



Annual Report of the Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology

Calendar Year 2024

Submitted in Accordance with CGS § 61a, Sec. 4d-80(c)(8)

*Hartford, Connecticut
January 3, 2025*

Contents

2024 Year in Review.....	3
2024 Impact.....	4
Background.....	5
Membership.....	5
Leadership.....	7
Advisory Councils	7
Meetings.....	9
State Educational Technology Plan.....	11
Technology-Enabled Learning.....	12
Digital Equity	14
Sustainability	17
Data Privacy and Security	19
Communications and Outreach	22
Connecticut State Library	26
researchIT CT.....	26
findIT CT.....	28
requestIT CT	28
eGO and the Palace Project App	28

2024 Year in Review

The Commission embarked on a new five-year [State Educational Technology Plan](#). Its themes and initiatives intentionally align with the [National Education Technology Plan](#) and the Commission's [State Digital Equity Plan](#).

The Commission continues to define and advocate for digital skill development among learners of all ages. It advances Connecticut's Open Education Resources (OER) movement through www.GoOpenCT.org, the Commission's OER portal with more than 9,000 free learning materials. Collaboration with the Connecticut State Department of Education, Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, and other partners enables, accelerates, and scales learning through the site.

See [Technology-Enabled Learning](#), page 12

Ensuring the sustainability of technology investments remains an educational priority, especially with the end of pandemic relief funding this year. The Commission's research and resource development have helped decision-makers understand the benefits of digital learning tools, and how critical technology has become to education. The Commission continues to provide resources to help schools leverage innovative learning tools while ensuring student data privacy.

See [Technology Sustainability](#), page 16

Perhaps no single trend has disrupted learning more in 2024 than the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) tools. Rather than a separate initiative within Connecticut's state educational technology plan, AI remains a theme and consideration in virtually all digital learning realms, teaching methods, privacy and security, school climate, operations, leadership, and decision-making.

See AI Guidance at www.CT.gov/AlforSchools

The Commission's Digital Equity Program will complement all other plan initiatives, civic engagement, workforce development, and other outcomes. In late 2024, the Commission received approval to proceed with "Everybody Connected," the State Digital Equity Plan. Federal seed funding in 2025 will advance technology access across a suite of interconnected digital equity programs.

See [Digital Equity](#), page 14

2024 Impact

26,000+
Visitors

Nearly 27,000 people used the Commission's open education resources site, [GoOpenCT.org](https://goopenct.org), to access free, high-quality digital learning materials.

→ See [Open Education Resources](#), page 12

1.3M
Residents

Seed funding to implement the State Digital Equity Plan will build capacity to address the needs of ~1.3M (36%) residents who do not meet Connecticut's Digital Literacy Benchmark.

→ See [State Digital Equity](#), page 14

\$6M+
Savings

Since its 2017 launch, the Commission's Educational Software Hub has saved districts an estimated 50,000 staff hours to comply with Connecticut's data privacy law.

→ See [Data Privacy and Security](#), page 19

\$40M+
Savings

The Connecticut State Library provides researchIT, the digital library free to residents. This service delivered \$42M in digital content subscriptions at a cost to the state of \$1.5M.

→ See [researchIT CT](#), page 25

Background

The Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology (“the Commission”) was established in 2000 by [Public Act 00-187](#) to serve as the State’s principal educational technology policy advisor. This document summarizes the Commission’s progress in attaining its [statewide technology goals](#) during the past calendar year, in accordance with its governing statute ([CGS § 4d-80](#)). The report informs and provides recommendations to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education, appropriations, and the budgets of state agencies; the State Board of Education; and the Board of Governors of Higher Education. Readers accessing this report online may use the embedded links to view minutes, watch recorded meetings, and review publications.

Membership

Name and Position	Representing or Appointed By
Mark Raymond, CIO, Commission Chair	Department of Administrative Services
Haleh Ghaemolsabahi, Interim Associate Vice President and Acting CIO	University of Connecticut
Douglas Casey, Executive Director	Commission for Educational Technology
Colleen Bailie, Director, West Haven Public Library	CT Library Association
Nick Caruso, Senior Staff Associate	CT Association of Boards of Education
Burt Cohen, Staff Attorney, State Broadband Policy and Program Coordinator	Office of Consumer Counsel
Charles Dumais, Executive Director, Cooperative Educational Services	Office of the Governor
Vacant	Minority Leader of the House
John Elsesser, Town Manager, Town of Coventry	CT Council of Small Towns
Tony Salvatore, Co-President, Connecticut Federation of School Administrators	Speaker of the House
Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Performance Officer	CT State Department of Education

Name and Position	Representing or Appointed By
Michelle Wyskiel, Fourth Grade Teacher, West Haven Public Schools	American Federation of Teachers – Connecticut
Barbara Johnson, Instructional Technology Coordinator, Colchester Public Schools	CT Educators Computer Association
Carol Quinn Toomey, Managing Director – Connecticut Public Service, Accenture	President Pro Tem of the Senate
Maura Provencher, Vice President of Research and Administration	CT Conference of Independent Colleges
Deborah Schander, State Librarian	CT State Library
Josh Smith, Superintendent, Region 15 Public Schools	CT Association of Public School Superintendents
Bart Stanco, Vice President, Gartner	Office of the Governor
Ryan Aylesworth, Town Manager, Town of Mansfield	CT Conference of Municipalities
Toni Boucher, First Selectman, Town of Wilton	Minority Leader of the Senate
Chinma Uche, Math and Computer Science Teacher, CREC Academy of Aerospace and Engineering	Connecticut Education Association
Grace Suh, Chief of Staff, Office of Workforce Strategy	Department of Economic and Community Development
Holly Williams, Section Director, Education and Workforce Development	Office of Policy and Management
Scott Zak, Senior Director of Learning Technologies	Connecticut State Colleges and Universities

In 2024, three changes to membership occurred. First, the Connecticut Senate President Pro Tempore appointed Carol Quinn Toomey to the Commission. Ms. Toomey is the Managing Director of Accenture’s Connecticut Public Service practice. She brings more than 32 years of experience and insight to the Commission through her professional and volunteer efforts, including service on the Executive Board of the Girl Scouts of Connecticut.



In November, the University of Connecticut (UConn) Chief Information Officer (CIO) and Vice Provost assumed the role of CIO of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities. The Commission welcomed UConn's new appointee, Haleh Ghaemolsabahi, the Interim Associate Vice President and Acting CIO.

Finally, Tom Dillon stepped down from his position as the appointed member of the Minority Leader of the House. The Commission acknowledges Mr. Dillon's significant contributions as a member and Chair of the Infrastructure Advisory Council for more than ten years.

Leadership

Mark Raymond, the State's Chief Information Officer (CIO), continues his service as Chair of the Commission. Douglas Casey serves as the Commission's Executive Director and is responsible for planning and activities as described on the Websites of the Connecticut General Assembly ([Chapter 61a](#)) and Commission (www.CT.gov/CTEdTech).

Advisory Councils

The Commission benefits from the insights of more than 30 Advisory Council members. Ten Commission members, alternates, and other subject matter experts from across the state, serve on these Advisory Councils, representing a broad diversity of constituents to help guide the Commission's priorities and programs. In October, To expand the planning and coordination capacity of these groups, Commission leadership and Advisory Chairs Nick Caruso and Tom Dillon brought on board a co-chair to each group. In October, Region 15 Superintendent Josh Smith stepped forward to serve as co-chair of the Digital Learning Advisory Council, and Manchester Public Schools IT Director Kerri Kearney assumed the role of co-chair on the Infrastructure Advisory Council. Advisory members are as follows:

Digital Learning Advisory Council

- Nick Caruso (Co-Chair)* – Senior Staff Associate for Field Service, Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE)
- Josh Smith (Co-Chair)* – Superintendent, Region 15 Public Schools
- Katie Bauer – Director of Library Research Services & Collections, Trinity College
- Jonathan Costa –Executive Director, EdAdvance

- Larry Covino — Director, Bristol Adult Education
- Andy DePalma — Director of Technology, EASTCONN
- Josh Elliott — Director of Educational Technology, Fairfield University Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions
- Shaune Gilbert — Data Manager, ReadyCT
- Barbara Johnson* — Instructional Technology Coordinator, Colchester Public Schools
- Karen Kaplan — Retired (former Technology Director, Hamden Public Schools)
- Dawn La Valle* — Director, Division of Library Development, CT State Library
- Tom Lonsdale — Director of Educational Technology, Goodwin Magnet Schools
- Laura McCaffrey — Director of School Support and Academic Services, Office of Catholic Schools, Hartford Archdiocese
- James Mindek — Director of Technology & Operations, Connecticut Technical High School System (CTECS)
- Karen Skudlarek — IT Accessibility Coordinator, University of Connecticut
- Jim Spafford — Coordinator of Business Services and Partnerships, Manchester Adult Education
- Chinma Uche* — Computer Science Teacher, CREC Academy of Aerospace and Engineering
- Scott Zak* — Senior Director of Learning Technologies, CT State Colleges and Universities

Infrastructure Advisory Council

- Tom Dillon (Co-Chair)* [Departed 2024]
- Kerri Kearney (Co-Chair) — IT Director, Manchester Public Schools
- Colleen Bailie* — Library Director, West Haven Public Library
- Joe Campbell — Educational Technology Consultant, CTECS
- George Claffey — CIO, Central Connecticut State University
- Burt Cohen* — Staff Attorney and State Broadband Policy and Program Coordinator, Office of Consumer Counsel
- Ryan Kocsondy — Director, Connecticut Education Network (CEN)
- Sam Nanayakkara — Campus Technology Administrative Lead, CT State Community College - Tunxis
- Sabina Sitaru — Associate Director - Innovation Product Manager, Pratt & Whitney
- Rick Widlansky — System Manager, Libraries Online (LION)

*Also served as a Commission member or alternate.

Meetings

The dates and topics of the Commission and Advisory Council meetings appear below. Minutes and materials are available from the Commission's website, www.CT.gov/EdTech.

Commission Meetings

Monday, March 4	
• 2023 Annual Report • New State Education Technology Plan	• CT Legislative Session
 Meeting Materials	
Monday, June 3	
• Digital Equity Plan • Guidance on Artificial Intelligence	• School Technology Sustainability
 Meeting Materials	 Video Archive
Monday, September 9	
• Digital Equity Capacity Program • AI Data Privacy	• Student Personal Technology Use
 Meeting Materials	 Video Archive
Monday, December 2	
• Digital Citizenship Curriculum • School Devices and Staffing	• Digital Equity Plan
 Meeting Materials	 Video Archive

Advisory Council Meetings

Digital Learning Advisory Council

Tuesday, January 30

- National Education Technology Plan
- AI Policy

 [Meeting Minutes](#)

Monday, April 22

- Commission AI Guidance

 [Meeting Minutes](#)

Tuesday, October 15

- Model Digital Literacy Curriculum
- School AI Pilot Program

 [Meeting Minutes](#)

Infrastructure Advisory Council

Friday, January 26

- Technology Sustainability
- Technology Planning

 [Meeting Minutes](#)

Monday, April 22

- Sustainability of School Technology

 [Meeting Minutes](#)

Tuesday, October 22

- Baseline Measures of School Technology
- Digital Equity

 [Meeting Minutes](#)

Joint Council Meeting

Monday, July 15

- Implementation of AI Policy
- Technology Cost Avoidance

 [Meeting Minutes](#)

State Educational Technology Plan

At the December 2023 meeting, the Commission members voted unanimously to adopt the new 2024 – 2028 Connecticut State Education Technology Plan. The Commission’s Vision Statement continues to guide its strategic plans:

***THAT EVERY LEARNER AND EDUCATOR IN CONNECTICUT BENEFITS FROM THE FULL
POTENTIAL OF TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT PERSONALIZED AND IMPACTFUL
TEACHING, LEARNING, RESEARCH, AND ADVANCEMENT.***

To support that vision, the following Mission Statement defines the strategies and activities of the Commission:

**DESIGN, STEWARD, AND PROMOTE POLICY, PROGRAMS, INSIGHTS, AND RESOURCES THAT SUPPORT
THE EFFECTIVE USE OF TECHNOLOGY FOR ALL LEARNERS AND EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN
CONNECTICUT.**

The 2024 – 28 plan exists as a downloadable, [print-friendly PDF](#) as well as an [interactive Web page](#). The plan’s goals fall under five categories:

- 1) Technology-Enabled Learning: The tools and processes to accelerate, scale, and personalize learning
- 2) Digital Equity: Affordable devices, connections, training, support, and services to provide learning and advancement opportunities
- 3) Competencies: The skills and mindsets that students, educators, and leaders need to use technology effectively in education
- 4) Sustainability: The programs and policies necessary to ensure that institutions can address the technology-related costs of education
- 5) Data Privacy and Security: The infrastructure, tools, and behaviors necessary to protect against the misuse of personal and educational data and information

Within each category are initiatives that continue the work of the prior state education technology plan and map to the National Education Technology Plan ([Tech.Ed.gov/NETP](https://tech.ed.gov/NETP)) as well as the Commission’s Digital Equity Plan ([www.CT.gov/DigitalEquity](https://www.ct.gov/DigitalEquity)). The following sections provide updates on initiatives the Commission undertook in 2024, by category.

Technology-Enabled Learning

Open Education Resources

Goals 1.3 – 1.5 of the State Education Technology Plan address the expansion of efforts around open education resources (OER). The Commission pledged Connecticut as a “Go Open” state in 2019 (see www.CT.gov/OER), a commitment to ensure high-quality instructional materials are available to all learners. This work supports the Commission’s statutory charge of “providing access for all public schools, public libraries, and libraries at institutions of higher education to a core set of online, full-text resources” [[CGS § 4d-80\(c\)\(2\)\(C\)](#)].

The Commission launched the State OER portal, www.GoOpenCT.org, in 2021 and has seen strong adoption from both the higher education and K – 12 communities. That site allows all educators in the state to search for standards-aligned textbooks, courses, lesson plans, and other instructional materials by grade band, subject, and a host of other criteria. The portal also offers a rich set of authoring and collaboration tools for school teachers, professors, and other educators. The updates below speak to the following OER-related goals for 2024:

Goals

- Goal 1.3: Encourage the use of OER as well as low or no-cost commercial materials at all grade levels to reduce financial barriers to high-quality instructional and learning materials.
- Goal 1.4: Host the GoOpenCT.org OER repository to allow schools, universities, libraries, and other institutions the ability to co-create and use OER.
- Goal 1.5: Pursue resources to enable pilot or statewide training on the effective use of OER.

Outcomes and Impact

The Commission undertook efforts in 2024 that resulted in a number of positive outcomes in support of Goals 1.3 – 1.5:

- Encouraging Adoption: Director Casey continues to present to educators and leadership groups on OER practices and the benefits of leveraging the Go Open CT platform. At the March 2024



Connecticut OER Summit, he provided an overview of the site to university leaders as a means of reducing textbook and other costs that students incur. He supports the ongoing partnership with the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) in its promotion of the site as well.

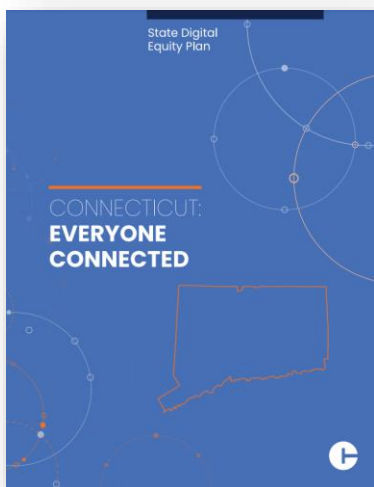
- **GoOpenCT Hosting:** The Commission will continue to host and manage the site, available to all educators in Connecticut since 2021. Nearly 1,700 registered members have access to the 9,324 courses, units, textbooks, and other learning materials on Go Open CT. Those members can use, remix, or repurpose the materials for their instructional needs. Group and other collaboration features enable educators to work across classrooms, departments, and institutions to co-create high-quality, standards-aligned instructional materials.
- **Go Open CT Engagement:** The number of registered users (members) as well as the total items published on Go Open CT grew in 2024. Top-level data for the site is as follows:
 - Total Visitors: 26,676
 - New Resources: 82
 - Average Daily Visitors: 536

Visitors and registered members accessed the CSDE's model curriculum, especially its Social Studies courseware, more than any other set of materials on the site. The top 10 learning resources utilized in 2024, by number of views, are as follows:

Resource	Views
Connecticut Model African American/Black and Puerto Rican/Latino Course of Studies	2,719
Connecticut Model Financial Literacy for Grades 9-12	1,666
Connecticut Model Social Studies for Grade 8	988
Connecticut Model Social Studies for Grade 5	867
Connecticut Model Social Studies for Grade 6	762
Connecticut Model Social Studies for Grade 7	718
Connecticut Model Social Studies for Grade 0 Kindergarten	669
Connecticut Model Social Studies for Grade 4	666
Lesson 2.1: The Tainos, Aztecs, Incas, and the Mayans	631

- Partnership with OER Coordinating Council: This group was created through Public Act 19-117 to develop cost-saving approaches that leverage OER for college students and administer an OER grant program. To date, investments have resulted in more than a 5X return on investment. Learn more by reading the [2024 OER Coordinating Council Report](#).
- Plans for 2025: The Commission and CSDE leadership are pursuing opportunities in the next year to expand the use of OER methods. Efforts will include the continued publication of the CSDE's model curriculum (see GoOpenCT.org/hubs/CTStateCurriculum) for the K – 12 community and as an accelerator for developing learning materials for adult education programs.

Digital Equity



The Commission stewards the federal [Digital Equity Program](#) through funding from the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. In early 2024, the Commission completed the state's Digital Equity Plan, "Connecticut: Everyone Connected." More than 400 residents provided input on the plan, reflecting the open and collaborative approach to its development. The federal agency overseeing the Digital Equity Program, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), accepted the plan with no changes.

To support the implementation of Everyone Connected, the Commission applied for funding in May through the federal Digital Equity Capacity Program. The application developed by Lauren Thompson, the Commission's Digital Equity Program Manager, includes elements that address the following State Educational Technology goals.

Goals

- Goal 2.1: Expand access to affordable, high-speed broadband and devices.

- Goal 2.2: Identify, promote, and provide investments into digital navigation and other training to support resident learning and support needs.
- Goal 2.3: Provide best practices and resources that assist agencies and providers to serve residents online.

Outcomes and Impact

The Commission has received written approval of its Capacity Program application from both the NTIA as well as the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). The Capacity Program includes three waves of awards. The first has a period of performance from 2024 through 2029 and totals \$9.1 million, Connecticut's formula-based allotment. Two additional waves of funding exist for fiscal years 2026 and 2027, pending Congressional appropriations.

Implementing the state's Digital Equity Plan with fidelity — ensuring all 3.6 million residents have access to affordable broadband, computers, training, and technical support to thrive in today's digital world — would require far more than the \$9.1 million award. For this reason, the Commission prioritized investments through this first, and potentially final, wave of funding through the following initiatives.

- **Digital Navigator Pilots:** To address the most significant aspect of the digital divide in Connecticut — skills and support — the Commission will provide residents with the direct training they need to take advantage of digital education, healthcare, and workforce resources. Using the approach of “digital navigation,” this program will take place at two locations where the skills gap is the greatest. Designed to take place on a rapid timeline, the pilots will serve both to address the needs of some of the state's most needy residents and to collect input rapidly that will inform the design of the Commission's competitive grant program.
- **Competitive Grant Program:** To spur new programming and expand existing resources across the state, the Commission will create a competitive digital equity program. Local, trusted organizations such as libraries, neighborhood revitalization zones, and places of faith will apply for funds to train their neighbors on the effective use of technology. These programs will directly support the adoption of affordable Internet service and computers to help residents become more self-reliant in their use of technology.

- Digital Equity Collaboratives: In partnership with the Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs) – which collectively serve every city and town in Connecticut – the Commission will establish communities of practice to support digital inclusion efforts. Each RESC will host meetings for educational and community-based organizations to learn how to advance digital skill development through current programming and new initiatives. These groups will also foster an ongoing community of practice and provide key practitioner input on the design of statewide resources, including an open curriculum that adult education programs can use to skill-up residents.
- Curriculum: To accelerate the availability of high-quality training for residents in need of digital skill development, the Commission will create freely available curriculum. Non-profit and other community-based organizations will be able to use these digital and downloadable guides to create standalone digital navigation programs and bolster digital skill development in existing educational programs.
- Asset Map: Through this effort, residents will be able to find local resources to help them get online, get a computer, and enroll in training programs that strengthen their digital skills. In partnership with the United Way, the Commission will leverage the 211 hotline and Web site (www.211CT.org) to get connected to the technology resources and support they need.

In addition to the research and planning behind “Everyone Connected” and the design of Connecticut’s first wave of Capacity initiatives, the Commission advanced Connecticut’s digital equity work through other efforts. Director Casey and Manager Thompson foster the burgeoning “digital inclusion” network of organizations invested in advancing resident skills and technology access. Through presentations and partnerships with other state agencies, the team has strengthened relationships that will help accelerate the adoption of the above programs.

The Commission has also provided technical assistance to organizations that have applied for funding through the Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program. Awards for that federal program should take place in early 2025 and complement the strategic goals of the state’s digital equity program.

Sustainability

The breadth and depth of technology use in schools, libraries, and universities increase every year. The shift to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated those trends. Given the vast footprint of technology in the form of student and educator devices, institutional and home broadband connections, and educational and operational systems, the Commission has prioritized efforts to ensure the sustainability of digital learning resources. These needs are compounded by the need for institutions to obligate technology-related pandemic relief funds by the end of 2024. The following goals have guided the Commission's work on this topic.

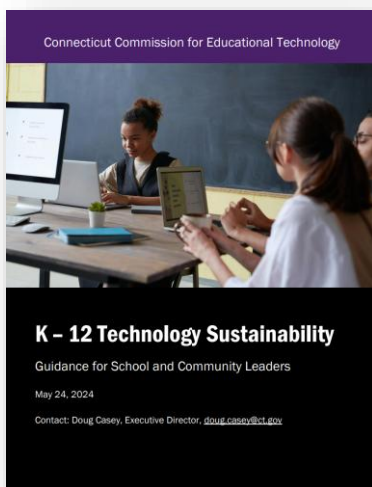
Goals

- Goal 4.1: Assess technology increases and costs within schools and districts.
- Goal 4.2: Provide guidance on technology investment best practices and efficiencies, including the use of federal and state programs.

Outcomes and Impact

In 2024, the Commission took several steps to gauge technology increases and risks to the financial sustainability of these investments. During the [July](#) and [October](#) Advisory Council meetings, members of those groups suggested using data collected through the [Education Financial System](#) (EFS) administered through the CSDE. Early explorations into the district-submitted data were not conclusive in terms of identifying technology investments consistent across schools. The Commission will continue to partner with the CSDE and schools to understand why data may vary from district to district.

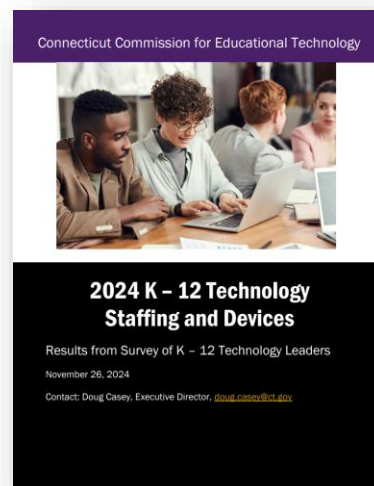
In addition to exploring baseline measures for school technology (Goal 4.1), the Commission developed guidance for school and community leaders. The report, ["K – 12 Technology Sustainability"](#) (May 2024) provides historical data on school technology use, especially pre- and post-pandemic. Intended for decision-makers



such as district leaders and board members, the report also defines the vast, often-hidden, and essential aspects of technology in the section, [“Anatomy of a K – 12 School Technology Budget.”](#) Many parents and other stakeholders have seen firsthand their children’s use of computers and software for homework and remote instruction. To make these resources possible, and to enable the operation of schools, the “technology footprint” also includes staff computers, instructional and enterprise software, operational software, classroom technology hardware, phone systems, printers, equipment to secure buildings,

cybersecurity, back office, training, and — of course — dedicated professional staff. The report concludes with specific recommendations for schools to appreciate cost savings through federal and state programs.

The Commission provided additional insights into technology investments through a statewide survey. The November 2024 report, [“2024 K – 12 Technology Staffing and Devices,”](#) provide summaries of district responses to questions regarding computers and personnel to support them. Data from 62 school districts educating nearly 40 percent of Connecticut’s public-school students show steady levels of student “1:1” (one computer per student) programs across districts. Historical data from 2017, 2020 (pre-pandemic), 2021, and 2024 shows a sharp increase in device provision at the elementary level. Investments in 1:1 programs remain high, from 89 percent at the lower elementary level to 98 percent at the high school level.



Despite these increasing computing levels — serving as a strong proxy for overall technology growth across the elements mentioned in the “Anatomy of a K – 12 School Technology Budget” — staff to support them remains relatively low. The average school technology professional supports 670 computers, in addition to their other responsibilities. Adding all computers across responding districts, divided by

the number of staff among all districts, moves the ration of support staff to devices to 1:1,008.

The Commission will pursue additional opportunities to address the sustainability of technology in schools, libraries, and universities in 2025. This work will likely include continued data collection and reporting, sharing of best practices, and socialization of the topic. Education stakeholders can help ensure the sustainability of these crucial learning resources by understanding the broader set of dependencies that digital tools address, and the value they bring to administrators, teachers, and students.

Data Privacy and Security

The Commission's work has long supported a balance between the innovations that educational technology can afford, on the one hand, and protecting student data and information on the other. The passage of Connecticut's student data privacy law in 2016 (see [Connecticut General Statutes §§ 10-234aa – dd](#)) placed specific compliance requirements on school districts and software developers to abide by best practices in student data collection and sharing. The Commission's research, advocacy, and programming have improved efficiencies and knowledge sharing in this area. The introduction of artificial intelligence (AI) tools and elements into educational software in 2023 – 24 has both opened possibilities for the future of teaching, learning, and research and heightened concerns about privacy. This context serves as a backdrop for the Commission's goals concerning data privacy and security.

Goals

- Goal 5.1: Provide continued guidance and best practices for institutions to protect and steward student and other sensitive data and avoid bias through the use of instructional, operational, and decision-support systems. Includes best practices in the transparency of machine learning processes and data sets in operational and decision-support systems.
- Goal 5.3: Encourage review and potential revisions to Connecticut data privacy legislation based on the Data Privacy Task Force recommendations.

Outcomes and Impact

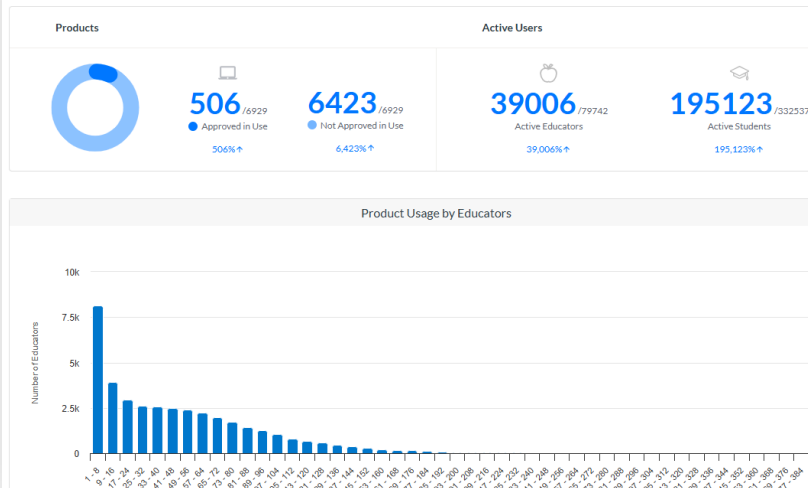
The Commission provides districts and educational providers free of charge the statewide library of compliant software (ctedtech.app.learnplatform.com). Open to any registered visitor, the site enables members to search for products designed for educational use, read and write peer reviews on their efficacy, and view their pledge of compliance with Connecticut's data privacy law. In 2022, the Commission collaborated with other state agencies to [provide clarification](#) on what constitutes compliance with Connecticut law, further reducing administrative burdens on schools and companies doing business in our state.

Use of the LearnPlatform library provides an estimated \$1M annually in cost avoidance in the form of time savings for staff. Not calculated in that total are legal and paralegal hourly costs avoided through the streamlining of compliance and negotiation of terms.

In light of the rapid expansion of AI features into educational software — and the potential use of student data through these tools — the Commission conducted an outreach campaign to software providers in 2024. Director Casey worked directly with the LearnPlatform team to email more than 900 companies that had signed the Connecticut Student Data Privacy Pledge to renew their commitment to its terms. As of this writing, nearly a third have recommitted to the terms of that Pledge, committing to the protection of student data even as they integrated AI-powered features into their products.

Inventory Dashboard

Discover the full scope of your organization's edtech use, identify trends and start on your path to a more effective edtech ecosystem.



In addition to the efficiencies that the LearnPlatform solution provides, nearly half of all districts take advantage of the free inventory tool. Through an anonymous collection of usage data, schools gain insights on the educational software their teachers and students use.

Usage data in 2024 from 86 districts, 39,006 educators, and 195,123 students (38 percent of all public-school students in Connecticut) shows a total of 6,423 software products in use, among which 506 are listed as compliant with Connecticut student data privacy laws. The total educational software “footprint” is likely much larger than this total, and these numbers serve as reminders of the need to ensure the protection of student information as schools continue to leverage technology for personalized learning.

Communications and Outreach

To raise awareness of its work and gather feedback from a diverse set of constituents, the Commission leverages several online media channels, including the Commission's website, Twitter account, and e-mail listserv. Director Casey continues to present at state and national events, produce research and publications, submit news to educational media outlets, and participate actively in several [professional and advocacy groups](#). The following sections provide highlights of these communication and outreach efforts.

Online Media

- **Web:** The Commission's Web site, www.CT.gov/EdTech, continues to support the educational community. In 2024, the site underwent an upgrade to expand its compatibility with mobile devices. Director Casey added expanded details around the 2024 – 29 State Educational Technology Plan.
- **X (Formerly Twitter):** The Commission's account, @CTEdTech, serves as a means of communicating important research and policy updates to 642 followers.
- **Statewide Listserv:** Since 2016 the Commission has hosted a statewide e-mail listserv to share research, best practices, and announcements with the K – 12 education community. Since that time, the list has grown to include 480 members, including school technology leaders from nearly every Connecticut public school district and many private schools. Topics shared include funding and legislative updates, best practices in digital learning approaches, and time-sensitive security alerts. Technology leaders indicate that the service provides an easy and powerful means of quickly communicating with and sharing best practices among members of the Connecticut educational technology community.



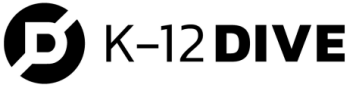
Presentations

Director Casey shared the Commission's work statewide, nationally, and internationally in 2024, including a UNESCO session with national education leaders from Singapore, Spain, and the United Arab Emirates. The following list summarizes these presentations.

Organizer – Audience	Topic(s)	Date
Sacred Heart University	Technology in K – 12 Education	Jan 6
Office of the Governor	Digital Equity Plan Public Comment	Jan 8
Rep. Rosa DeLauro	Town Hall on Expanding Internet Access	Jan 30
CT State Colleges and Universities (CSCU)	CIO Roundtable (Digital Equity)	Jan 31
UNESCO	Role of Technology in Education Data	Feb 9
CT Administrative Services	DAS Town Hall (Digital Equity)	Feb 14
EdAdvance	K – 12 Digital Council	Feb 14
CSCU	Connecticut OER Summit	Mar 8
CAPSS	Technology Council Updates	Mar 12
NTIA	Internet Access and the Justice-Involved	Apr 25
CT Conference of Municipalities	Technology Sustainability	Jul 17
Government Technology	CT Digital Summit: Digital Equity Keynote	Sep 5
ECSU	Digital Equity (University Hour)	Oct 16
SETDA	Federal Efforts to Close the Digital Divide	Oct 28
SETDA	Digital Equity Alignment: Making K-12 a Priority for Your State's DE Efforts	Oct 28
SETDA	Ed Tech Insights for Efficacy and Privacy	Oct 28
NTIA	Digital Equity Capacity Press Conference	Oct 30
CABE	K – 12 Technology Overview	Dec 3
C.E.S.	Reimagining the Library Learning Commons	Dec 11

Media Coverage

Outreach campaigns and publishing opportunities promoted the Commission's work and resulted in coverage across several media channels this year. The following list includes stories, interviews, and publications highlighting the Commission's impact.

Outlet – Publisher	Title	Date
	CT releases 'digital equity plan' draft, seeks feedback	Jan 3
	CT is 'well wired' but thousands still have no internet. The state has a \$17 million plan to change that	Jan 3
	CT Congress members call for more internet access funding	Jan 8
	'Everyone Connected.' Gov. Lamont rolls out 5-year plan to expand internet access	Jan 8
	How Connecticut is working to close the 'digital divide' for state residents	Jan 10
	Everyone Connected: Connecticut's Digital Equity Plan	Jan 12
	Connecticut Bill Asks State to Choose AI Tool for Schools	Apr 15
	The Affordable Connectivity Program is winding down. What that means for CT.	May 27
	Connecticut's Digital Equity Work Supports Regional Efforts	Jul 2
	ECSU Gets A Look At State's New Digital Equity Plan	Oct 17
	How to navigate the rising cost of cyber insurance for schools	Oct 30

Professional and Advocacy Groups

To garner support for Commission initiatives, deepen understanding of constituent needs, and identify funding opportunities, Director Casey actively participates in the following state and national groups:

- Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) Technology Committee: Provide monthly Commission updates to state superintendents
- Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) Digital Equity Steering Committee: Engage as part of the core planning team to identify and share best practices and develop guidance to state leaders on ensuring equitable access to digital learning through broadband, devices, and skill development
- ISTE Standards Advisory: Provide input on the revision of international technology proficiency standards for students, teachers, and leaders
- State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA) Board of Directors: Served as 2021 – 22 Chairman of the Board of national affinity group that develops and advocates best practices in digital learning
- State Interagency Council for Ending the Achievement Gap: Represent the Department of Administrative Services in statewide efforts to align programs and resources that enable all learners to succeed
- United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Broadband Commission – Data for Learning Working Group: Establish international guidance and standards on the effective and ethical use of data in education

Connecticut State Library

researchIT CT

As part of the Connecticut Education Network and administered by the Connecticut State Library (CSL), researchIT CT



(<https://researchitct.org/>) provides all

Connecticut students, faculty, and residents with online access to essential library and information resources. The researchIT CT service offers a core level of information resources, including secured access to licensed databases, and is available to every resident in Connecticut. These resources support efforts by the Division of Library Development (DLD) around the seven literacies: Digital Literacy, Health Literacy, Financial Literacy, Legal Literacy, Civic/Social Literacy, Basic Literacy, and Early Literacy. In addition, college students and faculty have access to specialized research information. The researchIT CT service also includes a collection of downloadable eAudios and eBooks (eGO CT) for access on mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets. This service is now available to academic, K – 12, and public libraries.

The CSL continues to provide easy database access to patrons in 2024. In response to the pandemic and the remote learning it presented, The DLD worked with database vendors to temporarily provide remote access to researchIT databases without requiring library card authentication. EBSCO created a list of temporary links that can be used by patrons and students who don't have a library card. This means of access remains in effect and it also serves as a backup to sites that have trouble accessing the new user interface rolled out in 2023 and 2024 from EBSCO.

Additionally, The CSL utilized federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds to extend access to EBSCO's *Learning Express Workforce Solutions including Job and Career Accelerator* for public libraries in CT to run from October 1, 2023 through June 30, 2025.

Goals of researchIT CT are as follows:

- Ensure universal access to a core level of library and information resources for every resident of Connecticut through their public library, school, and college and from home
- Provide necessary information resources to every school in Connecticut so that all students are prepared to function in an information society
- Provide information resources to the increasing number of students taking advantage of online courses at Connecticut's colleges and universities
- Support the information needs of all Connecticut residents

Budget

In the spring of 2019, the DLD coordinated a Request for Proposal (RFP) process for the databases that comprise researchIT CT. After three years of stable pricing, the resulting proposals included some price increases that pushed the cost to maintain all of the current offerings beyond the DLD budget. This fiscal year saw an increase in the budget for the Connecticut Digital Library to accommodate cost increases and inflation. The current agreement with EBSCO and ProQuest keeps the subscription in effect until June 30, 2025.

Annual Savings / Cost Avoidance (FY 2024)

The value of all researchIT CT databases to local communities exceeds \$43 million in one year, while the cost to provide those databases is \$1.3 million. This represents a cost avoidance of nearly \$42 million. For more details, see the following publication:

[Cost Benefit: What researchIT CT Saves the State's Libraries and Municipalities](#)

Usage (FY 2024)

For researchIT CT's licensed full-text databases, there were a total of 2,201,805 page views (a measure of when search results are viewed), with 471,400 or 21% from public library patrons; 154,885 or 7% from school library patrons; and 1,575,520 or 72% from academic library patrons. In addition, public libraries viewed CLS collections in Ancestry.com 9,254,044 times in FY 2024.

findIT CT

findIT CT, Connecticut's statewide library catalog, contains the holdings of 333 libraries in Connecticut, with more libraries able to be added on an ongoing basis. As of January 1, 2024, findIT CT contained more than 21 million records and 19 million items. In FY2024 it had more than 860,000 visits and 6.5 million page views.



requestIT CT

requestIT CT, the statewide interlibrary loan service in findIT CT, began in September 2017, and as of July 2024, 131 libraries in Connecticut participated in the service. Librarians can easily place requests on behalf of patrons, update requests, and track the status of requests as they make their way through the interlibrary loan process. Participating libraries filled 13,647 interlibrary loan requests during FY2024 using the fulfillment system.



eGO and the Palace Project App

eGO CT is a project through which the CSL acquires digital content such as eBooks and eAudio and makes it available to users statewide primarily through an app. Library users can download the app and use it to easily discover, check out, and read or listen to digital content, such as eBooks and eAudio. The app is designed to display content that is available in the statewide CLS collection as well as content from local library collections.

Launched to the public in March 2022, The Palace Project App makes it possible for Connecticut public library users to access eBook titles from their individual public library, from a parent regional library system, from the Palace Open Bookshelf, Palace Marketplace, and Axis 360 collection, all in one intuitive, easy-to-use mobile app for iOS or Android. As of July 2024, there are 157 public libraries and 17 academic sites

that are live in the app and sharing it with their patrons. The service includes downloadable audiobooks as well as eBooks.

The eGO Community Share program was launched in 2022. This project is aimed at K – 12 schools as part of the eGO CT program. The goal is to allow for easier access for students to the CSL eBook collection. The project is being accomplished with LSTA funds in partnership with Baker and Taylor. As of July 2024, there are 161 school sites participating.

Content

As of July 2024, the eAudio and eBook collection includes the following:

- Baker & Taylor Axis 360: 6,688 items
- Palace Marketplace & Biblioboard: 9,112 items
- Palace Open Bookshelf: 23,000 eBooks

Usage (FY 2022)

Because the digital collections are available through a self-service model, CSL staff have no role in the circulation process and are responsible only for collection development and licensing. Usage statistics show that there was a total of 26,316 checkouts as part of the eGO CT program, and 19,435 were from the CSL collection.