

Connecticut Governor Calls for Shake-Up in Public-Education Funding

Malloy has proposed redistributing state funds for schools from affluent towns to low-income communities

By Joseph De Avila • March 21, 2017 5:28 p.m. ET



Connecticut Gov. Dannel P. Malloy delivers his budget address in Hartford, Conn., on Feb. 8. *Photo: Jessica Hill/Associated Press*

Connecticut Gov. Dannel Malloy said Tuesday he will only support a budget that includes a major shake-up to how the state pays for public education.

Mr. Malloy, a Democrat, made his comments after the state Legislature's education committee indicated it would move forward with a proposal that mostly kept the state's funding system intact.

"We cannot avoid addressing the inherent injustices in how we currently support towns and how we educate our children," Mr. Malloy said.

The governor noted that a [state judge ruled in 2016](#) that the way the state pays for education doesn't meet the state's constitutional requirement for a fair and equitable public education system. The Connecticut Supreme Court is reviewing the case.

Mr. Malloy has called for redistributing state funds for schools from affluent towns to low-income communities. His proposal would also split special-education funding into a separate category of spending and calls for shifting about \$408 million in teacher pension costs from the state to local municipalities.

Towns and cities have said these changes would force them to raise property taxes to make up the shortfall and lay off staff.

"We don't have the votes to pass the proposal he put forward," said Democratic Rep. Andy Fleischmann, co-chairman of the education committee, regarding the governor's bill. "The truth is that the executive and legislative branches are going to have to find some solutions that they can both live with."

The state Legislature's education committee has proposed changing the current funding system by ending the practice of ensuring each municipality receive at minimum the same amount of funding they did in the previous year. Under this plan, if school enrollment for a district declines, so does state funding.

This change would free up about \$18 million in funds to districts that

previously didn't receive sufficient funding increases, Mr. Fleischmann said. He added that this proposal is just a first step and likely will be tweaked.

Mr. Malloy said the \$18 million wasn't nearly enough money to adequately address the funding disparities between wealthy and poor towns.

"While I'm ready and willing to negotiate with the legislature, any budget that I sign will include meaningful reforms," Mr. Malloy said.

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