



The Danbury Collective



Connecticut Cradle to Career Coalition

Strengthening Affordability Through Education & Workforce Alignment

A Practical Path Forward for Connecticut



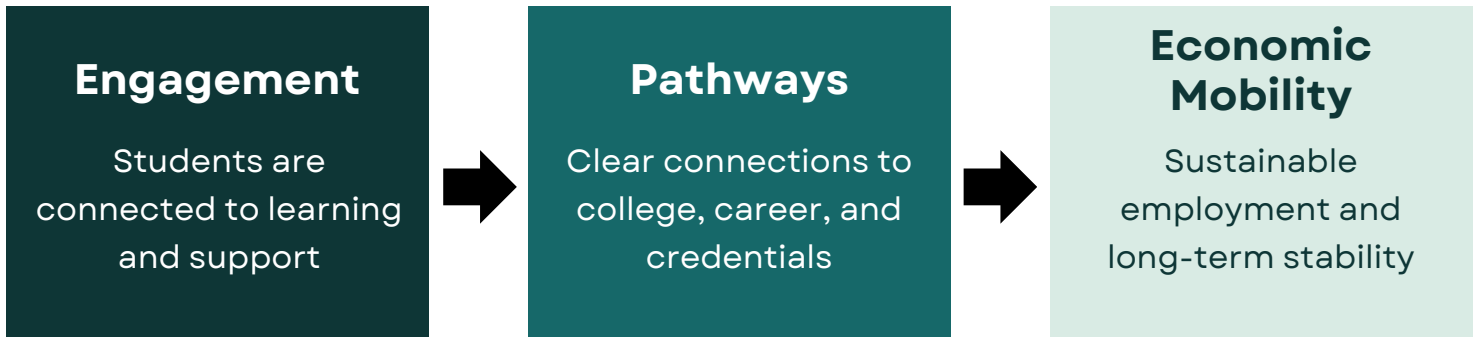
Foundation: Early Childhood

Access to affordable, high-quality early care and education

Supports child development, family affordability, and workforce participation

Education is at the center of affordability.

Affordability is shaped by how well education, workforce, and community systems align to create real pathways to opportunity.



Access

Access to affordable, high-quality early care and education

Supports workforce participation and child development

Access enables participation
 Participation drives engagement
 Engagement builds pathways
 Pathways lead to economic mobility

Affordability

Improves when education, workforce, and community systems align



A Practical Path Forward for Connecticut

Connecticut families and communities are navigating rising costs and increasing pressure on local systems. Across the state, one reality is clear:

Education is at the center of affordability.

Local school districts shape both family stability and long-term economic mobility, whether through property taxes, workforce access, or the cost of care and opportunity. While large-scale investments remain critical, there are practical, lower-cost strategies we can advance now to strengthen outcomes and advance scalable, evidence-based strategies. This includes sustaining and growing early childhood investments, which are foundational to affordability and long-term outcomes.

What We Can Do Now

Align Education and Workforce Pathways

Connect learning to real career pathways in high-need sectors

Example: Affordability and workforce alignment initiatives

Support Innovation in Schools

Expand and sustain strategies that improve student outcomes

Example: Education innovation grant programs

Use Data to Drive What Works

Align decisions and resources using connected, cross-system data

Example: Data sharing across education, workforce, and community systems

Remove Barriers to Access

Ensure students can fully participate in school, work, and opportunity

Example: Student transportation access

Connect Classrooms to Careers

Link education to real-world experience through employer partnerships

Example: Educator externships and career-connected learning

With proposals currently under consideration, Connecticut has an opportunity to:

- **Advance policy alignment now**, and
- **Build toward long-term investment in early childhood and education**

These steps are practical building blocks we can advance now to strengthen outcomes and align systems, while continuing to pursue the long-term investments required for early childhood and public education.