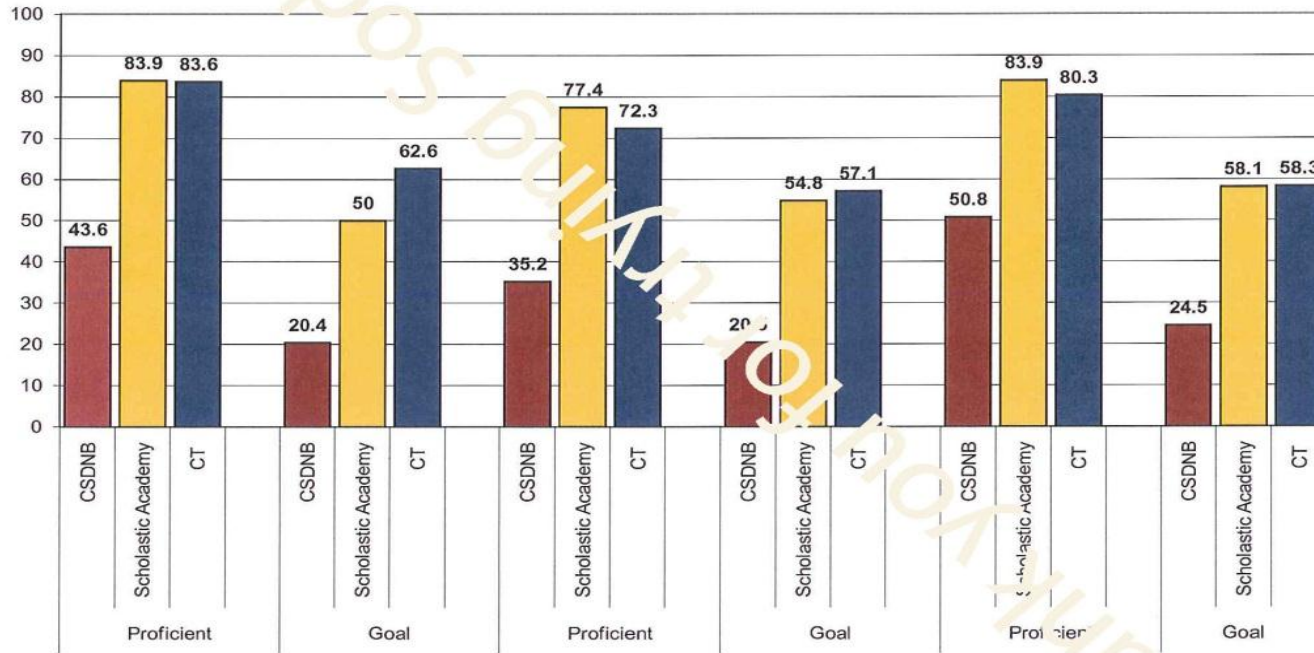
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- District serves 3900 PK-8 students in 8 schools plus a small alternative high school; most Gr 9-12 students tuitioned to Norwich Free Academy or regional magnets
- 76% poverty, up 25% from 2000, up 6% since Sept 2011
- 30 languages spoken
- Poor facilities and technology
- 4<sup>th</sup> year of flat funding from state and local governments — \$12 million less than a maintenance budget
- Closed 11 classrooms due to budget, raising class sizes to 25-30 students
- Most non-mandated programs/services eliminated

# Norwich Public Schools

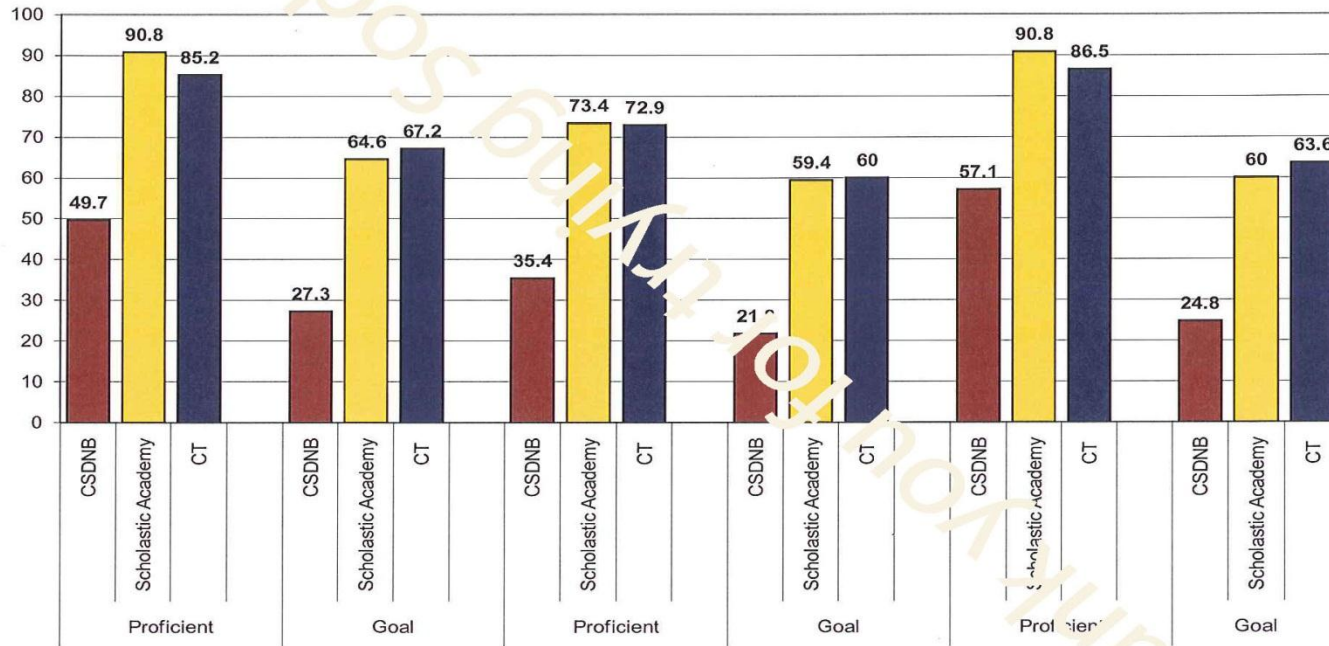
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2010 Scholastic Academy Grade 3  
 Compared with District and State

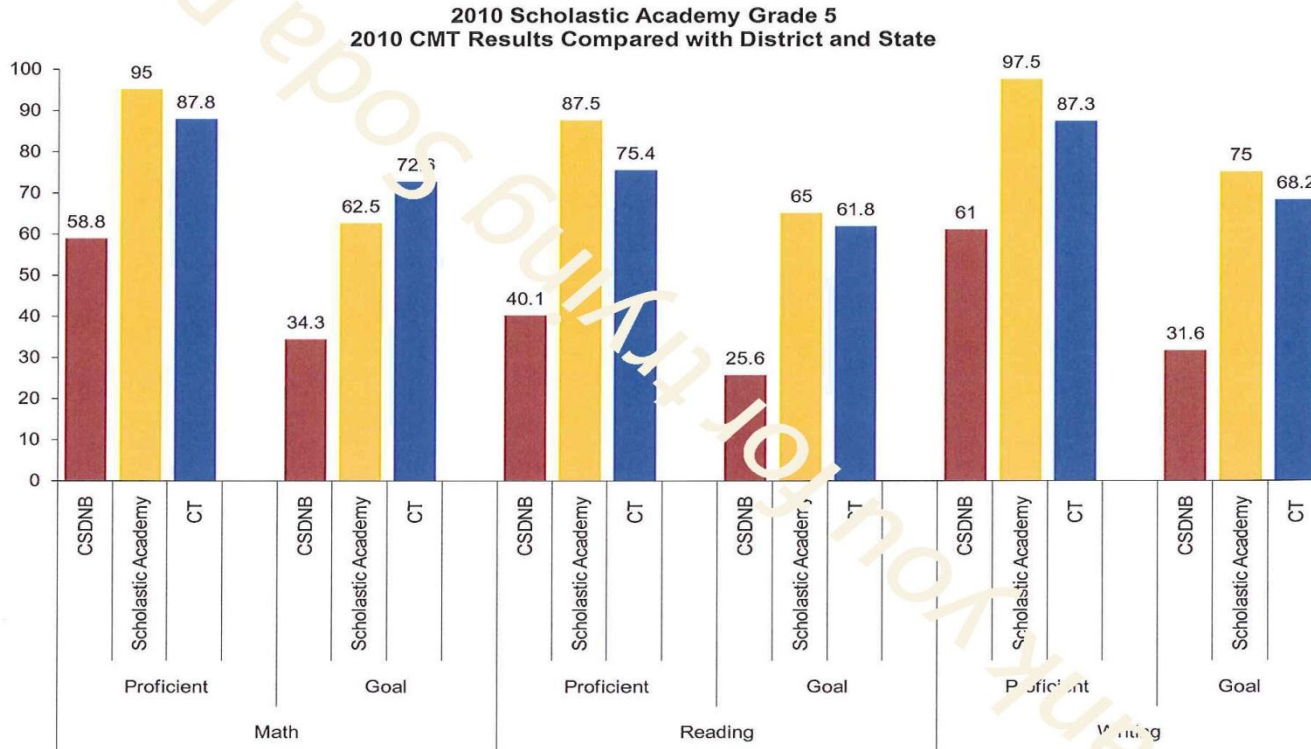


# New Britain Public Schools

2010 Scholastic Academy Grade 4  
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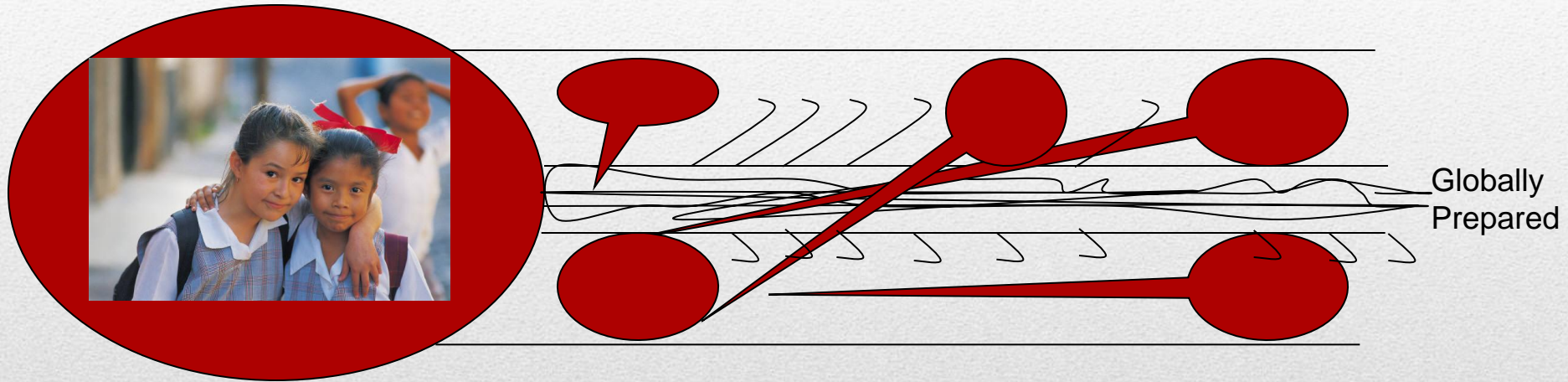


# New Britain Public Schools



# New Britain Public Schools

# “RUDY’S PARADIGM”



# Bridgeport Public Schools

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Revenue 2010

2011

2012

2013

2014

Expense

(with no action)

Expectations

(Performance/ Achievement)

# **Bridgeport Public Schools**

# Staff and Program Reductions Already Implemented for the 2011-2012 School Year

- Administrators (Directors and Supervisors) 9 positions
  - Math, Science, English, Language  
and Social Studies Teachers 24 positions
  - Business and Technology Teachers 27 positions
  - Art and Music Teachers 2 positions
  - Social Workers and Case Workers 8 positions
  - Support Staff 27 positions
- 97 positions

\$5,440,000 in Reductions

# Bridgeport Public Schools

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