
Administrative Report to the Governor

**Connecticut
State Department of Education**

2023-24



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At-a-Glance

Commissioner - Charlene Russell-Tucker

Deputy Commissioners - Dr. Charles E. Hewes, Sinthia Sone-Moyano

Established - 1838

Statutory authority - Sec. 10-3 (1949), Revised (1969) Sec. 10-3a CGS and Sec. 10-4(a) CGS

Central office - 450 Columbus Blvd, Hartford, CT 06106

Number of employees - 214

Recurring operating expenses - \$3,125,660,375.91

Organizational structure - [CSDE Organizational Chart](#)

Mission

The Connecticut State Board of Education will provide leadership that promotes an educational system supporting all learners in reaching their full potential.

Statutory Responsibility

Under Sec. 10-3a of the Conn. Gen. Statutes, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is the administrative arm of the State Board of Education (SBE), which is responsible for implementing the educational interests of the state from preschool through grade 12.

Under Sec. 10-4(a) of the Conn. Gen. Statutes, the State Board of Education provides leadership and promotes the improvement of education in the state. Connecticut's 13-member State Board of Education is responsible for "general supervision and control of the educational interests of the state, which interests shall include preschool, elementary and secondary education, special education, vocational education and adult education." Sec. 10-4(a) further defines the educational interests of the state as including ". . . the concern of the state that (1) each child shall have for the period prescribed in the general statutes equal opportunity to receive a suitable program of educational experiences. . ."

The Governor, subject to the approval of the General Assembly, appoints members of the State Board to four-year terms.

The State Board and Department of Education also protect the educational interests of the state by serving school districts and teacher preparation programs at Connecticut's public and private higher education institutions. Among the Department's many partners are parent and teacher groups; the six regional educational service centers; nonpublic schools; public and independent colleges and universities; the Connecticut Departments of Children and Families, Developmental Services, Social Services, Public Health, Labor, and Corrections; and the State Education Resource Center.

Specific functions carried out by the Department of Education include leadership and communication with the state's school districts, charter schools, and regional educational service centers; research, planning, evaluation, educational technology (including telecommunications); the publishing of guides to curriculum development and other technical assistance materials; the presentation of workshops and other professional development for educators and leaders; teacher and administrator certification; oversight of teacher preparation programs; data collection and analysis; and the administration of annual standardized assessments.

As part of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the State Department of Education has implemented an [accountability system](#) that uses a set of 12 indicators to show how well schools are preparing students for success in college, careers, and life. The system moves beyond test scores and graduation rates and instead provides a holistic, multifactor perspective of district and school performance, and incorporates student growth over time.

Public Service

Academic Office

The mission of the [Academic Office](#) is to provide high-quality instructional resources, guidance, and leadership to local education agencies (LEAs), ensuring students are prepared for success in college, career, and civic life. Embracing innovation and future-forward thinking, the Academic Office is dedicated to fostering educational excellence and equity through:

- Innovative instructional support: We offer advanced resources, such as Defined Learning and Edmentum/Apex Learning, to support flexible and personalized learning.
- Rigorous standards and curriculum: Our office supports LEAs in implementing challenging academic standards and curricula, ensuring equitable access to high-quality education.
- Capacity building in early literacy and numeracy: We help LEAs build robust internal structures to ensure early literacy and numeracy success for all students, laying a strong foundation for lifelong learning.
- Expanding humanities and STEM access.
- Comprehensive support for English learners/multilingual learners (ELs/MLs): We provide guidance and technical support for implementing effective language instruction programs, ensuring ELs/MLs have access to grade-level content and achieve academic success.
- Effective implementation of federal programs: We manage and provide resources for federal programs under the state's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated Plan, including Titles I, II, and III grant programs; the State Bilingual Grant; and the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund.
- Modernizing to elevate career and technical education: Through the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins V) grant programs, we support the development of career and technical education pathways that prepare students for the 21st-century workforce.
- The [Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success](#) implements Connecticut's early literacy laws, regulations, and policies. The mission of the Center is to lead statewide change and increase the effectiveness of literacy teaching and learning through advocacy, research, and education so that all Connecticut students are reading at or above grade level independently and proficiently by the end of third grade.

Bureau of Special Education

The [Bureau of Special Education](#):

- Provides leadership, guidance, training and technical assistance to schools, districts, parents, and interested stakeholders to ensure students with disabilities receive a free

appropriate public education that prepares them for college or training, employment, independent living, and community participation.

- Enforces the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and its program requirements for each entity responsible for educating children with disabilities.
- Supports continuous improvement (learning) activities that result in improved educational and functional outcomes for all children with disabilities.
- Collaborates with other state agencies to align procedures and practices to support students with disabilities from age 3 through the end of the school year in which the student turns 22 or when they receive their regular high school diploma, whichever comes first.

Division of Legal and Governmental Affairs

The [Division of Legal and Governmental Affairs](#) provides legal counsel to the State Board of Education, the Commissioner of Education, and Department offices and bureaus on a wide range of issues pertaining to education and school operations, including matters pertaining to remote instruction, the formation of a new regional school district, and the provision of sufficient emotional, behavioral, and mental-health services to students as an educational interest of the State under Connecticut General Statutes Sections 10-4a and 10-4b.

The division also:

- Provides guidance and assistance to local school districts and educational organizations about the interpretation of laws and regulations pertaining to education.
- Manages certain statutory responsibilities of the Department, including but not limited to, teacher and administrator contract negotiations, monitoring of racial imbalance requirements, investigations and enforcement proceedings concerning certification action against educator certificates, school accommodations appeals from decisions of local and regional boards of education, Freedom of Information Act requests, and regional school district establishment and governance.
- Assists the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) in its representation of the State Board of Education and the Department of Education in litigation matters.
- Serves the public and provides practical suggestions on matters presented during these calls.
- Houses the Bureau of Investigations and Professional Practices, which investigates educator misconduct where such misconduct has the potential to result in certification action. In 2018, the Legislature expanded the statutory language that expanded the Department's available certification actions to include revocation, suspension, probation, and denial. When warranted, the bureau will start the process necessary to seek an appropriate certification action against an educator's certificate, authorization, or permit, which ultimately requires an administrative hearing before a hearing officer. Pursuant to Conn. Gen. Statutes Sec. 10-221d, this bureau collaborates closely with the Department

of Children and Families, criminal justice authorities, and local school districts to ensure the safety of schoolchildren. Additionally, the bureau works with district administration, human resources staff, and educator preparation programs to develop awareness about professional practices by discussing educator ethics and situations that could lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal or certification action against an educator or teacher candidate.

Finance and Internal Operations

The [Finance and Internal Operations Office](#) coordinates the effective delivery of financial services to support the Department's strategic direction and compliance needs. Key services provided by the Finance and Internal Operations Office include:

- Managing and aligning financial resources to support CSDE's organizational structure in the successful implementation of key strategic priorities and managing the annual calculation and disbursement of almost \$3.1 billion to support state and local education initiatives, including the State Board of Education's Comprehensive 5 Year Plan for Education, adult education, general and special education, and choice programming.
- Administration of nearly \$1.8 billion in federal COVID-19 relief funds pursuant to the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act; the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act; and the American Rescue Plan Act.
- Budget process and implementation.
- Asset management.
- Purchasing, contract, and travel administration.
- Accounts receivable/payable.
- Cash management.
- Operational services.
- Federal and state grants distribution, monitoring, and reporting.
- Analysis of budget proposals and legislation for impact on CSDE grant-related functions.
- Collection of local expenditure data for calculation and reporting purposes.
- Electronic Grants Management System (eGMS).
- Payroll services.

Office of Internal Audit

The mission of the [Office of Internal Audit](#) (OIA) is to assist the State Board of Education and the Connecticut State Department of Education management in identifying, avoiding, and mitigating risks. In support of this mission, OIA reviews and analyzes all aspects of CSDE's and the Office of Early Childhood's (OEC) operations. Key services provided by the Office of Internal Audit include:

- reviewing and evaluating the soundness, adequacy, and application of accounting, financial, and operating controls and procedures, and the cost effectiveness of such controls and procedures;
- determining the extent of compliance with established statutes, regulations, policies, plans and procedures;
- auditing accounts and financial transactions, including performing forensic analyses; and
- recommending improvement in the operations and the use of resources in the department.

Office of Strategic Planning and Partnerships

The mission of the CSDE [Office of Strategic Planning and Partnerships](#) is to oversee and support numerous educational programs and projects within the agency, including Open Choice, Interdistrict Magnet School programs, and other school choice opportunities across Connecticut as they relate to legislative requirements, educational operations, operating budgets, and grants.

The office also:

- Leads agency efforts to meet the state’s obligation pursuant to the *Sheff v. O’Neill* litigation and manages implementation of the most recent agreement and final resolution in that case.
- Leads the agency’s effort toward expanding and establishing programs for high school students aimed at providing college and career readiness opportunities through educational and business partnerships.
- Conducts in-depth data analyses and research for a variety of important CSDE projects.
- Collaborates cross-divisionally, across agencies, and with outside parties to develop clear and consistent policies, procedures and resources for agency, school, and district leadership.
- Conducts outreach to inform families about school choice opportunities, provides application assistance, and supports informed decision-making.
- Coordinates diversity, equity, and inclusion programming for choice schools and districts to support districts’ efforts to create positive school climates and plan for meeting legislative mandates.
- Administers legislative proposal grants that support magnet enrollment and tuition reimbursement.
- Administers ARPA grants from agency set aside to promote extracurricular programming in choice schools to enhance the educational experience, support the social-emotional well-being of students, and promote community.
- Administers ARPA grants to towns in the Sheff Region, New Britain, and New London for interdistrict magnet school tuition costs for enrollment greater than 4% of their resident students.
- Conducts college and career readiness initiatives to ensure that Connecticut high school students are provided opportunities for post-graduate education and workforce prospects

through partnerships and program development with both institutions of higher education and state businesses.

Office of Student Support Services (OSSS)

The mission of the [Office of Student Support Services](#) (OSSS) is to improve the educational success of each and every learner by providing comprehensive supports to students and families and ensuring high-quality programs and services.

Services include:

- promoting health, fitness, and wellness, as well as supporting food and nutrition services;
- promoting positive school environments through physical, social-emotional, behavioral and mental health supports, and school climate development efforts;
- supporting school, family, and community engagement and youth development programs through after-school programs;
- helping students experiencing homelessness and those involved with the juvenile justice system; and
- prevention efforts targeting chronic absenteeism and the overuse of exclusionary discipline.

Performance Office

The mission of the [Performance Office](#) is to support the improvement of student engagement and outcomes through the use of data. The office focuses on the following key goals and initiatives:

- [Collect accurate data](#) in a highly efficient, secure, and timely manner.
- Implement a high-quality [student assessment system](#) that provide a full suite of summative and interim block assessments that are aligned to state academic standards, efficient, reliable, and enable valid interpretations of student achievement and growth.
- Aggregate data and deliver interactive reports through a comprehensive data portal, [EdSight](#), for use by schools, districts, the CSDE, parents, legislators, researchers, and other interest groups.
- Design and implement a [district and school accountability model](#) that is inclusive, collaborative, transparent, and reflective and enables a suite of differentiated supports and interventions for schools and districts.
- Study the effectiveness of state initiatives through [rigorous research](#), analyses, interagency data, and [reports](#) sharing to gain insights that inform policy decisions.
- Design and implement strategic initiatives to address state-level priorities like [FAFSA completion](#), [dual credit expansion](#), and [automatic admissions to higher education](#).

Additionally, the Performance Office published important summary reports, including the [Profile and Performance Reports \(ct.gov\)](#) and [Special Education Annual Performance Reports \(ct.gov\)](#).

Accountability

- Implemented the [school and district accountability system](#), included dual credit data from Connecticut's public and private universities in Indicator 6, and identified a set of Turnaround and Focus schools for state support.
- Identified schools for the National Blue Ribbon School award and processed their submissions with the U.S. Department of Education and the school/district leaders.
- Submitted accountability data for Perkins career and technical education program to the U.S. Department of Education.
- Coordinated the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) activities including administration of additional federal data collections.

Research, Analyses, and Data Sharing

- Continued obtaining federal funds and participated actively in numerous data requests (e.g., disengaged/disconnected youth), to support P20WIN (Workforce Information Network) that enables secure data sharing between state agencies, higher education institutions, and nonprofits to inform sound policy.
- Collaborated with the Department of Social Services around the launch of the Summer EBT (SEBT) and provided all necessary data well in advance of the launch of the program.
- Continued sharing historical, longitudinal student-data securely with the Department of Children and Families and with the Court Support Services Division (CSSD) of the Judicial Branch on a monthly/nightly basis.
- Used the data warehouse to respond to several data requests from researchers, districts, and CSDE personnel, providing suppressed data according to CSDE suppression guidelines.
- Provided U.S. Department of Education with all required data on a timely basis through the EdFacts system.

Strategic Initiatives

- Designed and implemented a [FAFSA completion](#) challenge to improve Connecticut's FAFSA completion rate, especially for students from low-income backgrounds.
- Disseminated over 30,000 letters from the Commissioner to students in grades 9 and 10 (who were identified based on [research](#)), encouraging them to participate in rigorous courses in high school.
- Partnered closely with CSCU, Office of the Governor, and Connecticut school counselors to support implementation of the [Connecticut Automatic Admissions Program](#).

Talent Office

The mission of the CSDE [Talent Office](#) is to ensure that every Connecticut public school student has access to racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse educators by providing school districts with support, strategies, and tools to hire and retain talent. These educators are culturally competent and equipped to prepare all students for success in college, career, and life. The Talent Office now houses three bureaus: the Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification (BESC),

the Bureau of Educator Effectiveness (BEE), and the [Office of Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities](#) (ODRD). Collectively, the three bureaus work in close collaboration with numerous education professionals and organizations.

Strategies and resources offered by the Talent Office include the following:

- Attract and recruit racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse individuals to the teaching profession, and support and sustain them in the teaching profession (for example, CT Educators Rising, Next-Gen, etc.).
- Ensure equitable access to educator preparation information, support career changers in pursuit of their educator credentials, identify employment opportunities and funding supports (for example, see [TEACH Connecticut](#) and [CHESLA Alliance District Teacher Loan Subsidy Program](#)).
- Through the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability and Reform (CEEDAR) Center and the Council for Chief State School Officer's (CCSSO's) Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership initiative, the Talent Office continues to build stronger partnerships between educator preparation programs (EPPs) and school districts focusing on inclusive education.
- The office supports early career educator induction through the Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) program. By focusing on growth and development, we re-imagined educator evaluation statewide with full implementation in fall 2024, and we continuously improve practice through high-quality professional learning, support systems, and annual recognition programs such as Paraeducator of the Year, Teacher of the Year, and the prestigious Milken Family Foundation award.
- Amplify efforts to increase the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of Connecticut's educator workforce and address persistent shortage areas in math, science, comprehensive special education, bilingual, and elsewhere.

Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification

- Issues new and continuing certificates to nearly 30,000 educators annually.
- Provided customer service to current and prospective Connecticut educators and all 19 of Connecticut's EPPs, as well as representatives of all public school districts.
- Served as liaison to the CT Education Certification Council (CECC), which focused on modernizing certification to better meet contemporary workforce needs given outdated regulations (1998).
- Continued to make significant progress to streamline certification processes, to the extent possible, given existing regulations.
- Implemented changes to the certification system to streamline internal processes for the purpose of enhancing the experience for educators, higher education institutions and districts, and to address reduced staffing capacity.
- Focused on providing flexibility to districts with temporary authorizations to fill critical positions amid a continually shrinking workforce.

- Coordinated all aspects of Connecticut’s pre-service licensure assessment system (e.g., Praxis II, Foundations of Reading, Connecticut Administrator Test, ACTFL, edTPA).
- Expanded reciprocity to include 10 more states.
- Collaborated with districts, higher education, and professional organizations to increase pathways to certification to address persistent shortage areas.

Bureau of Educator Effectiveness

- Participated in initiatives with the CEDAR Center and CCSSO’s Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership initiative. Our team engages with state and national partners to promote effective and inclusive education practices to ensure success for all students, with a specific focus on students with disabilities, struggling learners, and multilingual learners.
- Supported administrator preparation programs to improve clinical internship opportunities for aspiring administrators so they will better understand how to support and address the needs of students with disabilities, struggling learners, and multilingual learners.
- Participated on the Connecticut Advisory Council for Teacher Professional Standards and the Connecticut Advisory Council for Administrator Professional Standards.
- Participated on the Connecticut School Paraeducator Advisory Council to advise the Commissioner quarterly on the needs for the training of paraprofessionals and the effectiveness of the content and the delivery of existing training.
- Facilitated the Educator Evaluation and Support (EES) Council since 2022, which included key educational stakeholders, to develop new Connecticut Guidelines for Educator and Leader Evaluation and Support 2023 (CT Guidelines 2023).
- Coordinated statewide recognition events as part of an effort to recognize excellent educators and to elevate the image of the teaching profession as a recruitment strategy: Connecticut State Teacher of the Year process, Milken Educator Award, Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year.
- Oversaw all aspects of statewide implementation of the TEAM program (training, allocation of funding, mentor training, etc.).
- Continued to collaborate with Teach.org, with funding support from the Buck Foundation, to maintain and support TeachCT, a comprehensive recruitment campaign consisting of a website, social media, television, and radio advertisements, designed to elevate the image of the teaching profession in general and to encourage teaching careers. Connecticut was the first state to partner and launch with [Connecticut.teach.org](https://connecticut.teach.org).
- Continued to coordinate statewide efforts to provide pathways to teaching for veterans.
- Collaborated with the Department of Labor to start two registered Connecticut Teacher Apprenticeship programs, which remove financial barriers for teacher candidates to address the teacher shortage.

Office of Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities (ODRD)

The Office of Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities has adopted the following methods to improve service to families, educators, and local/regional boards of education, who are the chief beneficiaries of our work:

- Developed a plan to ensure the office prioritizes the needs of stakeholders.
- Engage with institutions of higher education (IHEs) on standards for EPPs.
- Established a structured protocol for scheduling and documenting consultation requests and services provided to ensure that the office is supporting its target stakeholders equitably.
- Works with the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success to identify opportunities to collaborate and use staff resources for the benefit of shared priorities.
- Works with the Bureau of Special Education on a professional learning and development calendar proposal for IDEA funding that prioritizes ensuring that special educators and special education administrators have equitable access to science of reading and structured literacy training opportunities matched to those made available to general educators and general education administrators through the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success and Academics.

Turnaround Office

The [Turnaround Office](#) improves student outcomes in Connecticut's lowest-performing schools and districts through support, technical assistance, direct intervention, and the creation of high-quality new schools.

The Turnaround Office supported and advanced the continuous improvement process across the 36 Alliance Districts and provided technical assistance to further equitable access for all students with an amplified focus on students with high needs (i.e., free-reduced price lunch, multilingual learners, students receiving special education services, students who were chronically absent from school).

- One of several bright spots for the Turnaround Office was the addition of four schools to the Commissioner's Network (CN) of schools. Currently, there are 18 CN schools statewide. The process to become a CN school includes a rigorous needs assessment to identify areas of strength and areas for improvement.
- Key services provided by the Turnaround Office include investing in and transforming schools and districts opportunities for continuous growth through various programs, including the Commissioner's Network, Alliance and Opportunity Districts, Priority School Districts, and charter schools.
- The Turnaround Office focuses on building capacity and infrastructure in the state's highest-needs districts by fostering collaboration across districts; expanding educational options by opening high-quality new schools; piloting innovative strategies, scaling

promising practices, and serving as the catalyst for local continuous improvement and statewide reform.

Additional services provided by the Turnaround Office include:

School and District Support

- Support district transformation through the state’s Alliance District, Opportunity District and Priority School District programs.
- Support school turnaround through the Commissioner's Network and Title I School Improvement Grants (SIG).
- Provide ongoing support, technical assistance, and monitoring through differentiated and targeted fieldwork.
- Provide opportunities for Alliance Districts and Commissioner Network Schools to collaborate, share, and learn best practices from each other.
- Conduct on-site consultations in the use of the Resource Allocation Review report in EdSight.

Internal Operations and Accountability

- Distribution, monitoring, and ongoing management of state grants and bonds, as well as federal Title I School Improvement Grant programs.
- Development and maintenance of the state’s electronic consolidated eGrants Management System Applications, including district applications for Alliance District, Priority School District, and Title I Part A School Improvement Grants.
- Promote accountability and data-driven support and improvement.
- Support districts in tracking their grant investments to student outcomes using the Resource Allocation Review report in EdSight.
- Support and review district improvement plans to incorporate new plans under ESSER, ESSER II, and ARP-ESSER federal funding aligned to statewide priorities. Specific to all allocated relief funding, the Turnaround Office provided just-in-time technical assistance in the alignment of strategies to statewide priorities.

Charter Schools

- Provide public school choice options to students and families.
- Create and implement systems and processes for charter monitoring and accountability.
- Support the development of Corrective Action Plans.
- Promote reduction of racial, ethnic, and economic isolation, and serve high-need student population groups.
- Support new schools in underserved geographic locations.
- Completion of New State Charter School Request for Proposals.

Improvements and Achievements

Academic Office

Recent Initiatives and Innovations

- **K-8 Model Curricula Project:** This year, the CSDE Academic Office continued to design and develop K-8 Model Curricula as Open Education Resources (OER) through GoOpen CT, as legislated by PA 19-12 and PA 21-2. The Academic Office fully deployed model curricula for the following content areas and grades.
 - K-8 Model Mathematics, with integrated financial literacy
 - K-8 Model Computer Science (in partnership with Code.org)
 - K-8 Model Science
 - K-8 Model Social Studies, with integrated legislated topics
 - K-8 Model English Language Arts, with integrated supports for the science of literacy
 - 6-12 Model Financial Literacy, with new CSDE Personal Financial Literacy and Management Course Kit
- Led the Lt. Governor's Computing Challenge to foster computational thinking and innovation.

High-Quality Instructional Materials and Support

- **Comprehensive Curriculum Development:** We have successfully developed and released model curricula for grades K-8 across various subjects, incorporating financial literacy, project-based learning, and aligned resources for English learners/multilingual learners (ELs/MLs). These curricula ensure rigorous and engaging learning experiences for all students.
- **Professional Learning Opportunities:** We have engaged two new cohorts of educational leaders in the Science of Reading Masterclass to ensure all teachers develop the capacity to provide learning aligned with the science of reading.

Innovative Education Practices

- **CSDE Course Kits:** We have created a comprehensive yet concise resource to support high quality development of a high school course ensuring alignment to standards and evidence-based teaching models and practices.
- **Open Education Resources:** The State Department of Education remains committed to providing Open Educational Resources (OER). This initiative is a significant step toward ensuring that all students have equitable access to high-quality educational materials. OER offers many benefits, including cost savings for students and families, the ability to customize and adapt materials to meet diverse learning needs, and the promotion of collaborative teaching and learning practices. By embracing OER, our state is not only

reducing the financial burden on school districts, educators, students, and their families but also fostering a more inclusive and adaptable educational environment.

Early Literacy

- Deployed over \$20 million in CSDE’s American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to local and regional boards of education and \$4,539,000 in ARP-ESSER Small Town grants for the purpose of supporting scientifically based, evidence-based literacy teaching and learning in kindergarten through grade 3.
- Provided K-3 literacy curriculum model and program adoption and implementation assistance to support districts and charter schools in accomplishing partial implementation by July 1, 2024.
- Accomplished DAS-BID to negotiate pricing on behalf of districts and charter schools for instructional materials and professional learning (e.g., a minimum 25% discount on list price for curriculum models and or programs, agree to “lock in” the pricing for a minimum of three years).
- Partnered with the Reading Leadership Implementation Council to create the [K-3 Literacy Plan](#) to guide the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success in supporting districts and charter schools in achieving every student reading at or above grade level independently and proficiently by the end of third grade.
- Created the [Infinite Possibilities: Doing This Together Webinar Series](#) to highlight districts and charter schools and share their unique experiences selecting and implementing a CT-approved K-3 core comprehensive reading curriculum model or program.

Bureau of Special Education

General Monitoring and Supervision

- Assigned the top ranking of “Meets Requirements” from the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) for its 2024 annual determination. This determination is based on the state’s performance during 2022-23, on a totality of information including State Assessment Participation, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), Drop Out/Graduation data, Previous Year State Performance Plan (17 special education indicators), monitoring and public information, fiscal conditions, and validity and reliability of data.
- Engaged in continuous improvement cycle for Differentiated Monitoring System (DMS) moving from a Special Education Compliance to Compliance and Results based system (improved outcomes for students with disabilities).
- Created a new collaborative vision and mission for General Supervision with input from educators and families through the re-establishment of the LEA Advisory Committee and State Advisory Council. Received input and feedback through these structures on General Supervision and Monitoring activities.

- Instituted a process and protocols to conduct random, onsite, unannounced monitoring visits to review IEPs, verify delivery of services, conduct parent/staff interviews and classroom observations. 2023-24 visits included six school districts, one regional special education program, one approved private special education program and one charter school.
- Updated State Systemic Improvement Plan (infrastructure improvement strategies, evidence-based practices, and resources (including data-based individualization), aligned with our theory of action and evaluation plan, to improve reading achievement that is assessed by using the accountability data derived from the state assessment testing results for third-grade students with IEPs.
- Implemented special education funding monitoring (Fiscal Risk Rubric) and identified districts that require a higher level of engagement of supports and technical assistance regarding their procedures and practices related to the use of IDEA Part B funds.
- The DMS team continues to review information and data from the call center and a variety of other sources to assess potential noncompliance in the state's LEAs and programs and ensure the appropriate implementation of the IDEA throughout the state.
- Conducted 17 CSDE Approved Private Special Education Program approvals and 14 program changes during the 2023-24 review cycle.
- Conducted eight charter school site visits focusing on special education practices and students with disabilities as part of the CSDE Turnaround Office's charter school renewal process.
- Ongoing collaboration with the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) to update the APR data collection through the Early Childhood Outcome (ECO) data system including developing and providing professional development for LEAs on the new expanded CT DOTS assessment tool that will be used in the future to collect ECO data.
- Conducted a pilot in the spring of 2024 using the new expanded CT DOTS assessment tool to collect exit data for Early Childhood Outcomes.
- Ongoing collaboration with the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) to support the APR data regarding the transition from Birth to Three (Part C) to Preschool Special Education (Part B) including a "Lunch and Learn" Series for Part C and Part B providers.

Training and Support

- The CSDE continues to offer educators and parents professional development and technical assistance to support statewide development and implementation of high-quality IEPs for students.
 - The CSDE implemented the third year of [IEP Quality Training](#) statewide during 2023-24 school year. IEP Quality Training is designed to improve consistency of IDEA implementation across the state with a specific focus on the new IEP document.
 - Training evaluations and feedback were overwhelmingly positive.
 - Sessions are offered Regionally, In-District, and as Asynchronous Refresher Modules.

- 576 related services specialists enrolled in specific goal development training sessions.
 - The CSDE offered targeted IEP quality training to educators with Durational Shortage Area Permits (DSAPS), student teachers, general education teachers and administrators.
- Implemented the second full year of Connecticut's comprehensive special education data system (CT-SEDS) providing continued support and quality assurance.
 - Partnered with the RESC Alliance to establish a CT-SEDS help desk to provide additional support to schools and programs. (14,344 Help Desk tickets resolved)
 - Provided 11 Office Hours sessions to district administrators and staff who support the implementation and troubleshooting related to CT-SEDS. Office Hours provide timely information on system updates, procedures and guidance on system functionality.
 - Provided CT-SEDS Focused Trainings and Technical Assistance Sessions offered regionally, in person or virtually.
- Continued to support and add to Connecticut's 14 special education teacher and related services communities of practice (early childhood/Pre-K special education teachers, elementary special education teachers, middle school special education teachers, high school special education teachers, assistive technology specialists, board certified behavior analysts, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech and language pathologists, teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing, school counselors, school nurses, school psychologists, and school social workers).
- Continued support provided to established secondary transition structures: Regional Transition Networks (RTNs) for Secondary Transition personnel, and Connecticut Transition Community of Practice (CoP) for a variety of stakeholders, including parents/families, students/youth, educators, and other agency personnel.

Other Professional Development and Training Efforts

- Expanded partnerships with SERC and the RESC Alliance to provide training, resources, and technical assistance to stakeholders to support students with disabilities.
- Continued partnership with UConn to implement the Aspiring Special Education Leaders initiative to support the development and preparation of 24 potential new Special Education Directors.
- Partnered with the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) to support 42 administrators (50% increase from the previous year) through mentoring, coaching, and program review/improvement.
- Provided the Planning and Placement Team Leadership Institute for two cohorts of Connecticut's special education leaders over eight full-day and four half-day sessions. Three cohorts are planned for the fall 2024, including a newly designed cohort for general education leaders who lead PPT meetings.
- Collaborated with Adult Agencies and key stakeholders to host the 9th Annual Secondary Transition Symposium.

- Supported the expansion of the Transition Youth Advisory Board (YAB) (Students and young adults ages 16 to 26) and the Special Education Youth Advisory Council (SEYAC) (Students in grades 6-12), including student forums, student leadership training, and advisory structures as part of the Student Voice Initiative.
- Provided Structured Literacy Program Training Series and Systematic Teaching of Basic Literacy Skills to school districts featuring several structured literacy approaches.
- Provided SLD/Dyslexia online modules to the public, including educator preparation programs.
- Served all districts in improving attendance rates and decreasing chronic absence through conducting Talk Tuesday Sessions and a monthly Community of Practice.
- Capacity building for LEAs in the needed areas of Assistive Technology (AT) and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) support with expanded subscriptions (through a cohort model) and membership to New England Assistive Technology (NEAT).
- Families and educational teams connected through the interactive easierwiththat.org web site for information and supports that enhance accessibility, increase performance and access to Assistive Technology (AT) content specialists/experts.

Grants Funding and Communications

- The Electronic Grants Management system (eGMS) supported FFY24/FY25 IDEA Part B 611 (ages 3 through 21) of \$138,826,975 and 619 (ages 3-5) of \$4,431,981 subrecipient grant applications for flow through entitlement funds to assist with the excess costs of providing special education and related services for eligible Local Education Agencies (LEAs).
- A statewide meaningful consultation assembly of nonprofit non-public schools and the school districts where the nonprofit non-public schools were located was convened to encourage better communication and increase consistency across the state to support equitable services for parentally placed private school students/children.
- Provided IDEA Part B stipend opportunities related to Transition Support Activities (over \$1.9 Million) as part of support and recognition of recent Transition legislation (PA 23-137) changing the eligibility to the end of the school year of the identified student's 22nd birthday, and a total of \$775,000 for Extended Support for Para-educators for eligible LEAs to access.
- CSDE/BSE was awarded a five-year, \$5.9 million State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) by the U.S. Department of Education beginning in October 2023 through 2028. This grant will help the CSDE improve and expand statewide efforts to strengthen individualized education program (IEP) development and implementation. This funding will enhance educators' capacity to monitor student progress, make data-driven decisions, formulate clear and consistent IEPs, enhance student and family experiences, and design specialized instruction in mathematics. This will be achieved by funding the following activities:

- Providing coaching to enhance educators' ability to assess student performance, establish IEP goals, track progress, and adapt the student's educational program as necessary, resulting in improved educational outcomes.
- Increasing professional learning opportunities to improve specialized instruction in mathematics using individual student data.
- Offering guidance to new teachers in special education roles, including those with initial certificates and temporary licenses.
- Providing training for Birth to Three personnel to create high-quality Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) that incorporate the essential data required for developing IEPs when a student transitions to special education services.

Special Education Dispute Resolution

- Implemented the first full year of the Bureau of Special Education Call Center to enhance responsiveness to parent/community inquiries, to share resources, and assist parents/students in understanding their IDEA rights. The call center is designed with the goal of improved outcomes in communication, student outcomes, and a decreased need for parents to access formal dispute resolution options. As Connecticut's federally funded Parent Center, CPAC was invited to partner with the Bureau of Special Education to support the BSE in working with families and the public. This structure also supports response to credible allegations with referrals to the Bureau of Special Education Differentiated Monitoring System (DMS) team.
- Supervised hearing officers and mediators to support the implementation of the dispute resolution system and the new legislative requirements established during the previous legislative session.
- Hired six new mediators to expand the state's capacity to support mediation sessions.
- Established a new, formal 40-hour training and orientation program for new mediators.
- Processed 210 special education complaints.
- Processed 377 requests for mediation.
- Processed 256 due process hearing requests.
- Supported the State Advisory Council for Special Education, which is a group of 37 individuals (50% parents) who are charged with advising the State Department of Education and legislators on the unmet needs of students with disabilities.
- The Surrogate Parent Program supported over 1,000 students in foster care.

Division of Legal and Governmental Affairs

- Served as general counsel to the State Board of Education, the Commissioner, deputy commissioners, and the Department in general. This includes responding to all requests for advice and information about interpretation of statutes and regulations and advising about the duties and responsibilities of Department staff.

- Acted as liaison to the Office of the Attorney General on pending litigation, including *Sheff v. O'Neill* (racial and economic isolation case), and collaborated on all matters related to *Sheff v. O'Neill* litigation and activities.
- Administered statutorily required functions, including but not limited to, responses to requests under the Freedom of Information Act; management of contract negotiations under the Teacher Negotiations Act, including the recruitment of impartial arbitrators; contract review, including the preparation of contract templates; private school approvals; racial imbalance; and other internally required functions such as forms review.
- Served as support to legislative liaison to the General Assembly, including helping the liaison with legislative proposals, tracking pending legislation, and ensuring that the interests of the Department and State Board of Education are coordinated with the executive branch and effectively communicated to the legislative branch. Provided technical assistance to the Education Committee and others on legislative proposals and assisted legislators and the liaison in responding to constituents on education issues.
- Advised bureaus within the Department on the promulgation of regulations and implements the regulation-making process under the Connecticut Uniform Administrative Procedures Act.
- Investigated requests to revoke, suspend, or place on probation the certification and/or permits of Connecticut teachers, administrators, and coaches and managed the revocation/denial process through hearing and/or action by the State Board of Education.
- Represented the Department and Commissioner in administrative actions, including actions under Section 10-4b of the Connecticut General Statutes.
- Represented the State of Connecticut on the Interstate Compact for Educational Opportunities for Military Children and managed the State's activities pursuant to the Compact, codified at Section 10-15f of the Connecticut General Statutes.
- Provided legal advice and took part in departmental committees with respect to the receipt and distribution of federal funds under the American Rescue Plan and other legislation to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on schools and students.
- Reviewed contracts for whole school management services between charter management organizations and charter schools for legal compliance and advised the State Board of Education on approval of these contracts.
- Participated in the review of charter contracts for charter schools required by Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-66aa(6) and coordinated with the Office of the Attorney General as to approval.
- Advised the BSE on annual school district special education compliance determinations. Corresponded with school districts as appropriate.

Finance and Internal Operations

Bureau of Fiscal Services

- Continued to improve the stability and operation of all agency fiscal processes to ensure cost-saving measures are implemented effectively and result in overall budgetary savings.

- Processed over 25,500 vouchers for payment, including almost 23,000 grant payments in excess of \$4.2 billion.
- Processed almost 500 purchase orders.
- Processed and managed over 130 contracts, including personal service agreements, MOUs, MOAs and RESC Agreements.
- Managed budgets for over \$4.2 billion of expenditures across over 100 state and federal SIDs.
- Developed the Department's budget request for education grant programs.
- Prepared various state and federal financial reports.
- Performed approximately 40 state and federal education grant calculations and verifications.
- Processed just under 2,900 individual grant budgets for approximately 320 subrecipients.
- Continued enhancements of the eGrants system.
- Managed budgets for over \$1.8 billion of federal COVID-19 relief programs pursuant to the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act; the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act; and the American Rescue Plan Act.

Office of Internal Audit

- Advised grantees receiving federal awards of their responsibilities to have audits performed in accordance with Uniform Grant Guidance requirements, reviewed audit reports for compliance with Uniform Grant Guidance provisions, and required grantees to provide corrective action plans to ensure resolution of audit findings that may include questioned costs. The office worked with appropriate program management within CSDE and the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) to determine whether questioned costs were allowable and necessary. When applicable, notified the Bureau of Fiscal Services of the need to recover funds.
- Provided audit services for the Office of Early Childhood, including preparation of the compliance supplement for OEC grants and monitoring of federal and state single audits of OEC's grantees.
- Worked with the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) on issues identified in audits of grantees receiving State financial assistance from the CSDE. This activity included addressing questioned costs and compliance or internal control findings. In addition, the office developed audit compliance supplements for the grants administered by CSDE to be included in the State Single Audit Compliance Supplement for use by accounting firms.
- Provided program management with financial analysis, audit services, and recommendations for the charter school and magnet school programs. These services included participating in site visits for charter school renewals, evaluating the financial and management controls related to fiscal operations, and recommended improvements for each charter school.

- Coordinated work with external certified public accounting firms and the Auditors of Public Accounts (APA) to provide assurance to the Board, departmental managers, and state and federal regulators that resources are being used efficiently, effectively, and in compliance with applicable statutes, regulations, policies, and procedures. This included engaging an external accounting firm to perform a performance audit of the CSDE Bureau of Fiscal Services Grants Unit for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021. The audit services are focusing on the grant calculations and the authorizing statutory language and could include financial, compliance, operational, investigative, or other performance audits.

Office of Strategic Planning and Partnerships

In addition to continuing many of the improvements/achievements made in the previous year, updates for Office of Strategic Planning and Partnerships provides include:

- Managed the Interdistrict Magnet Schools statewide, which served 38,120 students at 88 schools in 17 districts/RESCs at a cost of \$259,904,320.
- Distributed \$3,957,579 to RESC operators in prekindergarten tuition costs to support early education engagement of prekindergarten age students enrolled in an Interdistrict Magnet School.
- Distributed \$21,874,691 in magnet supplemental transportation costs to RESC operators that transported students in the Greater Hartford Region.
- Distributed \$11,531,321 of ARPA and State funds to towns in the Sheff Region, New Britain, and New London for Interdistrict Magnet School tuition costs for enrollment greater than 4% of their resident students.
- Distributed \$500,000 to the State Educational Resource Center for Certified Staff Professional Development.
- Distributed \$2,000,000 to Legacy Foundation of Hartford, Inc to provide wrap around services to participating Open Choice students.
- Distributed \$100,000 to the Society of Human Engagement and Business Alignment (SHEBA) to provide summer youth employment opportunities.
- Provided extracurricular and athletic grant opportunities to 42 Greater Hartford Region magnet schools totaling \$5,715,723.
- Managed the Open Choice programs statewide, which serves 2,987 students at 275 schools in 47 school districts at a cost of \$20,685,000 in enrollment tuition; 26 districts in the Sheff region served 251 students in prekindergarten to kindergarten at a cost of \$1,631,500 in enrollment tuition and transportation cost of \$21,168,675, including summer programs and supplemental transportation costs.
- Provided grant opportunities to 27 Open Choice districts in the Sheff region with funds equaling \$300,000 as part of the Comprehensive School Choice Plan (CCP) to increase acceptance rates and enhance educational opportunities.
- Distributed \$1,694,777 to the RESCs in Administrative costs to operate the Open Choice program statewide.

- Distributed \$920,000 in funding to magnet operators to increase acceptance rates in furtherance of Sheff and CCP-related goals.
- Managed the Interdistrict Cooperative Grant program, which had 3,927 students participate in 19 programs statewide and issued \$1,694,958 in grants funds to provide opportunities to reduce racial, ethnic, and economic isolation.
- Revised the grant application for Open Choice districts to build in attrition and performance metrics as an incentive to retaining students and enrolling students in the upper grades.
- Distributed \$3,732,940 to 27 districts and one RESC in the Sheff region to promote academic and social success and family engagement to participating Open Choice students.
- Distributed \$320,000 to seven Open Choice districts as a bonus for cohorts of five students enrolled in entry grades.
- Distributed \$260,000 in enrollment bonus to five districts that increased their Open Choice enrollment by 20% over the previous year.
- Collaborated to improve education, training, pathways, and opportunities across state borders to benefit Career Technical Education programs in solar installation, energy efficiency and sustainable building materials.
- Partnered with CT Commission of Fire Prevention and Control to create guidance and pathways in public safety for students to earn college credit and certifications in areas such as Emergency Medical Responder (EMR), Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and Firefighter One (FF1).
- Created intra-agency work group to deepen cooperation and synchronize postsecondary project plans.
- Supported workforce development boards' initiatives on workforce and career readiness in manufacturing, computer science and technology, health sciences, and new initiatives.
- Collaborated with a wide range of stakeholders to identify industry-recognized credentials for in-demand jobs to support schools in creating robust pathways for students.

Office of Student Support Services (OSSS)

Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs

- During the summer of 2023, the CSDE Summer Meal Programs served 1,677,197 meals from 585 meals sites.
- For school year 2023-34, the Connecticut General Assembly (CGA) appropriated \$16 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to support “free meals for students” and support households by allowing the provision of (1) breakfast meals at no cost to all students in non-Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) schools participating in the School Breakfast Program (SBP), and (2) lunch meals at no cost for students eligible for reduced-price meals in non-CEP schools that are participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Coined the School Transition Assistance for Breakfast and

Lunch Expenses (STABLE) funds, 119 participating school districts served 7,557,805 meals at no cost to students through the NSLP and SBP.

- The CSDE distributed more than \$11,477,378 million in Supply Chain Assistance Funds to schools for purchasing domestic products for their school meal services.
- The CSDE distributed \$729,194 to schools participating in the National School Lunch Program to reimburse schools for administrative costs associated with the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) benefits.
- Connecticut's Child and Adult Care Food Program's At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program (Supper program) provides nutritious meals and snacks to children through structured after-school programs that are located at sites where at least half of the children in the school attendance area are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals. Meals are provided in conjunction with educational or enrichment activities after the regular school day ends, on weekends and holidays, and during other times of the year when school is in session. During school year 2023-24, Connecticut schools provided 966,492 supper meals and 230,859 snacks at 189 sites.

School Health and Family Services

- **Family Resource Centers:** The CSDE monitors and provides guidance to Connecticut's network of Family Resource Centers (FRCs) on state funding to enable FRCs across the state to help schools with providing supports and services for children and families in their communities.
- **The School-Based Diversion Initiative (SBDI):** To date, SBDI has been implemented in 73 schools across 25 districts, with successful outcomes that include:
 - reducing school-based court referrals by 25%; and
 - increasing referrals to Mobile Crisis services by 24%.

Preliminary outcomes for the 2023-24 school year show:

- 22% decrease in out-of-school suspensions;
- 23% decrease in school-based court referrals; and
- 3% decrease in Mobile Crisis service use.

SBDI is a multiagency collaboration directed toward reducing exclusionary school discipline and school-based arrests and increasing local educational agency capacity to address emotional, developmental, and behavioral needs among students in collaborating schools. To date, SBDI has served 73 schools across 25 districts. During the 2023-24 school year, 14 schools in five districts participated in SBDI, where school staff received professional development, restorative practice training, discipline policy consultation and community coalition building to engage families, law enforcement, and providers. Of the 14 schools, **29% had zero court referrals**, and 50% had two or fewer, for an overall decrease in court referrals of 23% compared to the 2022-23 school year. Mobile Crisis referrals declined slightly (3%), amid statewide declines in school use of Mobile Crisis services. Cumulatively since 2010, participating schools have reduced court referrals by

25%, increased Mobile Crisis referrals by 24%, and decreased out-of-school suspensions by 4%.

Parent Trust Fund: The CSDE incorporated an additional \$330,000 through the Title IV Part A State Activities Fund to CSDE's state allocation of \$267,193 to increase funding for the Parent Trust Fund grant program in a shared effort to support parent leadership in civic engagement. Together these two funding sources increased the number of grantee sites and expanded geographic distribution, thereby increasing the beneficial impact of parent leadership activities in Connecticut. In addition, CSDE recruited and trained parent leaders to review and score Parent Trust Fund grant proposals and developed a collaboration with the federally funded Statewide Parent Engagement Center to provide stipends to parent leaders.

- **Friday CAFÉ:** The CSDE convenes a peer-to-peer learning network for professionals involved in family engagement called Friday CAFÉ (Community and Family Engagement). Friday CAFÉ meets once a month during the school year. In 2023-24, Friday CAFÉ hosted in-person and virtual sessions with overwhelming success. The settings of Friday Cafe are chosen to spark creativity and promote relational vs. transactional communication with families. Friday CAFÉ continues to support Connecticut family-facing professionals by adhering to the national Core Competencies for Family Engagement. Friday CAFÉ supports building professional capacity by providing networking opportunities for staff working in family engagement.
- **Commissioner's Roundtable for Family and Community Engagement in Education:** The roundtable was recognized in a national publication for CSDE's work in co-creating Connecticut's statewide definition and framework for family engagement with families, educators, and community members. The roundtable was also recognized by a national policy institute as a state model for using parent and family voices for change. The group advises the Commissioner of Education about policy and programmatic priorities to improve outcomes for all students and advances the State Board of Education's comprehensive plan for equity and excellence in Connecticut schools. The membership reflects a balanced representation of parents/guardians, educators, community organizations, and students.
- **School Climate and Bullying Prevention:** Provide internal, cross-divisional support, guidance, and training around school climate, culture, system change, implementation supports as needed to support and help LEAs, contracted partners, and community agencies regarding systems to address school climate for improved student outcomes for all, including vulnerable and special needs populations. Maintains website with legislative policies and links to professional learning and resources. Participate and support the SEL Collaborative and legislative requirements of 23-167 to support and provide guidance on mandates and best practices around school climate and bullying prevention and response.
- **Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP):** LEAP is a home visiting and family engagement program established by Governor Ned Lamont and his administration in April 2021. It is in 14 selected districts and designed to help K-12 students and their

families with high levels of absenteeism resulting from COVID-19 pandemic. LEAP's purpose is to improve student attendance through strengthening and expanding trusting relationships between schools and families who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic by focusing resources and supports including home visits, resource referral and connections with community agencies. From July 1, 2022, through April 2023, over 12,000 students across the 14 LEAP districts received more than 25,000 contacts from home visitor staff to encourage and support increased student attendance in school. An external evaluation of LEAP showed eight main qualitative benefits of LEAP, including improved family-school relationships; student attendance; student achievement; feelings of belonging; access to resources for families; expectations of accountability; and greater gratitude and appreciation. Quantitative results showed that one month after the initial home visit, participating students showed a 4-percentage point increase in attendance. Six months after the visit showed a 10-percentage point increase in attendance among prekindergarten to grade 5. Six months after the visit showed a 20-percentage point increase in attendance among grades 6-12.

- **Supports For Pregnant and Parenting Teens (SPPT):** The CSDE granted \$2.4 million of ARP ESSER funding to support 300 school and community-based programs for pregnant and parenting students, including fathers, in the six school districts with the highest dropout and teen pregnancy rates (Hartford, Bridgeport, Waterbury, New Haven, New Britain, and Windham). Goals include improving the health, social, and educational outcomes for expectant and parenting teens; educating teen parents about the services available to support their education (graduation), health, and parenting needs; and promoting healthy child development for the children of expectant and parenting teens.
- **After School Innovation Grant:** The Connecticut State Department of Education 2022-24 ARP ESSER Innovation After School Grant Program, which awarded \$5 million in CSDE's [federal COVID relief](#) funding to 23 grantees delivering high-quality innovative and accessible after school opportunities to children across Connecticut during school year 2023 and 2024.
- **After School Expansion and Enhancement Grant:** Over \$8.7 million has been awarded through Expansion and Enhancement grants to fund 45 after-school programs across Connecticut. Expansion grants have opened new free or affordable after-school program locations. Enhancement grants have allowed existing programs to better meet the increased needs of students and to improve program quality.
- **School and Summer Mental Health Grants:** The Connecticut State Department of Education created four competitive grant programs to tackle the mental health crisis affecting students in our schools and communities. In 2022, the Connecticut General Assembly designated \$28 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding for schools and summer camp programs. The CSDE distributed a total of 140 grants throughout the state, ranging from \$30,000 to \$324,000 over a three-year period.
ARPA – School Mental Health Workers Grant: This grant assists Connecticut local and regional school districts in hiring and retaining more school social workers, school psychologists, school counselors, school nurses, and licensed marriage and family therapists.

- Total grant amount: \$5,000,000
- 20 grants awarded on February 2, 2023
- Award range: \$37,768 to \$120,000 for fiscal year 2023 and 2024
- Grant period: November 2022-June 2025
- \$1,995,624 has been expended through July 2024
- 20 new positions hired

ARPA - School Mental Health Specialist Grant: This grant assists Connecticut local and regional school districts in hiring and retaining more school social workers, school psychologists, trauma specialists, behavior technicians, board certified behavior analysts, school counselors, licensed professional counselors, and licensed marriage and family therapists.

- Total grant amount: \$15,000,000
- 72 Grants awarded on August 1, 2023
- Award range: \$25,150 to \$120,000 for fiscal year 2024 and 2025
- Grant Period: July 2023-June 2026
- \$3,274,448 has been expended through July 2024
- More than 70 new positions hired

ARPA - Summer Mental Health Supports Grant (3 Year): This grant supports the delivery of mental health services for students when school is not in session through Connecticut local and regional school districts, operators of youth camps, and other summer programs.

- Total grant amount: \$4,500,000
- 48 grants awarded on August 1, 2023
- Award range: \$12,000 to \$50,000 for fiscal year 2024 and 2025
- Grant period: July 2023-June 2026
- \$599,321 has been expended through July 2024

ARPA - Summer Mental Health Supports (2 Year): Purpose: To support the delivery of mental health services for students when school is not in session through Connecticut local and regional school districts, operators of youth camps and other summer programs.

- Total grant amount: \$2,000,000
- 36 grants awarded on June 27, 2024
- Award range: \$10,000 to \$50,000 for fiscal year 2025
- Grant period: July 2024-June 2026.

Performance Office

Data Collection

- Successfully collected accurate data about students, educators, districts/schools, and assessments on time as required by federal/state legislation and regulations.
- Delivered professional development, streamlined data collection systems, added new data validations, eliminated/trimmed data collections where possible, and provided documentation/communication to support districts and reduce their burden.
- Collected student-level data from summer enrichments camps to support program evaluation efforts.
- Collected and analyzed home visitation data for the ongoing evaluation and support of the Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP).
- Collected and reported monthly attendance data to provide transparency and inform support initiatives.
- Worked with colleges statewide to collect information on Dual Enrollment programs offered to high school students.
- Provided extensive support for the first year of the statewide special education data system (CT-SEDS) that allows for improved communication and information sharing between schools, districts, and parents/families. Discontinued legacy data collections to reduce district burden.
- Collected student addresses to support agency initiatives including dissemination of nutrition benefits.

Student Assessment System

- Successfully administered the state summative English language arts, mathematics, and science summative assessments.
- Successfully administered the state English Language Proficiency assessment for students identified as English learners/multilingual learners.
- Successfully administered alternate summative assessments in English language arts, mathematics, and science for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- Successfully partnered with the Consortium for the Alternate Assessment of English language proficiency (CAAELP) to administer an alternate assessment for students who are English learners/multilingual learners.
- Successfully implemented and administered the Connecticut SAT School Day to students in grade 11.
- Successfully implemented and administered the Kindergarten Entrance Inventory.
- Continued to expand training and support to districts in the use of optional interim assessment blocks that are aligned to state academic standards and designed to inform classroom instruction.
- Successfully built and implemented a new system to collect individual student results for the Connecticut Physical Fitness Assessment.

- Supported Connecticut educators to participate in the assessment development process through the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) collaborative.
- Resubmitted peer review documents to the U.S. Department of Education for four of Connecticut's state summative assessments.
- Designed, developed, and implemented a new Sensible Assessment Practices webinar series that highlighted district efforts to use interim block assessments and reduce redundant standardized testing.
- Revamped CSDE website to reflect the various purposes of assessments and the importance of sensible assessment practices.

EdSight

Enhanced the [EdSight public](#) and secure data portals with many new dashboards, and interactive reports, and publications.

- [Attendance Dashboard \(ct.gov\)](#)
- [Educator Preparation Provider \(EPP\) Dashboard \(ct.gov\)](#)
- [Grant Expenditures \(ct.gov\)](#)
- [Physical Fitness Assessment \(ct.gov\)](#)
- [Postsecondary Labor and Earnings \(ct.gov\)](#)
- [Mental Health Staff Ratios \(ct.gov\)](#)

Research, Analyses, and Data Sharing

- Continued development of a ground-breaking research collaborative of public and private universities called the [Center for Connecticut Education Research Collaboration](#) to conduct rigorous evaluation studies of state-level investments. Reports include , [Remote Learning Study Executive Summary \(ct.gov\)](#), and [Summer Enrichment Executive Summary \(ct.gov\)](#). More than a dozen more projects are currently underway including a Behavioral Health Pilot, Identifying Effective and Equitable Socio-Emotional Supports for Students and Educators, Equity in Academic Recovery, Teachers and Leaders, Reading Curriculum Implementation, Virtual Reality in Connecticut Schools, High Dosage Tutoring, and Advanced Course Taking Patterns in Connecticut high schools.
- Conducted research/analyses and published reports on [Condition of Education \(ct.gov\)](#), [Encouraging Participation in Rigorous Courses: Rationale, Methods And Results \(ct.gov\)](#), [Report on Student Discipline in Connecticut Public Schools](#), [Racial Imbalance \(ct.gov\)](#), [Restraint and Seclusion \(ct.gov\)](#), [Relation between Smarter Balanced interim and summative performance 2022-23.pdf \(ct.gov\)](#), and [Staffing Shortages](#).

Strategic Initiatives

- Fostered partnerships between K-12 and public/private higher education institutions and established a grant program for districts and institutions of higher education to support the expansion of [dual credit](#) opportunities for students across the state so that students graduate high school with college credits under their belt. Established a partnership with the National Alliance for Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) to provide quality standards and accreditation training and support to IHEs and districts.

Talent Office

Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification

- The Talent Office continues its commitment to increasing the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of the educator workforce and diminishing vacancies in persistent shortage areas. Since 2015-16, the percentage of educators of color in the Connecticut workforce has increased from 8.3% in 2015-16 to 11.7% in 2023-24. The percentage of administrators of color has also increased, over that same period, from 12.24% to 16.2%. The growth in the number of educators of color in the workforce is encouraging with LEAs hiring 4,316 new educators of color since 2016. Efforts to engage broad stakeholder groups to achieve collective impact are ongoing.
- Issued 25,240 educator certificates, responded to tens of thousands of emails corresponding with districts and applicants between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024. Issued over 1,800 temporary authorizations and permits to keep schools running with appropriately authorized educators in front of students.
- Continued to implement various actions to streamline certification processes and procedures designed to increase efficiency while maintaining high-quality service to Connecticut educators while continuing to partially work remotely.
- Engaged in updating and modernizing the Bureau of Certification website and active chatbot. The chatbot helps the public with navigating the website and accessing important certification information.
- Implemented the enhanced reciprocity agreement with 23 states and territories to reduce application-processing time and to encourage interest in transferring certification to Connecticut. From April 28, 2022, to June 30, 2024, 2,231 educators have applied for educator certification through enhanced reciprocity, totaling 3,098 Connecticut certification endorsements issued and 2,962 positions filled in 176 CT public school districts.
- Emergency Authorizations issued during the 2023-24 school year to support LEAs with filling critical teaching positions:
 - Total number of Temporary Emergency Authorizations (ED 2020): 179 with a total of 554 Temporary Emergency Authorizations issued since 2020 (2020 was the first year of implementation for Temporary Emergency Authorization – ED 2020).
 - Total number of Durational Shortage Area Permits (DSAP): 967 with a total of 3,476 DSAPs issued since 2016.
 - Total number of Long-Term Substitute Authorizations (LTS): 570 with a total of 2,458 LTSs issued since 2016.
 - Total number of Resident Educator Certifications (REC): 92 with a total of 535 RECs issued since 2016.

Bureau of Educator Effectiveness

- During the 2023-24 school year, beginning and experienced educators were successful in the TEAM Program: 1,717 beginning teachers successfully completed the TEAM Program; 1,002 experienced teachers successfully completed Initial Support Training for Mentors; and 2,962 experienced teachers updated their mentor eligibility. In addition, 203 experienced educators completed Initial Reviewer Training (to review TEAM Module Reflection Papers), and 207 experienced educators updated their TEAM Reviewer eligibility.
- The CSDE Talent Office collaborated with RESC Alliance leadership, district TEAM facilitators, and TEAM stakeholder groups to support individual educators and local district staff adjusting to the shift in TEAM allocations, including ensuring that all districts had equitable access to mandated trainings. The office developed and implemented a mechanism to successfully distribute \$807,866.40 of TEAM allocations to RESCs and LEAs to support the implementation of TEAM at the local level, including shifting trainings to a virtual environment and providing flexibility for continued success. Successful induction and support are proven to lead to higher retention of early career educators. Connecticut's efforts around induction and support were validated in a [study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education](#).
- The State Board of Education approved the recommendation from the [Educator Evaluation and Support \(EES\) Council](#), codified in the Connecticut General Statutes as the Performance Evaluation and Advisory Council (PEAC), to adopt the new CT Guidelines 2023 on June 14, 2023. Local Education Agencies had the 2023-24 school year to plan for implementation of the CT Guidelines 2023 beginning in the 2024-25 school year. The new model focuses on cyclical processes of continuous improvement, professional learning and action research, and reflective practice, feedback, and support. The Talent Office is planning trainings and resources to ensure successful implementation.
- The Talent Office, in collaboration with colleagues from multiple CSDE Bureaus, is updating the CSDE Resource Guide for New Administrators, a comprehensive resource for administrators that includes CSDE resources on multiple topics.
- Recognized the 2024 CT Teacher of the Year, the 2024 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year, and the 2024 Milken Educator Awards.
- Partnered with the Connecticut Department of Labor to hold a Paraeducator Career Fair to address the paraeducator shortage in local school districts. The fair was held on Wednesday, July 28, 2023, at the Naugatuck Valley Community College. More than 20 local school districts attended with more than 40 registrants. Similar Paraeducator Career Fairs will be held at various locations throughout the state this year.
- Partnered with the RESC Alliance to train local district staff on "Creating a District Plan to Increase the Racial, Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity of Your Educator Workforce: A Guidebook for Hiring and Selection." The trainers provided direct support and guidance to districts in schools across Connecticut to increase the racial, ethnic, and linguistic

diversity of their educator workforce. Almost 30 districts took part in the Increasing Educator Diversity training.

- The Increasing Educator Diversity (IED) Policy Oversight Council (formerly Minority Teacher Recruitment Policy Oversight Council) held four quarterly meetings in 2023-24 to strategize on ways to increase the diversity of Connecticut's educator workforce by attracting middle and high school students, encouraging students of color at higher education institutions to enroll in EPPs, and recruiting educators from other states to teach in Connecticut, and more.
- Partnered with local education preparation programs to expand the NextGen Educators program, which gives undergraduate educator candidates the opportunity to work in school districts to gain valuable experience and provide districts with immediate access to new talent to ease pressures on current educators and address staffing shortages. NextGen Educators has grown to include the NextGen apprenticeship program at Central Connecticut State University. During the past year, this registered apprenticeship program was piloted in Waterbury Public Schools. The CT Teacher Residency Program (TRP) is the second registered apprenticeship program, which has been piloted in New Britain Public Schools.
- Partnered with Educators Rising Program and local school districts to expand the program, launched statewide in 2020, that introduces middle and high school students to careers in education. Research shows that pre-college engagement allows districts to invest in current students of color while also cultivating future educators. The EdRising program began in Connecticut three years ago with just one school district and fewer than 50 students and ended the 2023-24 school year with 23 districts and more than 500 students participating.
- Implemented the G4EPP (Grants for Educator Preparation Programs) to 18 educator preparation programs, which provided \$1 million in funding to offset licensure fees for students currently enrolled.
- The CSDE Talent Office is partnering with the Boston University Wheelock Educational Policy Center to develop and implement a research plan, with the goal of understanding the goals and implementation of Connecticut's TEAM Program, as well as the national context of teacher induction and mentorship, and to make recommendations based on state and national research and stakeholder feedback.
- The Talent Office has already facilitated four virtual focus groups representing multiple stakeholder groups, with three more focus groups planned for late August.

Legislative Initiatives

- Received legislative support for the CSDE to establish a registered Connecticut Teacher Apprenticeship program that enables students enrolled in an educator preparation program, residency program or alternate route to certification program to gain classroom teaching experience while working toward becoming full-time, certified teachers upon successful completion of such programs under the educator apprenticeship initiative. The Department received certification from the Labor Department for the educator apprenticeship initiative for purposes of using federal grants and funding. CSDE

partnered with two school districts – New Britain and Waterbury – to pilot the teacher apprenticeship program. With legislative funding, school districts were offered minigrants of \$10,000 to start a middle or high school program or \$5,000 to expand an existing program in the district. A total of \$500,000 in grants was awarded.

- Received legislative support to expand the Aspiring Educators Diversity Scholarship program (formerly the Minority Teacher Recruitment Scholarship) to allow high school students graduating from an Alliance School District instead of a priority school district the opportunity to apply for a scholarship under the program while enrolled in high school and prior to graduation if such student will be enrolled in a teacher preparation program during the following fall semester at a four-year institution of higher education. The grants are a maximum of \$10,000 per year. A total of 89 students were awarded the Aspiring Educator Diversity Scholarships in the first year of the program.
- Received legislative approval to issue an adjunct professor permit to any person who is a nontenured and part-time instructor employed by a public or independent institution of higher education in the state to teach in a local district high school beginning July 1, 2023.
- Received legislative approval to change the name of the Minority Teacher Recruitment Council to the Increasing Educator Diversity Council.
- Received legislative support to implement the Alliance District Increasing Educator Diversity Grant, which allocated 10% set aside funding to support teacher residency programs for hiring and retaining educators of color.

Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) Program

The following TEAM Program documents have been updated: Mentor Guide, Administrator Guide, Program Guide, and Beginning Teacher Guide. The CSDE Talent Office is expanding its partnership with TEACH CT to include a dedicated focus on supporting veterans in developing a pathway to becoming a certified educator.

Data on TEAM Program completers still in the workforce:

- TEAM Completers that are still in the workforce (includes all TEAM completers since 2010): 74.9%.
- TEAM completers from the 2023-24 (1,453) school year that are still in the workforce: 91.2% (1-year attrition rate 8.8%)
- TEAM completers from the 2022-23 (1,708) school year that are still in the workforce: 86.5% (2-year attrition rate 13.5%)

Leader and Educator Evaluation and Support

The CSDE Talent Office has led the work of the Educator Evaluation and Support (EES) Council, codified in Conn. Gen. Statutes Sec. 10-151b as the Performance Evaluation and Advisory Council, to develop new [CT Educator and Leader Evaluation Support Guidelines 2023](#) and the [CT Leader and Educator Evaluation and Support Plans 2024](#), both adopted by the Connecticut State Board of Education. The CSDE Talent Office has partnered with the RESC Alliance and the Connecticut Association of Schools to develop and facilitate trainings and

resources to support these trainings, to ensure successful implementation of the CT Guidelines 2023 beginning with the 2024-25 school year, as required by revised legislation (Conn. Gen. Statutes Sec. 10-151b) from the 2024 legislative session. These trainings include Guidance for Professional Development and Evaluation Committees, Training for Evaluators of Educators, and Training for Evaluators of Leaders. The EES Council continues to meet at least quarterly to provide feedback and input about the need for supports and resources to support the ongoing implementation of the CT Guidelines 2023. All local education agencies and CSDE-approved private special education programs were required to submit their evaluation and support plan, aligned with the CT Guidelines 2023, to the CSDE for review and approval by August 1, 2024.

Increasing Educator Diversity Plans

In accordance with [Public Act \(PA\) 23-167 §10](#) mandating the creation and submission of an increasing educator diversity plan by each local and regional board of education to the Commissioner of Education for review and approval, to date 140 of approximately 200 local education authorities have submitted increasing educator diversity (IED) plans. Submitting LEAs receive a letter from the Commissioner along with an IED Plan Review and Feedback Tool containing reviewer feedback and a designation of either approved or conditionally approved. LEAs with conditionally approved IED plans must submit a revised plan by October 1, 2024, for review and response by December 2, 2024.

To support LEAs in their compliance with PA 23-167 §10, technical assistance was provided in the form of six recorded webinars with accompanying slide decks; additional [resources for IED plan creation and implementation](#) include an [IED Plan Frequently Asked Questions](#) document and a fillable IED Plan Template for plan creation and submission. LEAs were also urged to review two other resources created by the CSDE and its partners: [Creating a District Plan to Increase the Racial, Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity of Your Educator Workforce: A Guidebook for Hiring and Selection](#), and [Creating an Action Plan and Sustaining Efforts to Increase Educator Diversity: A Toolkit for District & School Leaders](#).

Additionally, in June 2024, the CSDE and contracted partner WestEd staffed 30-minute district office hours that provided an opportunity for individual LEAs to discuss their plan feedback and receive technical assistance to inform and support their plan revision process.

The WestEd contract to support the agency's implementation of PA 23-167 §10 and increase agency capacity to provide technical assistance to LEAs ended on June 30, 2024. Importantly, the Region 2 Comprehensive Center's (R2CC) federally funded five-year contract that began in September 2019 will end on September 30, 2024. The R2CC has been an indispensable partner in Connecticut's five-year IED efforts to coach districts and Regional Education Service Centers on IED plan resources, and provide research-based, data-informed best practices to increase educator diversity. Critical next steps to leverage the willingness demonstrated by 140 LEAs that complied with PA 23-167 §10 will require additional agency capacity in terms of personnel and funding, to provide ongoing technical assistance in support of LEA IED plan implementation and progress monitoring to achieve plan goals to recruit, hire and sustain racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse educators in ways that support their retention.

Office of Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities

- Fully staffed the office with one bureau chief, three associate education consultants, and an administrative assistant.
- Provided input to the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success on their draft Family History Screener, to be developed or adopted per PA 21-168.
- Established a Technical Assistance Partnership with the National Center for Improving Literacy (NCIL) to support the development of educator structured literacy and dyslexia competencies by certification type and level, per PA 21-168. This work is being carried out under the guidance of, and in collaboration with, a Scientific Research and Practice Advisory (SRPA) that includes national experts, local faculty and school administrators, and intra-agency liaisons. Since March 2023, the SRPA has met five times and its supplemental working groups have met an additional five times to review, refine, and approve competencies. In July 2024, the SRPA convened for an in-person meeting to complete a set of structured literacy and dyslexia competencies for elementary educators, special educators, and remedial reading and remedial language arts specialists. The ODRD is collaborating with the Office of Student Support Services: Family Engagement to explore how to meaningfully incorporate accountability to the National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement's (NAFSCE) pre-service educator preparation initiative, and is collaborating with intra-agency partners with expertise in serving the needs of multilingual learners and their families to develop a core foundational competency dedicated to multilingual learners. The SRPA will meet on August 21, 2024, to review and consider the NAFSCE and other proposals under development by the ODRD. The target date for completing the educator structured literacy and dyslexia competencies for elementary educators, special educators, and remedial reading/remedial language arts specialists for submission to the Commissioner for review and approval is October 18, 2024.
 - Created a professional learning and development offerings calendar proposal for IDEA funding for submission to the Bureau of Special Education. This calendar proposal was developed in collaboration with the State Education Resource Center (SERC) and the Regional Education Service Center (RESC) Alliance.
- reading disabilities.
- Provided consultation supports to 231 individuals between September 2023-June 2024, with 67% of these consultations provided to parents, 15% provided to regional and local boards of education, 15% provided to CPAC's Call Center, and the remaining 3% provided to a mix of other education stakeholders.
- Supported regional and local boards of education through presentations and training delivered, for example, to the RESC Alliance Literacy Council, the RESC Alliance Speech and Language and School Psychology Communities of Practice, ConnCASE, Trumbull Public Schools, Regional School District #1, the Connecticut Association for Schools, and the Connecticut Association of Independent Schools.
- Established a Dyslexia Awareness Campaign (DAC) launching October 2024. This campaign is being led by a committee made up of members representing parents,

students, local and regional boards of education, and the Connecticut State Department of Education. The purpose of the DAC is to promote a shared understanding of dyslexia, including risk indicators and best practices for identification, with the goal of promoting equitable identification practices.

Turnaround Office

The CSDE Turnaround Office oversees the work of Connecticut's 36 Alliance Districts, Commissioner's Network Program, Priority School Districts and Summer School, Title I Part A School Improvement Grants, and the Charter School Program.

Priority School Districts

The Priority School Districts for the 2023-24 school year were Ansonia, Bridgeport, Danbury, Derby, East Hartford, Hartford, Manchester, Meriden, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Norwalk, Norwich, Stamford, Waterbury, and Windham.

Title I Part A School Improvement Grants

The Turnaround Office manages and distributes the state's allocation of Title I Part A School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds, providing technical support to 35 SIG schools, which have received allocations for **comprehensive** support under ESSA. In 2023-24, these schools included:

- Bridgeport: Barnum School, Columbus School, Luis Munoz Marin School, Cesar Batalla School, Roosevelt School, Geraldine Claytor Magnet Academy, Wilbur Cross School, Paul Laurence Dunbar School, Bassick High School, Warren Harding High School
- Hartford: SAND School, M.L. King, Jr. Middle School, Burns Latino Studies Academy, Milner Middle School, Wish Museum School, Weaver High School
- New Britain: Chamberlain Elementary School, Pulaski Middle School, Slade Middle School, Smalley Elementary School
- New Haven: Augusta Lewis Troup School, Wexler/Grant Community School, Roberto Clemente Leadership Academy for Global Awareness, High School in the Community
- New London: Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School
- Norwich: Kelly STEAM Magnet Middle School, Teachers' Memorial Global Studies Magnet Middle School
- Waterbury: Michael F. Wallace Middle School, West Side Middle School, Wilby High School, North End Middle School
- Great Oaks Charter: Great Oaks Charter School
- Windham: Windham Middle School

In 2023-24, the Turnaround Office also managed and monitored ESSA-SIG awards to 14 schools for targeted support under ESSA:

- Bridgeport: Bridgeport Military Academy
- Derby: Derby Middle School

- Hartford: Montessori Magnet at Batchelder, Classical Magnet School, Sport and Medical Sciences Academy
- New Britain: Northend Elementary School
- New Haven: James Hillhouse High School
- New London: New London High School
- Portland: Gildersleeve School
- Waterbury: Crosby High School, John F. Kennedy High School
- Connecticut Technical Education and Career System: A.I. Prince Technical High School, Eli Whitney Technical High School, E.C. Goodwin Technical High School

More improvements and achievements:

- Leadership teams from Commissioner’s Network schools took part in professional learning sessions (NetStat) twice a year to share best practices, network, and problem solve with colleagues from other schools. The fall session engaged school teams in a review of school categorization in the Next Generation Accountability system, state supports per ESSA Plan for Turnaround and Focus schools, and federal requirements for compliance. Teams then engaged in defining resource equity through the ten dimensions of education equity as identified by the Alliance for Resource Equity and exploring resources to support work at the school level. The spring session was dedicated to Learning Walks at 5 Network schools. The host school provided an overview of their school and the main components of their Turnaround Plan. The Learning Walk then engaged school leaders in a non-evaluative observation process to look at specific changes in practice that support district and school initiatives and implementation of the Turnaround Plan. Leadership teams from Commissioner’s Network Planning Year schools took part in the Commissioner’s Network Leadership Institute, which provides planned professional learning for leaders embarking on the school improvement process and developing an application to be approved by the State Board of Education.
- During the 2023-24 school year, the Turnaround Office engaged districts in a Resource Allocation Review process to ensure equitable allocation of resources across all district schools.

Information Reported as Required by State Statute

The State Department of Education (SDE) is an affirmative action employer and is committed to the policies and procedures that promote equal employment opportunity. Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity have been established as immediate and necessary agency objectives. The ultimate purposes of SDE's Affirmative Action Program are to ensure equal opportunity at SDE; avoid discrimination—either intentional or inadvertent; develop a workforce that is representative of all segments of the state's population; and improve the operation of SDE's services. SDE strictly prohibits discrimination, including sexual harassment and harassment based on all of the following legally protected classes: race; color; religious creed; age; sex; pregnancy; sexual orientation; gender identity or expression; marital status; national origin; ancestry; intellectual disability; genetic information; learning disability; physical disability (including, but not limited to, blindness); mental disability (past/present history thereof); status as a victim of domestic violence; military or veteran status; or criminal record.

In addition, the DAS Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Unit helps ensure that the agency follows federal, state, and local affirmative action and equal opportunity laws, including serving as the Americans with Disabilities Act coordinator. The EEO Unit also ensures compliance with the agency's non-discrimination and anti-harassment policies, which are available on the Department's website, as well as compiles the agency's affirmative action plan. SDE's 2024 Affirmative Action Plan is currently under review by the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) and has not been formally approved yet.

During the last Affirmative Action Plan reporting period, the Department hired 45 employees: 3 White Males, 28 White Females, 2 Black Males, 5 Black Females, 6 Hispanic Females, and 1 Decline to State Race Female. Of the 45 hires, 10 individuals met hiring goals: 9 White Females and 1 Black Male.