

Connecticut State Department of Education



At a Glance

DIANNA R. WENTZELL, Commissioner

Established - 1838

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

Central office - 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106

Number of employees - 2,042

Recurring operating expenses - \$3,013,852,813

Capital outlay - \$14,969,690

Value of real property - \$1,077,142,717

Number of full-time secondary students - 10,805

Number of part-time adult-student registrations - 2,130

Organizational structure - See attached 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; and the Connecticut Departments of Children and Families, Developmental Services, and Corrections.

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.

A report on [education-related legislation](#) enacted in the 2015 regular and special sessions of the Connecticut General Assembly is available on the Department of Education’s website. This comprehensive summary of public acts applicable to school districts was disseminated to all superintendents throughout the state and includes information regarding the creation of various taskforces, changes in curriculum and professional development requirements, modifications to certification statutes, and various technical changes to other education statutes.

Public Service

The Department of Education serves educators and the public through the work of the following offices: the Academic Office, the Performance Office, the Office of Student Supports and Organizational Effectiveness, the Talent Office, the Finance and Internal Operations Office, the Division of Legal and Governmental Affairs, and the Turnaround Office.

Academic Office

The Academic Office improves college and career readiness for all Connecticut students by supporting local education agencies and schools to effectively implement rigorous standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment in all subject areas. It engages all stakeholders with differentiated support and guidance for the stewardship of human, fiscal, and intellectual resources toward this mission.

Key services of the Academic Office include supporting district-based curriculum development, providing resources to include frameworks with standards and grade-level

expectations, templates for curriculum, and sample lessons and assessments. State-provided professional development, supplementary resources, with staff available to assist.

The following structures within the Academic Office provide additional services:

Standards Implementation Bureau

- Support district efforts to implement and develop curriculum for the Connecticut Core Standards.
- Builds external capacity through comprehensive, standards-based systems for professional learning.
- Invests in communications systems to create coherence among strategic agency initiatives framed around the Academic Office.

Curriculum and Instruction Bureau

- Supports 21st century learning through programs such as Connecticut Virtual High School.
- Develops standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessments in the areas of Science, Social Studies, and the Arts.
- Promotes the personalization of learning for all students, including gifted and talented and English language learners.

Bureau of Special Education

- Provides leadership to ensure that students with disabilities receive a free appropriate education that prepares them for college or training, employment, independent living, and community participation.
- Ensures compliance with special education laws and regulations.

Performance Office

The Performance Office improves student outcomes through the use of data.

Key services of the Performance Office include developing performance metrics and establishing targets that enable a suite of differentiated supports and interventions for schools and districts, including data evaluating civics, arts, and fitness; analyzing and reporting data trends and insights to support informed decision-making and action by schools, districts, the Department, and other stakeholders; and collecting, aggregating, and delivering accurate data in a highly efficient, secure, timely, and transparent manner.

The following structures within the Performance Office provide additional services:

Bureau of Data Collection, Research, and Evaluation

- Analyzes and reports longitudinal data trends and insights.
- Provides actionable data to support informed decision-making and planning at the state and local levels.
- Collects, aggregates, and delivers accurate data in a highly efficient, secure, timely, and transparent manner.
- Uses data from the Next Generation Accountability System to support informed decision-making and planning at the state and local levels.

Bureau of Assessment

- Monitors and supports effective implementation of the Connecticut summative assessment system, including the Smarter Balanced assessment and the SAT.
- Develops alternative assessments to support students' individual learning needs.

The Performance Office also provides a variety of reports and analyses with actionable data on Connecticut's schools. These include the Condition of Education report; IDEA Annual Performance Reports (special education accountability); data and research bulletins; the EdSight data portal; submissions to the federal government for its reporting; and hundreds of special data requests and analyses.

Office of Student Supports and Organizational Effectiveness

The Office of Student Supports and Organizational Effectiveness improves the educational success of each and every learner by providing comprehensive supports to students and families and ensures high-quality programs and services.

Key services of the office include improving student outcomes for each and every learner through effective delivery and implementation of family and student support programs and services.

The following structures within the Office of Student Supports and Organizational Effectiveness provide additional services:

Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services, and Adult Education

- Promotes health, fitness, and wellness; coordinates nutrition and health services.
- Promotes positive school environments through physical, social-emotional, and mental health supports, and bullying prevention efforts.
- Supports school, family, community engagement and youth development programs.

- Supports the delivery of quality adult education programming.

Bureau of Choice Programs

- Provides educational choices designed to promote increased student achievement and reduce racial, ethnic, and economic isolation.
- Supports magnets, Open Choice, and Interdistrict Cooperative Grant Programs.
- Supports charter schools (in collaboration with the Turnaround Office).

Regional School Choice and Sheff

- Promotes regional school choice programs and activities.
- Ensures equity and access by meeting the requirements of the court settlement in *Sheff v. O'Neill*.

Talent Office

The Talent Office collaborates with stakeholders and educational entities to develop and deploy talent management and human capital development strategies to districts and schools statewide so that the most effective educators are in every school and classroom, and all students are prepared for college, career, and life.

Key services of the Talent Office include developing effective teachers and leaders through high-quality, job-embedded professional learning and ongoing support of continuous improvement for all educators by: developing and implementing rigorous program and outcome standards, which all Connecticut teacher- and leader-preparation programs must meet; improving early career teacher effectiveness through support and mentorship for all participants of the Teacher Education and Mentoring Program (TEAM); promoting the continuous improvement of teachers and leaders through Connecticut's educator evaluation and support system and quality professional learning; increasing the diversity of Connecticut's educator workforce; and recognizing excellent educators.

The following structures within the Talent Office provide additional services:

Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification

- Oversees educator certification.
- Explores opportunities to streamline certification processes.
- Coordinates educator assessment (e.g., Praxis Core, Praxis II:, Foundations of Reading, Connecticut Administrator Test)

Bureau of Educator Effectiveness

- Coordinates Connecticut's new and continuing program review and approval process for the 23 educator preparation programs including Alternate Routes to Certification (ARCs).
- Convenes the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC), composed of several stakeholder groups including American Federation of Teachers-Connecticut (AFT), Board of Regents (BOR), CT Association of Boards of Education (CABE), Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS), CT Association of Public School Superintendents Inc. (CAPSS), Connecticut Education Association (CEA), Connecticut Federation of School Administrators (CFSA), and the Regional Educational Service Center (RESC) Alliance to continue to develop and refine policy related to Connecticut's system for educator evaluation.
- Collaborates with stakeholders, including monthly implementation meetings with CAS and the RESC Alliance to coordinate and advance statewide implementation of Connecticut's educator evaluation and support system through comprehensive training and technical assistance.
- Creates and implements policy and processes for monitoring educator evaluation and support in all districts.
- Coordinates the Connecticut Teacher Advisory Council and the Connecticut Administrator Advisory Council.
- Coordinates the statewide implementation of the Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) program in collaboration with the six RESCs.
- Supports districts in the development and implementation of a standards-based, high-quality system for professional learning.
- Elevates the teaching profession through recognition of Connecticut educators (Connecticut State Teacher of the Year, Milken Award, Connecticut Paraprofessional of the Year, and Celebrating Excellence in Education).
- Collaborates with the Connecticut Center for School Change, CABE, CAPSS, CAS, Neag, and New Leaders to design and implement LEAD Connecticut, a statewide program consisting of the Turnaround Principal Program, executive coaching for principals and superintendents, and the LEAD Connecticut UCAPP Residency Program.
- Collaborates with various stakeholders including the RESC Alliance Minority Teacher Recruitment initiative, deans of Connecticut educator preparation programs, and the NAACP to recruit and retain minority teachers in Connecticut school districts.

- Coordinates Connecticut Paraprofessional Advisory Council to support the development of paraprofessionals' roles and responsibilities.

Finance and Internal Operations Office

The Finance and Internal Operations Office coordinates the effective delivery of financial, human, and technology resource 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; managing the calculation and disbursement annually of nearly \$3 billion to support state and local education initiatives, including education reform initiatives, early childhood, adult education, general and special education, and choice programming; developing and delivering high-quality technology applications, infrastructure solutions, and data management systems to meet CSDE and LEA operational needs and reduce LEA administrative burden; and identifying and implementing policy, process, and organizational changes that align CSDE staffing and hiring with the implementation of CSDE's strategic priorities.

The following structures within the Finance and Internal Operations Office provide additional services:

Bureau of Fiscal Services

- Budget process and implementation
- Asset management
- Purchasing, contract, and travel administration
- Accounting
- Payroll, cash management
- Operational services

Bureau of Grants Management

- Federal and state grants
- Analyze budget proposals and legislation for impact on CSDE grant related-functions
- Local expenditure data for calculation and reporting purposes
- Prepayment grant system

Bureau of Information Technology

- Application development
- Data and data systems management
- High-quality and timely support services
- Facility and remote infrastructure solutions
- Educational technology
- Hardware and software investments

Bureau of Human Resources

- Staff recruitment, hiring, and communication of employee benefits
- Coordination with DAS and OPM regarding personnel matters
- Performance evaluation processes
- Training and staff development

Turnaround Office

The Turnaround Office works to improve student outcomes in Connecticut's lowest-performing schools and districts through support, technical assistance, direct intervention, and the creation of high-quality new schools.

Key services provided by the Turnaround Office include investing in and transforming Connecticut's lowest-performing schools and districts through various programs, including the Commissioner's Network and Alliance Districts; building capacity and infrastructure in our high-needs districts and fostering collaboration across districts; expanding educational options by opening high-quality new schools; piloting innovative strategies and scaling promising practices, serving as the catalyst for statewide reform.

The following structures within the Turnaround Office provide additional services:

School and District Support

- Provide ongoing technical assistance and monitoring through differentiated and targeted fieldwork.
- Support district transformation through the Alliance District program.
- Support school turnaround through the Commissioner's Network.
- Bullying prevention and school climate work.

Internal Operations and Accountability

- Provide Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI) trainings that are responsive to school and district needs.
- Provide ongoing grants management.
- Manage the federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) program and ensure waiver compliance.
- Promote accountability and data-driven improvement.

Charter Schools

- Create and implement systems and processes for charter monitoring and accountability.
- Support new schools.

Through differentiated, tiered supports, and interventions, the Turnaround Office helps low-performing schools achieve sustained high-performance and increased autonomy. Intra-departmental efforts in support of turning around low performing schools are at the center of the Department of Education's work in this area. The Academic, Student Supports, Talent, and Finance and Internal Operations offices all work together to support the Turnaround Office's work.

Structural changes in the Turnaround Office will further benefit recipients of the office's services. The planned creation of case management teams will provide school and district capacity-building, offering targeted and differentiated support. The office will also collaborate with the Office of Student Supports and Organizational Effectiveness on School Governance Councils.

Connecticut Technical High School System

The Connecticut Technical High School System provides a unique and rigorous high school learning environment that: (1) ensures both student academic success, and trade/technology mastery and instills a zest for lifelong learning; (2) prepares students for post-secondary education, including apprenticeships, and immediate productive employment; and (3) responds to employers' and industries' current and emerging and changing global workforce needs and expectations through business/school partnerships.

Connecticut State Board of Education's Five-Year Comprehensive Plan 2016-21: Ensuring Equity and Excellence for All Connecticut Students

In July 2016, the Connecticut State Board of Education approved its five-year comprehensive plan, *Ensuring Equity and Excellence for All Connecticut Students*, an action that paves the way

for deeper, more targeted support of local public school districts toward the goal of providing an outstanding education for every child in the state.

The State Board of Education is charged with developing and releasing a comprehensive master plan for education in Connecticut every five years. This blueprint sets forth the state's vision for education and provides a direction for policy considerations and administrative actions for the next five years that are designed to ensure that every student succeeds within that culture of high expectations.

The process for developing the plan involved engagement of a wide range of stakeholders, including members of the public and 46 focus groups. The board received feedback and more than 15,000 comments from over 6,700 respondents who took an online survey that sought to gain insight and perspective about the aspirations, challenges, and concerns pertaining to education in Connecticut.

The feedback received during this process helped inform and provide direction in the development of this five-year comprehensive plan. A common theme emerged among respondents that all partners need to work together to find a way to serve all students. This became the focus of the board's comprehensive plan — ensuring equity and excellence for all students. Out of that focus came four promises to Connecticut students:

1. Ensure their nonacademic needs are met so they are happy, healthy, and ready to learn.
2. Supporting their school and district in staying on target with learning goals.
3. Giving them access to great teachers and school leaders.
4. Making sure they learn what they need to know to succeed in college career and life.

The State Board of Education is committed to ensuring that equitable access and opportunities are at the forefront of our collaborative inquiry and collective responsibility. We are challenging and holding ourselves accountable to secure an excellent education for the current and future generations of students in Connecticut through the intentional focus on the areas highlighted in this plan.

To read the plan, visit the State Department of Education's website at www.sde.ct.gov/.

Improvements/Achievements 2015-2016

Academic Office

- English Language Proficiency Standards: Adoption of the CT English Language Proficiency (CELP) standards and development and implementation of training modules for general education teachers and English as a Second Language (ESL) service providers.

- Connecticut Statewide Career and Technical Education: The results of the 2016 Connecticut Statewide Career and Technical Education (CTE) Assessment reported 13,415 concentrators (students tested), an increase of 14.4 percent in the number of concentrators from 2015. There were 132 Connecticut secondary schools participating in the statewide assessment in 2016.
- ReadConn Initiative: ReadConn officially launched on September 20, 2016. Aligned to the teacher reading survey objectives, this interactive training will support the implementation of the Connecticut Core Standards in English Language Arts: Foundational Skills and will be repeated annually through the 2019-20 school year.
- Arts Standards Curriculum Framework: Completed thorough stakeholder engagement process reviewing the new National Core Arts Standards and the 1998 Arts Standards Curriculum Framework culminating with a draft Position Statement on the Implementation for the Connecticut Arts Standards scheduled to be presented to the Board of Education for adoption in October.

Bureau of Special Education

- State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR): State and district-level monitoring of 17 indicators focused on both compliance issues and the performance of students with disabilities.
- State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP): This plan (Indicator 17 of the SPP/APR) focuses on early literacy instruction (K-3) with the anticipated outcome of increasing the reading performance of all third grade students with disabilities statewide.
- Specific Learning Disabilities/Dyslexia (SLD/Dyslexia): Development of training/professional learning opportunities focusing on the identification of SLD/Dyslexia and structured literacy instruction; a menu of universal screening tools to identify students at risk for difficulty learning to read, including students with SLD/Dyslexia or other reading-based disabilities; and corresponding resource materials such as the Assessment Resource Guide for SLD/Dyslexia and an FAQ document.
- State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG): Supports district and state-level implementation of Connecticut's Scientific Research Based Intervention (SRBI) framework.
- School Climate Transformation Grant (SCTG): Promotes positive school environments by supporting district- and state-level implementation of the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework, an evidence-based multi-tiered behavioral framework (MTBF).

Performance Office

The mission of the Performance Office is to improve student outcomes through the use of data. To that end, the office has five goals. Accomplishments during 2015-16 under each goal are listed below:

- Goal: Collect accurate data in a highly efficient, secure, and timely manner.
 - Successfully collected accurate data in a timely manner as required by federal/state legislation and regulations.
 - Delivered professional development, streamlined data collection systems, eliminated data collections where possible, and provided documentation/communication to support districts and reduce their burden.
 - Recognized local district “data stalwarts” to promote best practices.
- Goal: Implement high-quality assessments that are aligned to standards, inclusive, efficient, reliable, and enable valid interpretations of achievement and growth.
 - Successfully implemented all state summative assessments in English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and English proficiency.
 - Administered the SAT instead of the Smarter Balanced to students in Grade 11 to increase equity and relevance for students while greatly reducing testing time.
 - Trimmed the Smarter Balanced ELA assessment to reduce testing time and increase instructional time, while maintaining validity and reliability.
 - Provided professional development and technology grant funding to support smooth implementation of computer-delivered assessments.
- Goal: Aggregate data and deliver accurate information in a secure, timely and transparent manner.
 - Completed development of the initial phase of CSDE’s information store.
 - Launched a new public data portal, EdSight, to provide all districts, schools, legislators, and the general public with access to aggregate education data.
- Goal: Analyze and report data trends and insights to support informed decision-making and action by schools, districts, the agency, and other stakeholders.
 - Published numerous analyses and reports to support decision-making across the CSDE including the Condition of Education, College Enrollment/Remediation and Credit Attainment, School Discipline, Restraints and Seclusions, and Certification Endorsement Shortage Areas.
 - Created and deployed the Profile and Performance Report — a complete makeover of a legacy report — that synthesizes updated metrics into one comprehensive, user-friendly report for every district and school.
- Goal: Develop performance models and metrics, establish targets and publish reports that enable a suite of differentiated supports and interventions for schools and districts.

- Implemented the next-generation multifactor district/school accountability model to provide a holistic picture of performance
- Identified Turnaround and Focus schools for state intervention and support.
- Published bright spots by identifying schools of distinction and schools where the performance of the high needs student group exceeds that of the district and the state.
- Provided technical assistance, documentation, and support to facilitate the use of accountability results for program improvement.

Office of Student Supports and Organizational Effectiveness

Bureau of Health, Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education

- The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) hosted a statewide conference on family engagement attended by over 250 district, school, community, and parent leaders. Commissioner Wentzell announced at the conference that she is convening the Commissioner's Roundtable on Family and Community Engagement in Education to examine how the CSDE can better support family engagement through agency initiatives.
- Strong policy, legislation, and accountability measures have created an infrastructure to support districts in the reduction of chronic absenteeism. State Board of Education policy now requires all Alliance Districts with high levels of chronic absence to include a plan to address absenteeism in their applications for state education reform funding. Legislation requires local and regional boards of education to monitor and address chronic absence rates in schools and to create district and school attendance teams where rates are high. Chronic absenteeism is one of 12 indicators in the Department's Next Generation Accountability System. This new measure has increased the number of administrators at the state, district, and school level that are addressing chronic absence as a key component of their education reform strategies.
- The Supports for Pregnant and Parenting Teens program (SPPT) helps pregnant and parenting students in districts with the highest teen pregnancy and school dropout rates. SPPT provides supportive services to high school students aged 14-21 in six school districts across the state (Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, Waterbury, and Windham). Outcomes for 2015 include school attendance increased from 69 percent to 76 percent; 74 percent of seniors graduated; 97 percent of children were up-to-date on well-child visits; and 100 percent of children were meeting developmental milestones or receiving developmental support services.
- Through coordinated efforts between the State Department of Education and partnering organizations, school districts participating in the National School Lunch Program continued to expand their School Breakfast Programs. In school year 2015-16, 886 participating sites served 17,980,812 breakfast meals, which

demonstrates an increase of 1,187,316 breakfast meals or an increase of over 7 percent from the previous year.

- The School-Based Diversion Initiative (SBDI) is a multiagency collaboration that is directed toward reducing youth contact with police and increasing LEA capacity to address psychological, emotional, developmental, and behavioral needs among students in collaborating schools. Outcomes for school year 2015-16 in schools with program Leaders-in-Residence include an overall 33 percent decrease in court referrals and a 42 percent increase in referrals to Emergency Mobile Psychiatric Services (EMPS)
- Safe Schools Healthy Students (SSHS) is a Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) collaboration supporting services to improve student mental health and academic performance. Currently piloted in Middletown, New Britain, and Bridgeport and funded through the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the SSHS project is entering its final year of its four-year grant and is developing sustainability plans for this project.
- The CSDE is engaged on a variety of fronts in supporting districts addressing improving student behavior, reducing sanctions and developing increased coping mechanisms among their students. These activities include SBDI, school climate development training and assessments, positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS), EMPS collaborations, restorative practices and after-school programming with social development components.
- Over the past six years, the total number of suspensions and expulsions has reduced by 23.6 percent from approximately 127,000 in 2009-10 to approximately 97,000 in 2014-15.
- The unduplicated count of students receiving at least one suspension or expulsion has also declined by 22.6 percent from about 51,000 in 2009-10 to about 39,400 in 2014-15.

Talent Office

- Developed a statewide leadership development program, LEAD Connecticut, intended to increase the pipeline of school and district leaders who are interested in and well prepared to lead Connecticut's highest need schools and districts, with specific focus on principals interested in serving in Connecticut turnaround schools and districts. LEAD CT, launched in May 2013, provides an array of services designed to develop and support principals and superintendents.
- Completed numerous actions aligned to the six high-level principles for the transformation of educator preparation programs for both teachers and school leaders, including development of a data accountability reporting system, a new

teachers/employer survey, and the pilot of edTPA, a new preservice performance assessment.

- In 2015-16, 4,164 teachers participated in the Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) program, an induction program designed to support beginning teachers through their first two years of teaching; 3,492 educators were trained as mentors to support beginning teachers; and 1,298 educators were trained to review the reflection papers written and submitted by beginning teachers. A total of 9,246 reflection papers were reviewed in the 2015-16 school year. Since TEAM was first implemented in 2010, 11,626 teachers have successfully completed TEAM requirements.
- Implemented the Connecticut's educator evaluation and support system in all local and regional school districts and Connecticut Approved Private Special Education Facilities under which every Connecticut teacher and leader is evaluated by a standards-based system based on multiple measures of growth and development.
- Coordinated training and technical assistance to support implementation of Connecticut's educator evaluation support system to ensure that evaluators are proficient in observing teachers and leaders and in providing high-quality feedback to improve practice.
- Collaborated with a broad stakeholder group to develop the Connecticut Standards for Professional Learning, which are designed to support excellence in teaching and learning through high-quality professional learning for educators. The State Board of Education adopted these standards on May 6, 2015.
- Coordinated the facilitation of in-district support for local and regional Professional Development and Evaluation Committees (PDECs) in collaboratively defining a shared vision of professional learning, establishing collective responsibility, and developing a high-quality system of professional learning.
- Developed and distributed a Professional Learning Guidance document and followed up with training and technical assistance to assist districts in establishing their own high-quality professional learning systems.
- Held second annual Moving from Compliance to Coherence Conference, which is a fully practitioner-driven event attended by 283 educators representing over 60 districts. All presenters were Connecticut educators who shared out on promising practices related to building coherence among district and state initiatives.

Division of Finance and Internal Operations

Bureau of Human Resources

- Managed employee/labor relations, payroll, staff recruitment, retirements, workers compensation, Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), mandatory drug testing,

professional development for SDE, including the Connecticut Technical High School System (CTHSS).

- Managed position management/refill/recruitment process to fill key agency vacancies.
- Served on negotiating teams for State Vocational Federation of Teachers, 1199, A&R, NP-2, NP-3, P-2, P-3A.
- Served on Labor Management Committees for SVFT, AFSA, 1199, P-2 and P-3A.
- Facilitated the human resources activities (transfers, classification issues, notification, position actions) regarding the expansion of the Office of Early Childhood (OEC), and administered all human resources functions for the OEC.
- Issued mandatory sexual harassment and diversity training, as well as on-line workplace violence training, active shooter training and tracked agency participation.
- Payroll activities included the timely processing of biweekly paychecks, employee health insurance benefits, retirements, payroll deductions, longevity, collective bargaining increases for SDE and OEC, including self-service time and labor for OEC.
- Increased the deductions for the roll-in of the 3 percent deduction for retiree health care for current employees.

Bureau of Fiscal Services

- Continuous improvement and stable operation of all agency fiscal processes to ensure all cost saving measures are implemented effectively and result in overall budgetary savings.

Bureau of Information Technology:

- In collaboration with DAS/BEST, completed installation and implementation of the production State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) accessed through the Department's EdSight portal.
- Completed move of all SDE production environments (including the SLDS environment) to the new state data center in Groton.
- Implemented new state assigned student identifier (SASID) application in a web services model.
- Completed testing and initial validation of Uniform Chart of Accounts (UCOA) data files.

- Completed Phase I of the Early Childhood Information System in production environment.
- Completed wireless access assessment and resolution for all 19 schools in the CTHSS.
- Completed implementation and expansion of all applications for the Child Nutrition Bureau getting federal recognition for implementing best practices.
- Purchased hyper converged hardware for pilot program to increase virtualization efficiency, provide higher availability of systems and to provide for disaster recovery and business continuity.
- Completed planning and communication for move to new building at 450 Columbus Boulevard move in January.
- Completed phase 1 of rewrite for the LEAN process for the Connecticut educator certification process (CECS).

Bureau of Grants Management

- Provided input relating to the 2015-16 state budget.
- Provided assistance to the Department of Administrative Services, Office of School Construction, regarding school construction calculations payments.
- Prepared various state and federal financial reports.
- Continued the development of the Uniform Chart of Accounts.
- Performed over 40 grant calculations.
- Processed over 2,500 individual grant budgets for approximately 500 subrecipients.
- Processed over 25,000 payments totaling more than \$3.7 billion.

Division of Legal and Governmental Affairs

- Served as general counsel to the State Board of Education, the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner, 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.
- Responded to inquiries from the public, including parents and school districts, about their rights and responsibilities under the law.
- Acted as liaison to the Office of the Attorney General with regard to pending litigation, including Sheff v. O'Neill (racial and economic isolation case) and

Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Funding, Inc. v. Rell (equitable education funding litigation). Advised the State Board of Education concerning litigation developments and coordinated all litigation efforts on behalf of the Department, including, but not limited to, all discovery and monitoring efforts.

- Collaborated on all matters related to the *Sheff v. O'Neill* litigation and activities managed by the Regional School Choice Office and Sheff Office within the State Department of Education. Served as the Department representative and advisor during Sheff negotiations and court proceedings.
- Served as the Attorney General Designee in employment matters, including actions before the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, in arbitration proceedings, and in federal and state court proceedings. Responsive pleadings and negotiate settlement agreements were also drafted.
- Administered statutorily required functions as well as contract review and internally required functions such as forms review.
- Served as support to legislative liaison to the General Assembly, including assisting 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 properly communicated to the legislative branch. Provided technical assistance to the Education Committee and others regarding legislative proposals and assisted legislators and the liaison in responding to constituents on education issues.
- Investigated requests to revoke 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 declaratory rulings and actions under Section 10-4b of the Conn. Gen. Statutes.

Turnaround Office

The CSDE Turnaround Office oversees the work of Connecticut's 30 Alliance Districts as well as the Commissioner's Network Schools.

Alliance Districts

The Alliance District program is a unique and targeted investment in Connecticut's 30 lowest-performing districts. Conn. Gen. Statue Section 10-262u establishes a process for identifying Alliance Districts and allocating increased Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funding to support district strategies to dramatically increase student outcomes and close achievement gaps by pursuing bold and innovative reforms. Pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. 262u, each Alliance District's receipt of its designated ECS funding is conditioned upon district submission and the

Commissioner of Education's approval of a plan, district progress and performance relative to that plan, and subsequent annual amendments, in the context of the district's overall strategy to improve academic achievement. The CSDE reviews district plans annually and approves plans aligned to the goals of the program. Annual plan approval is predicated on district implementation and performance during the prior year.

The Alliance Districts consist of the following: Ansonia, Bloomfield, Bridgeport, Bristol, Danbury, Derby, East Hartford, East Haven, East Windsor, Hamden, Hartford, Killingly, Meriden, Middletown, Naugatuck, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Norwalk, Norwich, Putnam, Stamford, Vernon, Waterbury, West Haven, Winchester, Windham, Windsor, and Windsor Locks.

Commissioner's Network

The Commissioner's Network is a commitment between local stakeholders and the Connecticut State Department of Education to dramatically improve student achievement in up to 25 schools. As of 2015-16, 17 schools are in the network. The network offers resources and authorities to empower teachers and school leaders to implement research-based strategies in schools selected by the Commissioner of Education to participate in the network for a period of three to five years. Network schools remain part of their local school districts, but the districts and the CSDE secure school-level flexibility and autonomy for the schools in exchange for heightened accountability.

Cohort I: joined the network in fall 2012

High School in the Community, New Haven
James J. Curiale School, Bridgeport
John B. Stanton School, Norwich
Thirman Milner School, Hartford

Cohort II: joined the network in fall 2013

Briggs High School, Norwalk
DiLoreto Magnet School, New Britain
Dunbar School, Bridgeport
Crosby High School, Waterbury
Walsh School, Waterbury
Wilbur Cross High School, New Haven
Windham Middle School, Windham

Cohort III: joined the network in fall 2014

John C. Clark School, Hartford
Marin School, Bridgeport
Lincoln-Bassett, New Haven
Uncas School, Norwich
O'Brien School, East Hartford

Cohort IV: joined the network in fall 2015

East Hartford Middle School, East Hartford

A list of [frequently asked questions](#) about the Commissioner's Network is available on the CSDE website.

Priority School Districts and Summer School

Under Conn. Gen. Statutes 10-266q, the emphasis remains on improving the quality of education available and focuses on funding any of the following initiatives: (1) the creation or expansion of programs or activities related to dropout prevention; (2) alternative and transitional programs for students having difficulty succeeding in traditional educational programs; (3) academic enrichment, tutorial and recreation programs or activities in school buildings during nonschool hours and during the summer; (4) development or expansion of extended-day kindergarten programs; (5) development or expansion of early reading intervention programs, including summer and after-school programs; (6) enhancement of the use of technology to support instruction or improve parent and teacher communication; (7) initiatives to strengthen parent involvement in the education of children, and parent and other community involvement in school and school district programs, activities, and educational policies, which may be in accordance with the provisions of section 10-4g; or (8) for purposes of obtaining accreditation for elementary and middle schools from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

The Priority School Districts for the 2015-16 school year were Bridgeport, Danbury, Derby, East Hartford, Hartford, Meriden, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Norwalk, Norwich, Putnam, Stamford, Waterbury, and Windham. Putnam was officially dropped as a Priority School District in 2015-16 but will receive funding under its three-year phase-out.

Additional improvements and achievements of the Turnaround Office include the following:

- Alliance Districts participated in professional development sessions called convenings three times a year tailored to meet their needs.
- Commissioners Network Schools participated in professional development sessions (Netstat) three times a year to share best practices.
- Commissioners Network schools began the process of coming forward to the State Board of Education Accountability and Support Committee to update board members on progress.
- Commissioners Network Schools (Stanton, Walsh, Windham MS, Lincoln Bassett, Marin, East Hartford Middle) saw growth in both ELA and math on Smarter Balanced assessments.
- Provide monitoring for Alliance Districts three times a year.
- Provide technical assistance to Commissioner's Network Schools biweekly.

Connecticut Technical High School System (CTHSS)

The Connecticut Technical High School System (CTHSS) consists of 17 high schools, one technical education center and two post graduate schools for aviation maintenance technicians.

The CTHSS is the state's largest high school system serving over 10,800 undergraduates and had over 2,100 adult-student registrations in postgraduate and apprenticeship programs throughout the 2015-16 school year.

The CTHSS has continued its mission of contributing to Connecticut's economic vitality and economic self-sufficiency by bolstering the size and quality of Connecticut's skilled workforce. In response to current and emerging employer and industry workforce needs, the CTHSS prepares students for both postsecondary education and licensed apprenticeships or immediate productive employment. For the 2015-16 school year, the CTHSS served a ninth through 12th-grade population that was 49 percent white and 51 percent minority, 40 percent female and 60 percent male. Of the 169 Connecticut resident towns, 165 were represented within the CTHSS student body. The graduation rate for the Class of 2016 was over 97 percent.

Improvements toward the integration of academic and career technology education more fully prepare students for both career and college transition. Students participate in college career pathways programs, earning college credit while attending tech schools. Over 650 students participated in work-based learning programs in the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years. The district has embraced blended learning by expanding its use of technology with Google Classrooms and deployed over 3,000 Chromebooks last year for class and home use.

In the U.S. News and World Report High School Rankings, Bullard-Havens Tech, Kaynor Tech, Platt Tech and Wilcox Tech all received bronze medal designations. Ellis Tech and Kaynor Tech made Niche.com's list of 2016 Best Public Schools in Connecticut. The CTHSS and Wolcott Tech were awarded 2015 Partnership Awards for the commitment to developing and sustaining of excellent programs of family and community engagement from the National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University. The CTHSS received a 2016 Green Circle Sustainability Award from the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and the Hartford Business Journal.

CTHSS staff and students were among the best in the nation. Adrienne Kiel of Goodwin Tech was the 2016 Connecticut Art Educator of the Year from the National Art Education Association. In the 2016 SkillsUSA National Championship, Jacob and Brett Hawran from Prince Tech won gold in audio-radio production, and Daria Stifel of Norwich Tech placed first in electrical construction wiring competition. Devin Bialek and Jonathan O'Neill from Norwich Tech won the 2016 National Automotive Technology Competition.

Grasso Tech's new welding shop opened in 2016 with 4,000 square feet of updated equipment and workspace. Bullard-Havens Tech re-opened its Precision Machining program after \$1 million in renovations and equipment updates. Nine CTHSS schools have E-Houses, and all eighteen schools will have fully operational E-Houses over the next five years with help from Energize CT and CT Green Bank partnerships. The district also has partnerships in industry such as NASA, General Dynamics Electric Boat, Pratt and Whitney, Sikorsky, New Haven Manufacturers Association, Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance, and Eversource Energy.

The CTHSS takes pride in giving back to local communities. Schools held food, clothing, and blood drives and also promoted cancer awareness through special fundraising activities. Students also used the skills learned in their career technologies: carpentry students built a bridge for a

local trail; hairdressing students gave free haircuts; and culinary students prepared meals for soup kitchens and veterans.

Information Reported as Required by State Statute

The State of Connecticut Department of Education is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. The Department of Education does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability (including, but not limited to, intellectual disability, past or present history of mental disorder, physical disability or learning disability), genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws. The Department of Education does not unlawfully discriminate in employment and licensing against qualified persons with a prior criminal conviction.

The Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity, under the direction of the Commissioner, is responsible for ensuring the agency's compliance with a wide variety of federal and state laws and department policies that address equal employment and education. Activities related to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act include investigating grievances, determining and documenting reasonable accommodations, and visiting work sites. The office also investigates complaints in the areas of employment practice, sexual harassment, disability/handicap, and age/sex under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.

During this reporting period, the Department hired 99 employees: 27 white males, 55 white females, five black males, three black females, five Hispanic males, four Hispanic females, zero other males, and zero other females. Of the 99 hires, the Department hired 47 goal candidates that consisted of four white males, 37 white females, zero black males, one black female, three Hispanic males, two Hispanic females, zero other males, and zero other females.

ORGANIZATION CHART FOR THE CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

