



Screeners

Q1. Are you at least 18 years old and registered to vote in Connecticut?

Yes	100%
No	.
Don't know	.

Q2. Are you employed by a media organization, newspaper, radio station, or television station?

Yes	.
No	100%
Don't know	.

Q3. In the 2014 election for Governor of Connecticut, for whom did you vote?

Dan Malloy	48%
Tom Foley	32%
Jonathan Peltó	.
Joseph Visconti	0%
Someone else	3%
Don't know	16%

Q4. Regardless of how you are registered, do you consider yourself a strong Democrat, a weak Democrat, a strong Republican, a weak Republican, or an Independent?

Strong Democrat	27%
Weak Democrat	6%
Weak Republican	5%
Strong Republican	16%
Independent	43%
Other	1%
Don't know	2%
DEMOCRAT	33%
REPUBLICAN	21%
INDEPENDENT	46%

Favorability and Approval

Now I am going to read you a list of people and organizations. After I read each one, please tell me if you have a very favorable view of them, somewhat favorable view, somewhat unfavorable view or very unfavorable view of them. If you haven't heard of them or are unfamiliar with them, just tell me that.

	Very Favorable	Smwt Favorable	Smwt Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	Heard of but No Opinion	Have not Heard Of	Don't Know	FAV.	UNFAV
Q5. Connecticut teachers.	48%	33%	7%	3%	4%	1%	4%	81%	10%
Q10. The public schools in your town.	46%	30%	12%	7%	3%	1%	2%	76%	18%
Q9. Connecticut public schools.	32%	41%	13%	4%	5%	1%	4%	73%	17%
Q6. Public Charter schools.	24%	35%	9%	4%	12%	5%	11%	58%	13%
Q8. Connecticut teachers' unions.	22%	28%	13%	10%	12%	4%	11%	50%	23%
Q7. Connecticut State Legislature.	10%	37%	22%	18%	5%	2%	6%	47%	40%

Q11. Thinking of the Connecticut State Legislature, do you strongly approve of the job they're doing, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, or strongly disapprove of the job they're doing?

Strongly approve	6%
Somewhat approve	40%
Somewhat disapprove	26%
Strongly disapprove	20%
Don't know	8%
APPROVE	46%
DISAPPROVE	46%

Q12. And when it comes to how the Connecticut State Legislature is doing on the state's public schools, do you strongly approve of the job they're doing, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, or strongly disapprove of the job they're doing on the state's public schools?

Strongly approve	7%
Somewhat approve	36%
Somewhat disapprove	30%
Strongly disapprove	16%
Don't know	12%
APPROVE	43%
DISAPPROVE	45%

State of Connecticut Education

Q13. Do you think the quality of public schools in Connecticut has gotten better, gotten worse, or stayed the same over the last five years?

Gotten better	22%
Gotten worse	29%
Stayed the same	36%
Don't know	12%

Q14. Thinking about the next few years, how optimistic or pessimistic are you about Connecticut's public schools? Are you... ?

Very optimistic	13%
Somewhat optimistic	42%
Somewhat pessimistic	28%
Very pessimistic	10%
Don't know	8%
OPTIMISTIC	55%
PESSIMISTIC	37%

Q15. And thinking of the public schools in Connecticut, would you say that they...?

Have urgent problems that need to be addressed immediately	38%
Have some problems that should be addressed eventually	38%
Are doing a good job educating Connecticut's children	18%
Don't know	7%

Personal Experience

Now I'd like to ask you some questions about your household and your experiences with Connecticut's public schools.

Q16. Do you have children?

Yes	70%
No	30%
Don't know	0%

Among Parents:

Q17. How old are each of your children?

4 or younger	10%
5	3%
6	3%
7	3%
8	7%
9	6%
10	6%
11	5%
12	4%
13	4%
14	6%
15	5%
16	6%
17	3%
18	6%
19 or older	66%
Don't know	1%

Among Parents

Q18. Which of the following types of schools have any of your children attended, any time from kindergarten through high school?

Public school, not including charter or magnet schools	85%
Public charter schools	4%
Public magnet schools	14%
Private schools, not including religious or parochial schools	13%
Religious or parochial schools	12%
Home schooling	1%
Children are not yet in school	1%
Other	4%
Don't know	1%

Among Parents of School-Aged Children

Q19. How important is it to you that your child graduates from high school and enrolls in a four-year college?

Very important	87%
Somewhat important	9%
Not very important	3%
Not at all important	1%
Don't know	.
IMPORTANT	96%
NOT IMPORTANT	4%

Among Parents of School-Aged Children

Q20. How confident are you that your child will graduate from high school and enroll in a four-year college?

Very confident	86%
Somewhat confident	12%
Not very confident	1%
Not at all confident	.
Don't know	1%
CONFIDENT	98%
NOT CONFIDENT	1%

Among Parents of School-Aged Children

Q21. And how confident are you that your child's school is preparing them to succeed in their career?

Very confident	52%
Somewhat confident	42%
Not very confident	6%
Not at all confident	.
Don't know	.
CONFIDENT	94%
NOT CONFIDENT	6%

Among Parents of School-Aged Children

Q22. And how confident are you that your child's school is preparing them to **attend and succeed in college?**

Very confident	60%
Somewhat confident	30%
Not very confident	2%
Not at all confident	8%
Don't know	.
CONFIDENT	90%
NOT CONFIDENT	10%

Education Policy Attitudes

Changing topics slightly... Next I'm going to read you some statements someone could make about education in Connecticut, and ask you for your view.

	Strongly Agree	Smwt. Agree	Smwt. Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK	AGREE	DISAGREE
Q24. For Connecticut to have a strong economy, we need a public school system that prepares every student to succeed in college and in good careers.	69%	18%	7%	5%	1%	87%	12%
Q29. Connecticut should use consistent and fair rules to distribute funding to all kinds of local public schools, including charter schools and traditional public schools, so every student gets the resources they need.	56%	23%	10%	8%	4%	79%	17%
Q25. The state government hasn't done nearly enough to fix and strengthen Connecticut's public schools, and they need to stop delaying and take action now.	47%	24%	18%	7%	4%	71%	25%
Q30. Many school districts in Connecticut are so poorly run that pumping more money into them won't do any good unless we make fundamental changes.	45%	23%	12%	13%	6%	68%	26%
Q23. Connecticut's public schools have been struggling for far too long, and real improvement is long overdue.	42%	33%	15%	7%	4%	75%	21%
Q26. The state government needs to take a more active role in local school districts to ensure they are giving every child the public education they deserve.	42%	24%	14%	17%	3%	66%	31%
Q27. The way Connecticut funds local schools is fundamentally unfair and denies children in poorer areas a fair chance to succeed.	34%	29%	15%	10%	12%	63%	25%
Q28. The way Connecticut distributes funds to public school districts is arbitrary and not based on a real plan to help all students succeed.	29%	30%	15%	11%	15%	60%	25%

Head to Head on Issues

Now I'd like to read you some different statements someone could make about changes Connecticut could make to its school system, and ask which you agree with more.

Q31. Which of the following statements do you agree with more?

Some people say we need to evaluate and reward teachers and school administrators based on how much they help their students, not just how long they've been on the job.	64%
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Other people say government evaluations can't measure real learning and will only punish good teachers and administrators who are working in the toughest classrooms in the state.	30%
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Don't know	6%
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Q32. Which of the following statements do you agree with more?

Some people say every student deserves the opportunity and support they need to get an education that prepares them for college and to compete in the global economy. We need to set expectations so that graduating from high school means a student is ready for college and career.	63%
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Other people say it just isn't realistic to expect all students in Connecticut to go to college, and denying students a diploma just because they are not ready for college will do nothing to help the kids who need it most	32%
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Don't know	5%
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Q33. Which of the following statements do you agree with more?

Some people say we need to fix the way Connecticut funds local public schools so it's fair to kids and based on their learning needs, instead of the current arbitrary system based on political wrangling.	62%
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Other people say we shouldn't let the state of Connecticut redistribute local schools' money to take funding away from schools that are doing a good job and give it to failing schools that are wasting the money they already have.	28%
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Don't know	9%
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Q34. Which of the following statements do you agree with more?

Some people say charter schools are public schools that are open to every student, and so it's only fair that students at public charter schools should get the same funding from the state as every other public school student. 54%

Other people say charter schools are run by private organizations and only serve a lucky few students who win lotteries to get in, so we shouldn't let them take tax dollars away from the traditional public schools that most students depend on. 32%

Don't know 13%

Case Awareness and Support

Switching gears slightly...

Q35. How much have you seen or heard recently about the Connecticut Superior Court's ruling saying the state is not meeting its constitutional responsibility to give every student an adequate education?

A great deal	17%
Some	27%
Not very much	22%
Nothing	29%
Don't know	4%
GREAT DEAL/SOME	44%
NOT MUCH/NOTHING	52%

Among those who have seen or heard some or a great deal of news about the case:

Q36. What have you seen or heard?

What I've heard/read in the media	20%
How schools are funded	19%
There is inequity in the school system	17%
The state isn't doing its job properly	8%
Steps are being taken to rectify the problem	8%
Everything/heard all about it	6%
Time frame to come up with a plan	5%
State is appealing the decision	4%
I disagree with the ruling	4%
Tax money is being wasted	2%
Poor quality of education	2%
Teachers being laid off	1%
Other	10%
Don't know/refused	11%

Q37. As you may or may not know, a Connecticut Superior Court judge recently ruled that the state of Connecticut's current education system does not meet the state's constitutional obligations to give children an adequate education.

The court ruled that the state has 180 days to submit a plan to fix these problems by fairly funding the state's public schools, making sure students graduate ready for college, and improving processes for hiring and evaluating teachers and school administrators. The state has appealed the ruling to the Connecticut Supreme Court.

Do you support or oppose this ruling requiring changes to Connecticut's school system? Do you...it?

Strongly support	39%
Somewhat support	29%
Somewhat oppose	12%
Strongly oppose	9%
Neither	12%
SUPPORT	68%
OPPOSE	20%

Q38. Given what you know and have heard, what, if anything, about this ruling concerns you most?

Nothing concerns me/I agree with the ruling	18%
I don't know enough about it	10%
Education should be equal statewide	10%
I'm not sure the ruling will do any good/problem won't get fixed	10%
Poor quality of public education	9%
Time limit is tight	9%
It's going to hike taxes/cost more money	5%
Schools should be run locally	4%
The state should not be appealing the ruling	3%
My child's school may lose funding	3%
Don't like the way schools are funded currently	3%
Judicial overreach	3%
Not every child is going to college	2%
Other	6%
Don't know/refused	11%

Q39. Given what you know and have heard, what, if anything, about this ruling gives you the most hope?

It may finally happen	15%
Schools may move closer to educational equality	11%
Nothing/none	8%
I don't know enough about it	7%
Poorly funded schools will get help	7%
Quality of education may improve	7%
The courts forced the issue	6%
They have no choice/they have 180 days to comply	6%
Re-evaluation/hiring of teachers	5%
I don't agree with the ruling	4%
I don't think it will improve/nothing will change	3%
Decisions about schools should be made locally	3%
The state should drop the appeal	1%
Ruling might be overturned	1%
Other	5%
Don't know/refused	16%

Q40. Which of the following comes closest to your view?

The General Assembly should act immediately to create a plan for improving Connecticut's public schools, even though the ruling is being appealed.	57%
The General Assembly should wait until after the Supreme Court has ruled on the appeal of this case to act, rather than taking action before the courts have spoken.	36%
Don't know	7%

Q41. Which of the following statements do you agree with more?

Some people say the court's ruling goes too far because an unelected judge is mandating a specific policy agenda. This ruling won't fix the problems facing Connecticut schools, it'll just lead to bad education policies by trying to force a complete overhaul in 180 days.	25%
Other people say the court's ruling is the call to action that our state government needs to finally get Connecticut's public schools on the right track. This will force the Governor and legislature to do their jobs and ensure all children in the state have a fair chance to get the quality public education they deserve.	63%
Don't know	11%

Demographics

The remaining questions are for statistical purposes only.

D1. May I ask how old you are?

18 to 24 years	5%
25 to 29 years	7%
30 to 34 years	5%
35 to 39 years	7%
40 to 44 years	7%
45 to 49 years	8%
50 to 54 years	11%
55 to 59 years	13%
60 to 64 years	13%
65 to 69 years	6%
70 to 74 years	6%
75 to 79 years	5%
80 or older	7%
Don't know/Refused	0%

D2. What is the last grade or level of school you have completed?

Less than high school degree	1%
High school graduate	21%
Some college - but less than two years of college	12%
Some college - two years or more/AA degree	13%
College graduate/Bachelor's degree/BA/BS	30%
Postgraduate courses	4%
Master's degree	16%
MBA or Law degree	1%
PhD or MD	2%
Don't know/None specified	0%

D3. Are you married, separated, divorced, widowed, not married but living with a partner, or have you never been married?

Married	62%
Separated/Divorced	9%
Widowed	8%
Not married, living with partner	4%
Never married/Single	17%
Don't know/Refused	0%

D4. Do you live in a city, a suburb just outside a city, or a less developed or rural area that is not near a city?

City	32%
Suburb just outside the city	49%
Less developed, rural area	18%
Don't know/refused	1%

D5. Are you or is anyone in your household a member of a labor union?

No	77%
Yes - Teachers	7%
Yes - Other union	14%
Yes - Not sure	1%
Don't know	1%
TOTAL YES	22%

D6. Do you generally consider yourself...?

Liberal	27%
Moderate	37%
Conservative	31%
Don't know/None specified	5%

D7. For statistical purposes only, we need to know your total family income. Will you please tell me which of the following categories best represents your total family income?

Less than \$15,000	2%
\$15,000 to less than \$30,000	4%
\$30,000 to less than \$40,000	8%
\$40,000 to less than \$50,000	6%
\$50,000 to less than \$60,000	8%
\$60,000 to less than \$75,000	9%
\$75,000 to less than \$100,000	13%
\$100,000 to less than \$150,000	15%
\$150,000 or more	12%
Don't know/Refused	23%

D8. Which of the following ethnic groups describes you? You can stop me when I've read your group.

White or Caucasian	78%
Black or African-American	10%
Latino or Hispanic	8%
Asian or Pacific Islander	1%
Arab	.
Native American	0%
Mixed Race	2%
Other	1%
Don't know/Refused	0%

D9. Gender:

Male	47%
Female	53%

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Danny Franklin, Managing Partner, Benenson Strategy Group

RE: Connecticut Voters' Views on Education

DATE: October 25, 2016

- **Connecticut voters support the ruling in CCJEF v. Rell** because they see it as an opportunity to create a stronger, fairer public school system that prepares every child to succeed.
 - ✓ After hearing a neutral description of the case and the ruling, more than two-thirds (68%) of voters support the ruling, while just 20% oppose it.
- Across party lines, **voters understand that a fair education system where every student has a chance is essential for a strong economy.**
 - ✓ 87% of Connecticut voters agree “for Connecticut to have a strong economy, we need a public school system that prepares every student to succeed in college and in good careers” (69% strongly agree)
 - Among Democrats: 89% agree with this statement (71% strongly agree)
 - Among Independents: 85% agree (67% strongly agree)
 - Among Republicans: 85% agree (67% strongly agree)
- **Connecticut voters see the state’s public schools falling short of their expectations, and failing to meet the state’s critical education needs.** Few see significant improvements in the school system, and a strong majority believes that real action is long overdue.
 - ✓ In a forced choice, 38% say Connecticut public schools have “**urgent problems that need to be addressed immediately**” and another 38% say they face “some problems;” just 18% say the public schools in Connecticut “are doing a good job educating Connecticut’s children.”
 - ✓ In the face of these problems, voters see schools as falling behind or stagnant. 29% say the quality of public schools in the state has “gotten worse” over the past 5 years, and 36% say school quality has “stayed the same.”
 - ✓ 75% of voters agree “Connecticut’s public schools have been struggling for far too long, **and real improvement is long overdue**” (42% strongly agree)
- Despite these serious issues, **voters believe that progress is possible** and remain tentatively hopeful for the future: 55% of voters say they are “optimistic” about Connecticut’s public schools.
- Voters are optimistic about improvements in Connecticut’s schools, and they have **strong views about how leaders in Connecticut can fix the problems in schools.**
 - ✓ On a range of issues, **Connecticut voters support improvements like those called for in the CCJEF v. Rell ruling, even before hearing about the ruling itself.**
 - ✓ We tested head-to-head arguments on several issues raised by the ruling, pitting an argument for change directly against a strong counterargument. As shown in the table below, voters chose the case for change by significant margins in every case.
 - ✓ Voters’ support for fair funding in the public school system extends to public schools of choice, including public charter schools. 79% of voters agree that “Connecticut should use consistent and fair rules to distribute funding to all kinds of local public schools, including charter schools and traditional public schools, so every student gets the resources they need,” and fully 56% of voters strongly agree with the statement.



Argument <u>For</u> Change		Argument <u>Against</u> Change	
Message	% Agree	% Agree	Message
Some people say we need to fix the way Connecticut funds local public schools so it's fair to kids and based on their learning needs, instead of the current arbitrary system based on political wrangling.	62%	28%	Other people say we shouldn't let the state of Connecticut redistribute local schools' money to take funding away from schools that are doing a good job and give it to failing schools that are wasting the money they already have.
Some people say every student deserves the opportunity and support they need to get an education that prepares them for college and to compete in the global economy. We need to set expectations so that graduating from high school means a student is ready for college and career.	63%	32%	Other people say it just isn't realistic to expect all students in Connecticut to go to college, and denying students a diploma just because they are not ready for college will do nothing to help the kids who need it most.
Some people say we need to evaluate and reward teachers and school administrators based on how much they help their students , not just how long they've been on the job.	64%	30%	Other people say government evaluations can't measure real learning and will only punish good teachers and administrators who are working in the toughest classrooms in the state.

- Voters' appetite for real changes and improvements in Connecticut's public schools is reflected in a **strong endorsement of the CCJEF v. Rell ruling as a call to action**, and a clear desire for the state's political leaders to act on the ruling.
 - ✓ After hearing a neutral description of the case and ruling, 68% of voters support the ruling, including 39% who strongly support it. Only 20% oppose the ruling.
 - ✓ When they are told the ruling is being appealed, 57% of voters still want the General Assembly to "act immediately to create a plan for improving Connecticut's public schools," while just 36% say the General Assembly should "wait until after the Supreme Court has ruled on the appeal."
 - ✓ In a forced choice, just 25% of voters see the ruling as "[going] too far because an unelected judge is mandating a specific policy agenda" while **63% say CCJEF v. Rell is "the call to action that our state government needs to finally get Connecticut's public schools on the right track."**

The bottom line: Connecticut voters see serious problems in public schools, and they believe those problems could be addressed by the types of changes called for by the CCJEF v. Rell ruling. When faced with arguments for and against those changes, Connecticut voters want change. When they hear about the ruling itself, voters support it by wide margins and want the General Assembly to act on the ruling immediately rather than wait for resolution on the appeal. Voters see the ruling as an opportunity for Connecticut to tackle the problems in public schools, and they want the state's leaders to seize that opportunity.

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Benenson Strategy Group conducted 600 telephone interviews with gubernatorial election voters in Connecticut from October 5 – 9, 2016. The margin of error for the entire data is ±3.39% at the 95% confidence level. It is higher among subgroups.

