

# YOUNG PEOPLE FIRST



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A Bold Plan to Address  
**Connecticut's Statewide Crisis**

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**Presented by CCM  
October 9th, 2024**



# The work of the 119k Commission was informed by deep community engagement

- 400** Attendees across 6 regional public meetings with panelists and public comment
- 7** Roundtable discussions hearing from >250 young people
- 84** Pieces of testimony received through 119kcommission.org
- 5** Local forums hosted by Commissioners with >110 residents
- 15+** Connecticut stakeholder briefings
- 8** National expert briefings
- 7** Monthly working sessions with the Commission

# The Commission has set bold but achievable goal of reducing at-risk and disconnected populations by 50% over ten years, through:

2025

63K

Disconnected

12K

Severely  
disconnected

56K

At-Risk

28K

Off-track

119K

of CT young people  
disconnected  
or at-risk



Preventive actions to prevent on-track young people from becoming at-risk and at-risk young people from disconnecting



Recuperative actions to get at-risk students back on track and reconnect young people who have disconnected



Early intervention to reconnect disconnected young people and get at-risk students back on track within 1 year of initial disconnection or becoming at-risk

2035

~30K

Disconnected

6K

Severely  
disconnected

~30K

At-Risk

15K

Off-track

~60K

of CT young people  
disconnected  
or at-risk

The Commission identified

6

gaps faced by young people and the people who support them

Lack of engagement, belonging & empowerment



At-risk young person

“ I've had horrible experiences ... If it wasn't for my Family Advocate I wouldn't come to school - it's like having a second Mom

Insufficient educational resources & infrastructure



At-risk young person

“ I qualified for a program to get my associates [degree] during high school, but I wasn't given the opportunity to take summer classes, so now I can't get my associates

Insufficient workforce development opportunities



Disconnected young person

“ I tried to get a job but didn't get into any programs. We need job programs that last all year, then don't need to be outside all day in the hot sun making money.

Fragmented, underfunded patchwork system of services



Nonprofit organization

“ To get housed you must stay on the phone for hours with 211, then you MUST use the right language because “I'm sleeping on a friend's couch and about to get kicked out” does not qualify as homeless. If you get through, it takes months to get into housing

Lack of data transparency & usability



Government support

“ Many people are working hard in their respective silos doing the best they can with the resources and tools available to them. Everyone is under-resourced and over-worked, and we lose young people through the cracks

























Lack of accountability across various stakeholders



Nonprofit organization

“ High-poverty areas often face complex, interrelated issues such as limited access to quality education, healthcare, safe recreational spaces, and economic opportunities. A place-based strategy can foster collaboration among local stakeholders who understand the unique needs of the youth and the broader community dynamics.

# The 119k Commission's strategy is built on four pillars and 22 Aligned Actions

 <b>Strategic Pillar 1: Coordination</b>		 1. Improve statewide data visibility and accountability	 2. Redesign service delivery at state, region, and local levels	 3. Improve 211 to ease access to resources	
 <b>Strategic Pillar 2: Conditions</b>	Policy	 4. Strengthen public education accountability	 5. Reform school policies to support the needs of youth	 6. Increase diversionary programs and restorative justice for justice-involved youth	
	Funding	 7. Equitably increase K12 funding	 8. Support federal Child Tax Credit	 9. Incentivize consolidation and savings	 10. Engage on federal policy and funding
 <b>Strategic Pillar 3: Capacity</b>	School	 12. Increase school and educator capacity	 13. Strengthen career-connected learning	 14. Create Support Networks for educators, schools and districts	
	Workforce	 15. Scale transitional employment, apprenticeships, and summer employment programs		 16. Launch Connecticut Youth Service Corps	
	Social Sector	 17. Build nonprofit capacity	 18. Launch Center of Excellence	 19. Support workforce reintegration	 20. Expand recreational hubs and summer program
 <b>Strategic Pillar 4: Coalitions</b>		 22. Launch a cross-sector coalition focused on at-risk and disconnected young people			



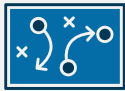


## Aligned Action 2: Redesign local service delivery to ensure young people have the support they need, supported by strong regional oversight boards and a state-wide Office of Youth Success

### Challenges addressed



Service providers are competing for funding, rather than collaborating



Young people do not know where to get information and often receive unclear or conflicting information about service availability, eligibility, and accessibility



### Sub-actions

A. Identify a coordinating organization in each region or municipality to lead **integrated case management** within and across municipalities

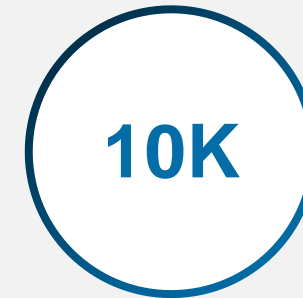
B. Build regional coordination and accountability structures by launching **Youth Success Oversight Boards**, through which funds flow for local hubs

C. Create a state-wide **Office of Youth Success (OYS)**, with statutory authority and a singular focus of leveraging resources and data to align and coordinate stakeholders and systems to support at-risk and disconnected youth

D. Leverage resources to incentivize **long-term cooperation** as opposed to competition



### Impact



severely disconnected young people accessing more coordinated services

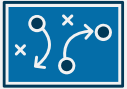
### Cost

- Launch: Leverage existing resources
- Annual run-rate: ~\$15M for staff for integrated case management and administration of Youth Success Oversight Board
- Existing resources leveraged: Local organizations, state government staff



## Aligned Action 3: Revamp CT's 211 system and develop a new user-friendly application to help at-risk and disconnected youth access existing resources

### Challenges addressed



Young people do not know where to get information and often receive unclear or conflicting information about service availability, eligibility, and accessibility



### Sub-actions

A. Invest in **refreshed 211 system** – including launching **a rebranded digital app** – with reduced wait times, easy navigation, more youth-centric functionality and availability in multiple languages



### Impact



young people accessing support quickly & efficiently

### Cost

- **Launch:** \$2-3M for app and support system development
- **Annual run-rate:** \$1-2M for system improvement and maintenance
- **Existing resources leveraged:** 211ct.org funding and infrastructure, United expertise and resources

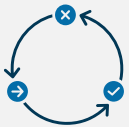


## Aligned Action 4: Strengthen public education accountability structures and approach to improve student outcomes

### Challenges addressed



Many policies either fail to help or harm young people



Current accountability mechanisms do not provide sufficient data and align incentives for school systems to support at-risk and disconnected young people



### Sub-actions

A. Improve Connecticut's **Next Generation Accountability System** for schools and districts

B. **Reimagine Alliance School districts** as accountability structures to improve support for districts with the highest needs

C. **Phase out Commissioner's Network Schools** to invest in **Community Schools** to drive improved outcomes in middle and high schools with the highest needs

D. Adopt high standards for **alternative education** programs and encourage transition toward regional programs



### Impact

**80-90K**

high school students benefiting from Community Schools

### Cost

- **Launch:** ~\$42M for facility upgrades and Challenge Fund for a winning alternative education program
- **Annual run-rate:** Leverage existing resources
- **Existing resources leveraged:** Commissioner's Network budget





## Aligned Action 5: Reform school policies to be more supportive of the needs of youth

### Challenges addressed



Many policies either fail to help or harm young people

### Sub-actions

- A. **Reimagine** Connecticut's **graduation standards** to promote greater workforce readiness
- B. Strengthen policies to **improve student attendance, enrollment, and transfer support**
- C. Increase access to Connecticut's **Career and Technical High School System**
- D. **Reduce school suspensions** and **implement new models** for managing student behavior
- E. Expand **alternative learning** strategies to combat student distractions and improve engagement

### Impact

**56-90K**

students accessing attendance support and alternative learning programs

### Cost

- **Launch:** ~\$7M for pilots at elementary schools for engagement improvement
- **Annual run-rate:** \$85-90M to expand Learner Attendance and Engagement Program (LEAP), CT Technical Education and Career System (CTECS) and add behavioral management staff in schools
- **Existing resources leveraged:** LEAP and CTECS expertise and resources



## Aligned Action 18: Launch center of excellence at a CT partner university, focused on at-risk and disconnected youth

### Challenges addressed



Organizations and individuals serving at-risk and disconnected young people do their best with tools and resources at hand, but many lack the technical and financial capacity to achieve their missions effectively



Insufficient clear evidence on what works, and learnings are not shared for replication across different entities in the state

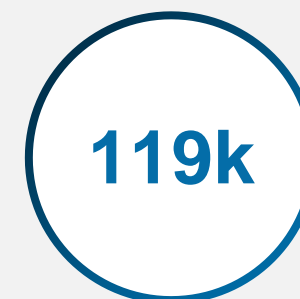


### Sub-actions

A. Establish and fund a **Center of Excellence at a CT partner university** focused on researching, piloting, and evaluating programs for at-risk and disconnected youth



### Impact



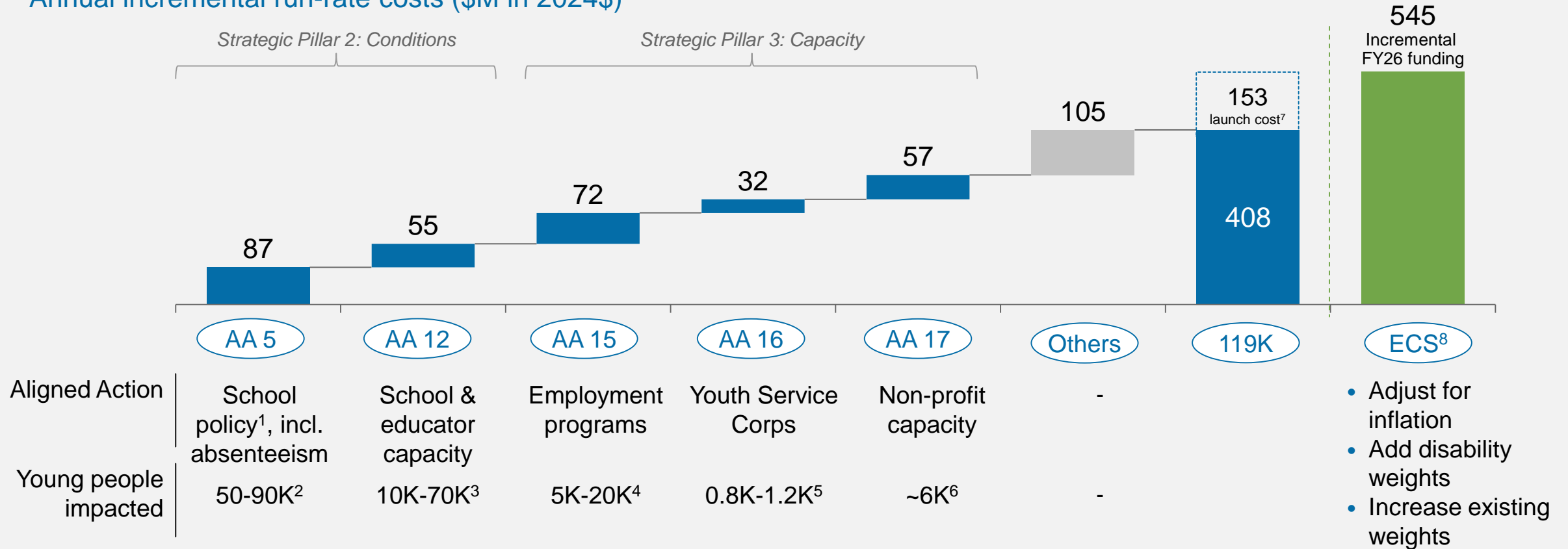
disconnected youth benefiting from evaluation and learning of state policies and nonprofit programs

### Cost

- Launch: Leverage existing resources
- Annual run-rate: \$1-2M for staffing and operational expenses
- Existing resources leveraged: Expertise and capacity from local institutes of higher education, e.g., Tow Institute at University of New Haven, Yale University

The cost of the Aligned Actions in the strategy is ~\$408M, with additional ~\$545M required for more equitable funding of K12 school system  
 Strategy will also incur one-time launch cost of \$153M, which may be phased with different actions

Annual incremental run-rate costs (\$M in 2024\$)



1. This does not include changes to K12 funding formula. 2. CTECS new enrollees, students in districts with additional chronic absenteeism programs, students in alternative learning pathway pilots 3. K-12 students in schools with high teacher-to-student ratios, students in pilot programs, and at-risk students paired up with Success Coaches. 4. Participants in transitional program , apprenticeship, and Youth Employment Program. 5. ~1K fellows. 6. Severely disconnected youth. 7. The timing of one-time launch cost varies by actions, ranging from 2024-2026. 8. School + State Finance; BCG analysis



## Aligned Action 7: Review CT's K-12 funding formulas to ensure equitable education funding based on student needs

### Challenges addressed



Inequitable per-capita school funding harming students in high poverty districts, BIPOC students, and students with alternative education needs

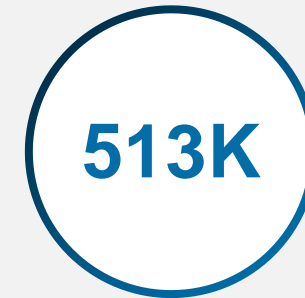


### Sub-actions

- A. Review and revise the [Education Cost Sharing \(ECS\) formula](#)
- B. Review [funding to ensure equitable facilities](#)



### Impact



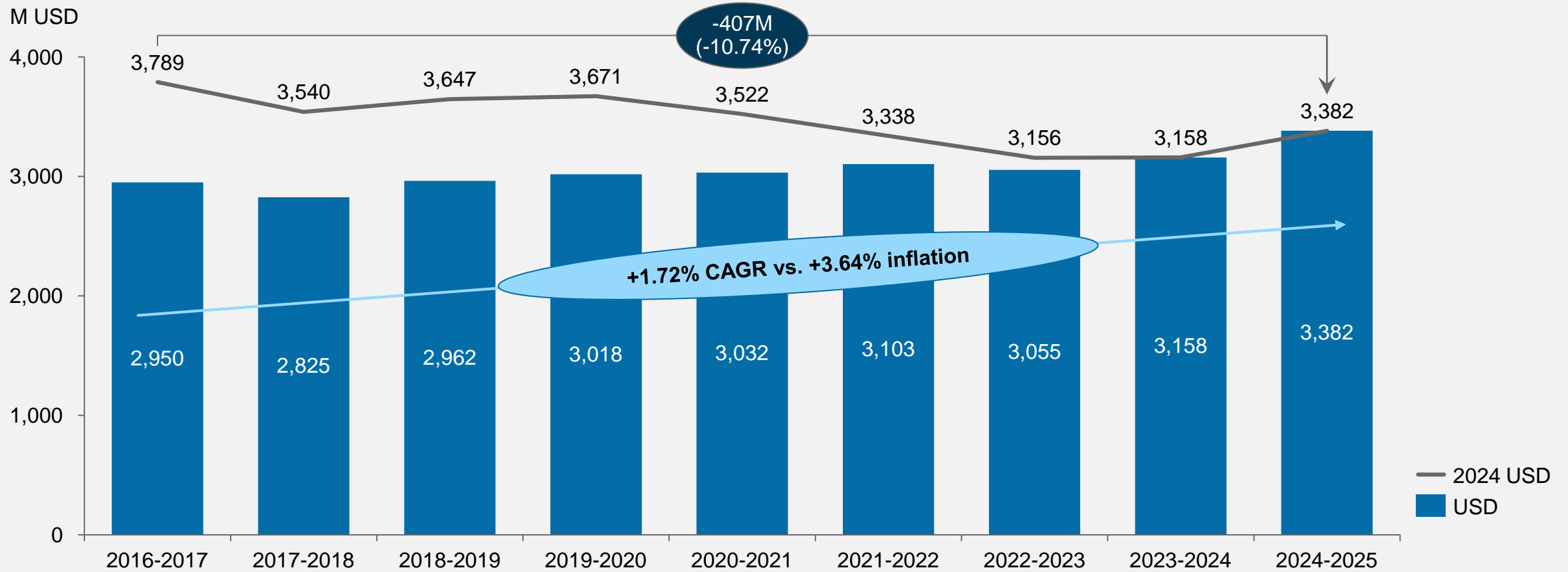
students accessing equitable funding & facilities

### Cost

- Launch: ~\$2M for facility needs assessment survey
- Annual run-rate: \$545M\*
- Existing resources leveraged: ~\$800M public-school construction, upgrades, and maintenance funds

\*Estimated increase in state funding to public K-12 schools, not costed directly as part of the 119k strategy

# Detail on state funding: New investment is needed to maintain, let alone grow CT's K12 funding, which has decreased by \$407M in real terms since 2017



Note: This excludes CTECS, Office of Early Childhood, State Library and Teachers' Retirement Board funding, which constitute the rest of state K12 funding  
 Sources: CPI Inflation Calculator, CT state budget



## Potential changes to the Education Cost Sharing formula would significantly increase state funding to public K12 schools in FY26

Key formula components:	Foundation	Economically disadvantaged weights	Concentrated poverty weights	Multilingual learner weights	Students with disabilities (SWD) weights	Total cost (\$M)	Incremental cost (\$M)
<b>Current ECS formula</b>	<b>\$11,525</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>2,411</b>	<b>-</b>
Scenario 1: Adjust foundation for 2024-2026 estimated inflation	\$12,488	30%	15%	25%	0%	2,604	193
Scenario 2: Adjust foundation and add SWD weights of 25%	\$12,488	30%	15%	25%	25%	2,699	288
Scenario 3: Adjust foundation and increase all weights	\$12,488	30%	20%	30%	30%	2,744	333
Scenario 4: Adjust foundation and increase all weights	\$12,488	40%	20%	30%	30%	2,864	453
<b>Scenario 5, recommended:</b> Adjust foundation and increase all weights	<b>\$12,488</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>2,956</b>	<b>545</b>
Scenario 6: Adjust foundation and increase all weights	\$12,488	50%	20%	30%	50%	3,062	651
Scenario 7: Adjust foundation for inflation from 2017	\$14,801	30%	15%	25%	0%	3,065	654
Scenario 8: Adjust foundation for inflation from 2013	\$15,580	30%	15%	25%	0%	3,229	818

Increasing cost

Note: All scenarios assume the ECS formula is fully funded, with holding harmless overfunded towns. Special Education students in Regional School Districts were apportioned into the towns that they are comprised of. Source: School + State Finance estimates, BCG analysis



# Appendix



## Aligned Action 1: Improve visibility of the number and nature of at-risk and disconnected youth and strengthen accountability at state, regional, and local levels

### Challenges addressed



Lack full visibility into at-risk and disconnected young people



Data on young people, expenditures, and results are not transparent and easily accessible to relevant stakeholders for decision-making



Early warning signs are being missed – particularly among transient and homeless populations

### Sub-actions

A. Measure and improve understanding of the **number and nature of at-risk and disconnected youth** across state and local levels

B. **Strengthen transparency** of funding, resource allocation, and results of investments in at-risk and disconnected young people, so that investments and programs are improved over time

C. Build **state-level data infrastructure**, including a data platform and intermediary to support secure data and information sharing across agencies, Youth Service Bureaus, and community providers

D. Require **K12 school districts** to invest in **high-quality data tools** and implement Student Success Team structures to regularly analyze and act upon data to support youth success

### Impact



young people in CT benefiting from more informed & timely interventions

### Cost

- **Launch:** ~\$25M for data system building and integration
- **Annual run-rate:** \$15-17M for maintenance and user access fees
- **Existing resources leveraged:** P20 WIN, Office of Policy and Management



**Aligned Action 9:** Create The 21st Century Fund to reward consolidation in services to reduce administrative overhead and drive more funding to highly effective strategies in school classrooms and in town youth services

## Challenges addressed



Many policies either fail to help or harm young people



## Sub-actions

A. Award funding to school districts and towns that elect to **combine services or share administrative positions**



## Impact



generating savings through consolidation of services

## Cost

- Launch: \$25M
- Annual run-rate: Leverage existing resources
- Existing resources leveraged: Administrative staff and expertise, technical assistance providers



## Aligned Action 10: Engage CT's federal delegation on federal policy and funding to support success of at-risk and disconnected youth

### Challenges addressed



Missed opportunities to leverage federal funding and innovative financing mechanisms to support young people



### Sub-actions

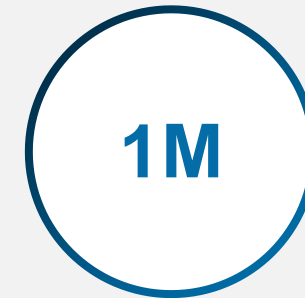
A. Apply for **new Medicaid Section 1115 waiver** to expand coverage for critical services and social determinants of health that impact this population

B. **Support organizations in leveraging federal funding** to serve at-risk and disconnected youth

C. Advocate for **full federal funding of IDEA** (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) to support learners with disabilities and increase per student funding to students with disabilities



### Impact



HUSKY Health participants and students with disabilities

### Cost

- **Launch:** Leverage existing resources
- **Annual run-rate:** <\$1M for staff to support funding applications
- **Existing resources leveraged:** Advocacy and state efforts





## Aligned Action 12: Increase school and educator capacity to support young people at risk of disconnection

### Challenges addressed



Funding for programs that support young people has not kept pace with increased demand, leading to critical shortages and waitlists



### Sub-actions

- A. Ensure **sufficient staffing support** for at-risk students in districts with the highest needs
- B. Support **trauma-informed professional development** and educator training
- C. Invest in school operational infrastructure to better integrate **mental health professionals and community supports directly in classroom settings**
- D. Pair students in the highest need schools with **Success Coaches** who build positive relationships and help them get back on-track, specifically focusing on 9th grade



### Impact

**10-70K**

students benefiting from additional teachers, mental health support, & Success Coaches

### Cost

- Launch: ~\$13M for pilots for trauma-informed approach training and mental health support in classrooms
- Annual run-rate: ~\$55M for additional teachers and Success Coaches
- Existing resources leveraged: Disparities analyses



## Aligned Action 14: Create Support Networks to provide technical assistance for educators, schools, and districts with the highest needs

### Challenges addressed



Organizations and individuals serving at-risk and disconnected young people do their best with tools and resources at hand, but many lack the technical and financial capacity to achieve their missions effectively

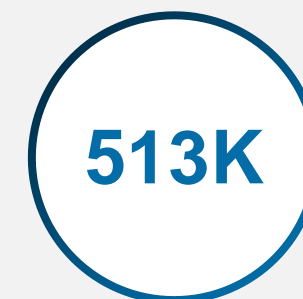


### Sub-actions

A. Launch **Support Networks** to improve instructional practice, accelerate school performance, and drive system-wide improvement



### Impact



students in schools receiving improved support from educators, schools, and district administrators

### Cost

- Launch: ~\$3M for pilots to create Support Networks
- Annual run-rate: Leverage existing resources
- Existing resources leveraged: Local technical assistance provider

# Education Cost Sharing formula revisions could increase state funding by ~\$545M

Being economically disadvantaged, attending high-poverty schools, being a multilingual learner, and having disabilities are significantly correlated to disconnection risk and carry higher cost to serve effectively compared to general population

Key formula components <sup>1</sup> :	Current ECS formula in FY26	Illustrative ECS revision in FY26	Rationale
Foundation	\$11,525	\$12,488	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inflation adjustment to 2026 using projected CT spending cap</li> </ul>
Economically disadvantaged	30% \$3,458	40% \$4,995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economically disadvantaged students tend to be more poorly funded (~\$3000 lower<sup>2</sup>) and need more supports to succeed, compared to average</li> </ul>
Concentrated poverty (>60% of town is economically disadvantaged) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional weight to economically disadvantaged weight above</li> </ul>	15% \$1,729	20% \$2,498	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students in high-poverty towns tend to be more poorly funded and need more supports to succeed (~\$6,500<sup>3</sup>), compared to average</li> </ul>
Multilingual learners	25% \$2,881	35% \$4,370	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multilingual learners require additional teaching and support resources (~\$17,500<sup>4</sup>)</li> </ul>
Students with disabilities	0% ~\$13,000 expenditure, funded by towns & through Excess Cost Grant	50% \$6,244 *Maintain access to Excess Cost Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students with disabilities require additional support services (~\$18,500<sup>5</sup>, varies with disability)</li> </ul>
Estimated total based on FY25 no. of students in category, base aid ratio	~\$2,411M <sup>6</sup>	~\$2,956M (+545M)	

1. Other components to ECS formula not being changed include concentrated poverty threshold (60%), base aid ratio, regional district bonus. 2. Brookings (2021) 3. Rutgers (2018) 4. Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office (2024) 5. California Legislative Analyst's Office "Overview of Special Education in California" (2019), Office of the New York State Comptroller (2020), 6. Assumes full funding of formula with holding harmless currently overfunded towns. Sources: School + State Finance reports and interactive tool; CT state budgets; EdSight; EdBuild; BCG analysis

# Connecticut can pay for this strategy through three major sources



## Re-investing fiscal impact of this strategy

## Re-allocation of spending

## New or expanded revenue sources

## Without new action...

- Incremental tax revenue from reconnecting young people
- Reduced spending on government / social services (e.g., safety net benefits, lower incarceration) from disconnected young people

- Phase out programs that are no longer driving intended results
- Increased efficiency / consolidation of duplicated systems and roles
- Shift of funds towards CT's highest priority topics

- Education carve-out from fiscal controls to utilize budget surplus
- Investment, e.g., state municipal bonds, outcomes-based/ social financing
- Philanthropy incentives, e.g., tax credits
- New taxes, e.g., high earners, sin taxes
- Federal funding, e.g., IDEA, Medicaid, CCAMPIS

- CT municipalities continue to try and meet education funding needs through property taxes
- Major burden on towns, perpetuates further inequities in town wealth and education outcomes

Significant and could pay for entire strategy, but will only be realized over time

- \$650-750M annually in tax revenue and reduced spending<sup>1</sup>
- Outcomes-based financing (e.g., TIFs, SIBs) to capture and reinvest

Significant and could pay for entire strategy, but will require political will and shifts in prioritization

- Prior CT efforts<sup>5</sup> identified \$600-900M+ of potential savings by increasing government efficiency

Potential to bridge remaining gaps in funding:

- Budget surplus varies – while >\$1B in 2022-2023, decreased to \$100-300M in 2024/2025
- 15% increase in philanthropy yields ~\$750M
- MA Millionaire's Tax raised \$1.8B in 2024<sup>2</sup>
- ME used TIFs to finance workforce training
- IA and MO extended tax-exempt bond authority to community colleges to finance workforce development<sup>4</sup>

Continued disconnection crisis has high human cost:

- Additional 10,000 young people disconnect every year
- \$350M in lost tax revenue
- \$400M in burden on government services
- Foregone GDP growth up to \$5.5B

1. Unspoken Crisis report; 2. [Millionaires tax revenue reaches \\$1.8 billion, on pace to double estimates | GBH \(wgbh.org\)](#); 3. Portland Adult Ed Runs Workforce Training Program Almost Exclusively for Immigrant Students - The Maine Wire; 4. Financing Workforce Development in a Devolutionary Era (atlantafed.org); 5. Connecticut CREATES Project, Office of the Governor

*Illustrative:*

How this strategy can help prevent an on-track student from becoming at risk



Megan is a **9th grader** who **just moved to a new district**. She has to **walk 30 mins to the school bus** and has started missing morning classes. She is also **learning English as a second language**



**Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP) staff visit Megan's house (AA5) and talk to her family** about safe transportation resources they had not known about



Megan's **new school** receives educational performance information and previous educator notes from her **old school** and identifies **areas where Megan needs additional learning support (AA1)**



Megan enrolls in classes with a **Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) educator (AA12)** and is assigned a **Success Coach (AA12)** who checks in on her and helps her apply to extracurricular programs she is eligible for



Megan is connected to a **recreational hub (AA20)** served by a bus from her school, where she takes **art lessons with peers and makes friends outside of school**. Over the summer, she participates in a **summer employment program in biosciences (AA15)**



Megan signs up for **dual-enrollment classes (AA13)**, with a plan to study biosciences at the local **community college after graduation**. She has a **strong support network** at and outside her high school



*Illustrative:*

How this strategy can help a disconnected young person to reengage



Tyler is **17** and **homeless**, moving frequently between shelters and friends. He **left high school** after **multiple suspensions** and has **not found steady work**. He was recently **arrested** for possessing **illegal substances**



**Juvenile Review Board (AA6)** directs Tyler to nonprofits offering diversionary programs that provide him with **treatment for substance use disorder** and **community service opportunities**



Tyler's **local Youth Success Oversight Board-designated integrated case management hub (AA2)** works with **Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness (AA21)** to find stable housing for Tyler



Tyler participates in a **transitional employment program (AA15)** where he receives training, wages, and a credential. His employer **connects him to the GEDWorks program (AA19)** and he completes his GED while working part-time



A **Youth Success Oversight Board-designated hub organization (AA2)** continuously checks in with Tyler on his needs, including **mental health support, housing options, and permanent employment**



Tyler finds a **job with a nonprofit serving opportunity youth that pays his rent and living expenses (AA16/17)**. He receives **mental health support** and **feels connected** to his community