

# Spark Innovation



# Focus on High School: On-Track for Graduation and Postsecondary Success

## Presenters:

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Sam Purdy, Deputy Director, Engagement



# Objectives and Agenda

## Our Objectives

- Provide an introduction to the Connecticut RISE Network.
- Share strategies to promote on-track achievement and engagement in and beyond Grade 9.
- Unpack strategies to increase college and career readiness, access, and success.
- Share tools and resources.

## Our Agenda

1. Introduction to the RISE Network
2. Freshman Success Strategies
3. Postsecondary Success Strategies
4. Cost Summaries
5. Contact Information and Resources



# Introduction to the RISE Network

# RISE Network Community



**13,000+** students



**1,000+** educators



**9** high schools



**8** public school districts



East Hartford, Hartford,  
Manchester, Meriden, Middletown,  
Naugatuck, Norwalk, Stamford

# RISE by 5 Focus Areas



## On-Track and Postsecondary Culture

**School communities** share a singular focus on results. Educators, students, and families work together to keep freshman success, on-track achievement, and college and career readiness at the forefront.



## Targeted Transition Supports

**Students** benefit from targeted transition supports in Grade 9 and in preparation for postsecondary pathways. These supports invest in critical moments, key staff, and focused student subgroups.



## Data-Driven Educator Collaboration

**Teams** engage in students-centered team meetings, leveraging data tools, protocols, and educator expertise to take a holistic approach to meet individual needs of all students.



## Equitable Educator Practice

**Educators** receive coaching, resources, and support to invest in educators as professionals, pursuing new ideas to create more rigorous, engaging, and inclusive classroom and school environments.



## Cross-School Learning

**Network partners** come together across schools and districts to learn, grow, and improve. Teachers, counselors, and administrators share successes, challenges, and ideas to advance our shared goals and collective impact.





# Freshman Success Strategies

# Why Focus on Freshman Success?

National research shows that Grade 9 on-track status (i.e., earning the credits required to promote on-time to sophomore year) is the single **best predictor** of on-time high school graduation - better than assessments, race/ethnicity, family income, or any other factor.





# Grade 9 Student Experience



## Student Experiences:

- Increased independence and responsibility
- More anonymity
- Social pressures and hormones
- Increased workload

## New School Structures:

- New school building, staff, and peers
- Different schedule, routines, and policies
- Introduction of credits
- New requirements (e.g., seat time, passing courses to earn credits/promote)

# Grade 9 Summer Bridge



[Toolkit](#)

**Strategy:** No-cost summer transition program for rising freshmen at the high school, focusing on community connections, interdisciplinary skills, and high school readiness.

**Participants:** Rising Grade 9 students and Grade 9 educators.

**Timing:** 2 to 4 weeks in July or August.

**Costs:** Staff time, supplies, transportation, curriculum development.



# On-Track Coordinators



[Toolkit](#)



**Strategy:** Youth development professionals supporting a targeted freshman caseload, serving as students' coach and champion, and liaising with students, caregivers, teachers, and administrators.

**Participants:** Youth development professionals with caseloads of ~60 Grade 9 students.

**Timing:** Throughout the school year.

**Costs:** Staff salaries/benefits.

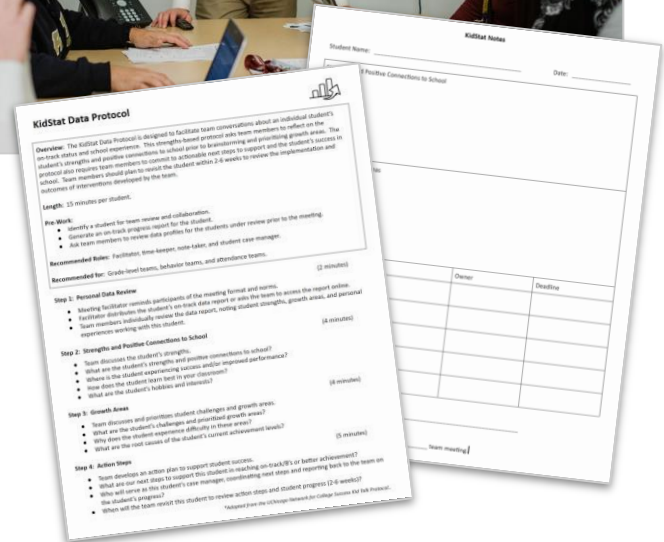
# Grade 9 On-Track Data Teams

**Strategy:** Weekly student-centered data team meetings engaging Grade 9 team members in protocolled, evidence-based, and solutions-oriented conversations. [Strategy requires teaming of Grade 9 students and educators.]

**Participants:** All Grade 9 educators (teachers, support staff, administrator).

**Timing:** Weekly data team meetings.

**Costs:** Staff time, supplies, data tools, professional development.





**Strategy:** Secure and user-friendly data tools allowing educators to understand trends over time and across subgroups, and explore the strengths and needs of individual students.

**Participants:** Data tools provided to educators based on district permissioning standards.

**Timing:** Throughout the school year.

**Costs:** Data tools, training.



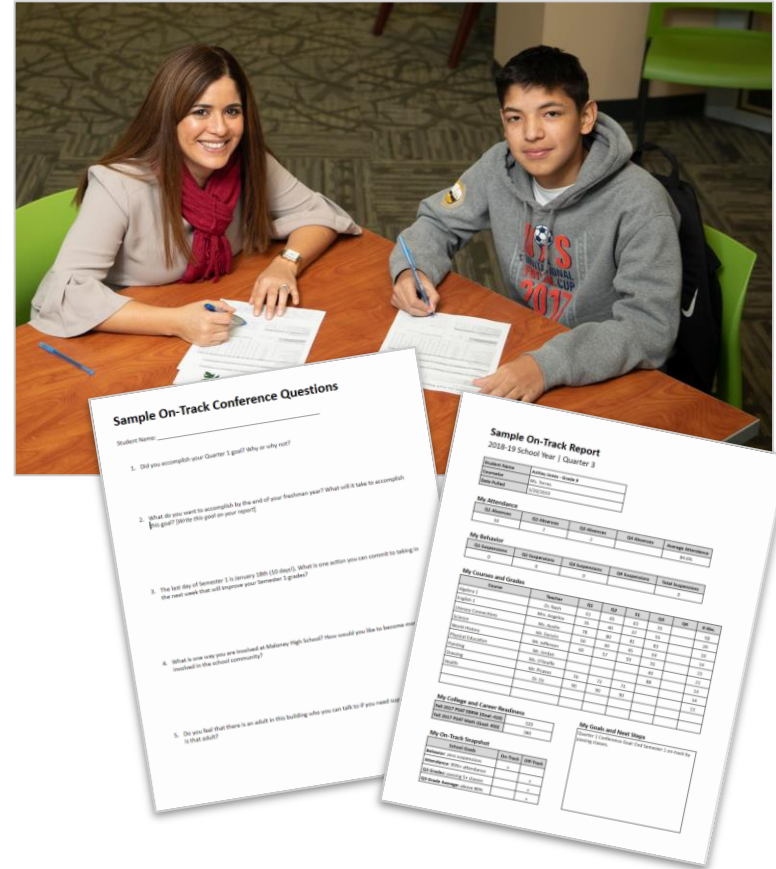
# On-Track Conferences

**Strategy:** Quarterly one-on-one goal-setting conversations between students and a caring adult guided by a student data profile and discussion protocol.

**Participants:** Students and diverse staff (incl. teachers, administrators, support staff, security guards, etc.).

**Timing:** Quarterly conferences 3-4 weeks prior to the quarter close.

**Costs:** Staff time, supplies.



# Focus on Grading



**Strategy:** Investment in more equitable grading systems, policies, and practices stemming from staff learning and collaborative planning.

**Participants:** Teachers, school administrators, and administrators with input from students and caregivers.

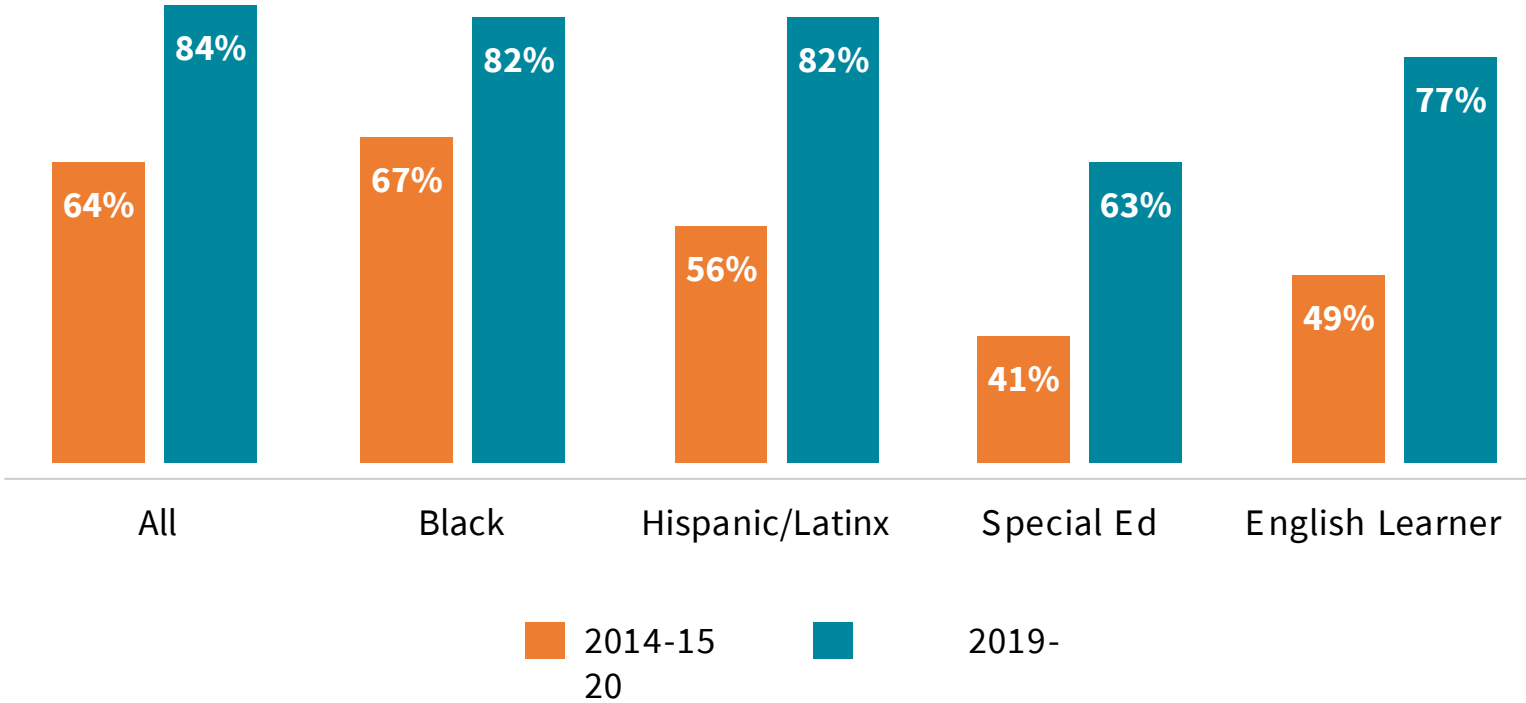
**Timing:** Throughout the school year.

**Costs:** Professional development.



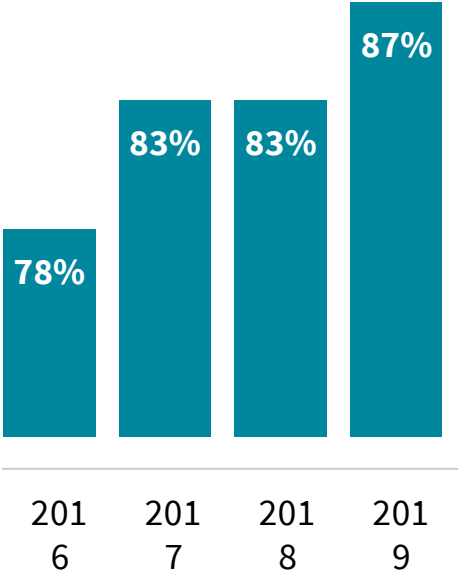
# Improved Freshman Success

Increases in Grade 9 On-Track Rates in RISE Cohort 1 Schools



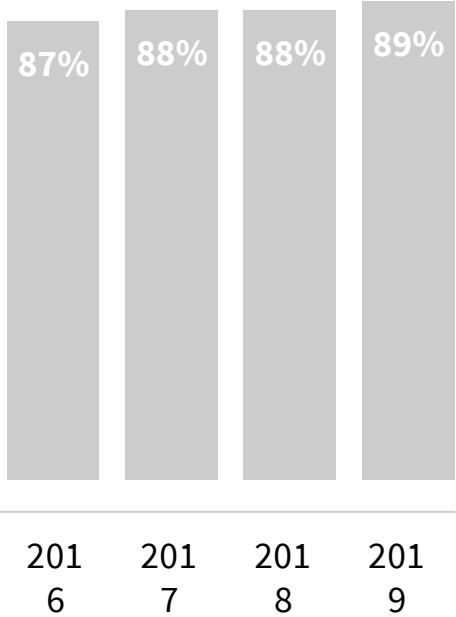
# Higher 4-Year Graduation Rates

RISE Cohort 1 Averages



Averages

Statewide





# Postsecondary Success Strategies

# Why Focus on Postsecondary Success?

**75%**

of low-income students in Connecticut graduate from high school within four years.



**20%**

of low-income high school graduates in Connecticut earn a college degree within six years of graduating from high school.



**70%**

of Connecticut jobs require some form of higher education beyond a high school diploma.



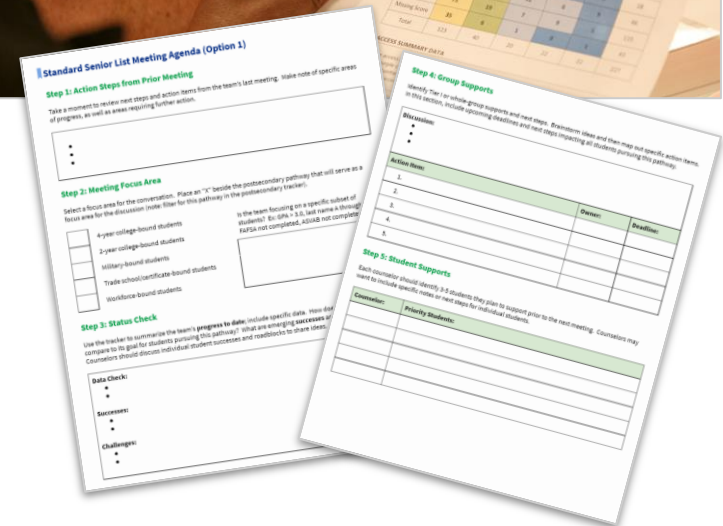
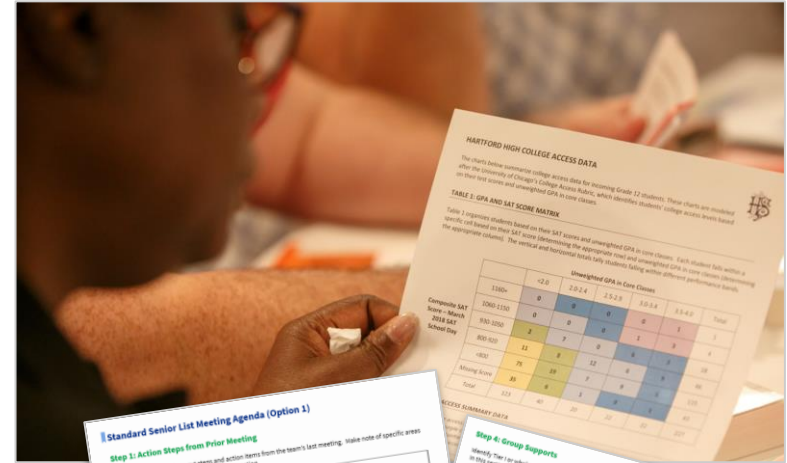
# Postsecondary Data Team Meetings

**Strategy:** Recurring postsecondary data team meetings to monitor and support student progress identifying postsecondary plans and completing milestones to achieve their goals.

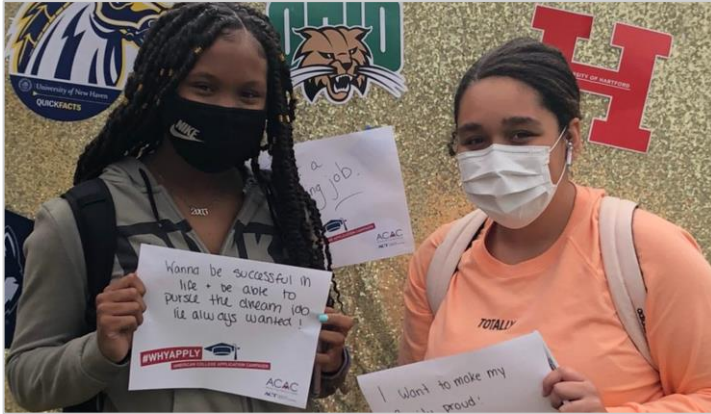
**Participants:** Grade 12 administrator, counselors, and college/career coordinator.

**Timing:** Biweekly/monthly data team meetings.

**Costs:** Staff time, supplies, data tools, professional development.



# Postsecondary Planning Campaigns



**Strategy:** Intentional activities and events during seniors' first semester to promote postsecondary plan development and milestone completion (e.g., FAFSA, college applications).

**Participants:** Grade 12 students and families, counselors, college/career coordinators, and administrators.

**Timing:** Activities concentrated in fall and winter.

**Costs:** Staff time, supplies, marketing.



# College & Career Summer Academies

**Strategy:** No-cost summer programs to help rising seniors form their postsecondary plans and get a head start on access milestones (e.g., college essays, resumes).

**Participants:** Rising Grade 12 students, counselors, college/career coordinators.

**Timing:** 1 to 2 weeks in August.

**Costs:** Staffing, supplies, curriculum development.





# Senior Signing Day



[Toolkit](#)



**Strategy:** Year-end celebrations to recognize seniors' plans to enlist in the military, join the workforce, or enter higher education or trade/technical programs.

**Participants:** Grade 12 students, staff, and families.

**Timing:** May-June event.

**Costs:** Staff time, supplies, marketing.

# Summer Melt Texting Campaigns

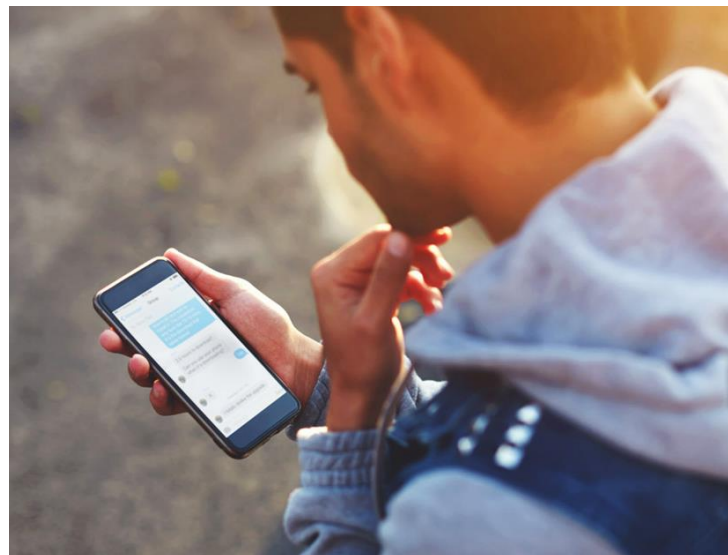


**Strategy:** Summer texting campaigns providing recent graduates with nudges and reminders to help students complete postsecondary enrollment milestones.

**Participants:** Seniors post-graduation, counselors, college/career coordinator.

**Timing:** June-August.

**Costs:** Staff time, texting software



# Results from the RISE Network



+20

**Improved On-Track Achievement:** Grade 9 on-track rates are up 20 points from 64% to 84%. Grade 9 on-track status is the best predictor -- more so than test scores, family income, race/ethnicity -- of on-time graduation.



+9

**Higher Graduation Rates:** Four-year high school graduation rates are up 9 points. Graduation rates have increased from 78% to 87%. Meanwhile, statewide graduation rates have remained relatively flat.



+8

**Increased College Readiness:** College readiness in Grades 9 through 12 is up 8 points from 26% to 34%. High school GPA (B's or better or > 3.0) is one of the strongest predictors of college enrollment and completion.



+14

**Higher College Access Rates:** More students are accessing college opportunities. FAFSA completion rates are up 14 points from 51% to 65%. FAFSA unlocks resources to make college a more attainable option.



## Cost Summaries

# Freshman Success

Strategies	Costs	Price Range
Grade 9 summer bridge	Staff time, supplies, transportation, curriculum development	Medium
On-track coordinators	Staff salaries/benefits	High
Grade 9 on-track data teams	Staff time, supplies, data tools, professional development.	Low
Data tools	Data tools, training.	Medium
On-track conferences	Staff time, supplies.	Low
Focus on grading	Professional development.	Low

# Postsecondary Success

Strategies	Costs	Price Range
Postsecondary data meetings	Staff time, supplies, data tools, professional development.	Low
Postsecondary planning campaigns	Staff time, supplies, marketing.	Low
College and career summer academies	Staff time, supplies, curriculum development.	Medium
Senior signing day	Staff time, supplies, marketing.	Low
Summer melt texting campaigns	Staff time, texting software.	Medium

# Contact Information, Resources, and Tools





# Resources, Templates, and Toolkits

**RISE NETWORK** | who we are | what we do | what we're learning | **resources** | get involved

## RESOURCES

Intro text lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Proin urna sapien, ornare at sapien ut, aliquam euismod orci. Nunc non magna pulvinar, faucibus libero ac, accumsan lectus. Curabitur commodo, erat in euismod.

**KEY**

- Video
- Protocol
- Research
- Toolkit
- Template
- Sample

**RESOURCE TYPE:**

- Video
- Protocol
- Research
- Toolkit
- Template
- Sample

**USER ROLE:**

- Teacher
- Counselor
- School Administrator
- District Administrator

**STUDENT OUTCOME GOALS:**

- Grade 9 On-Track
- High School On-Track
- College and Career Readiness
- College and Career Access
- Student Engagement and Attendance

**SOURCE:**

- RISE Network
- External Organization

**RISE by 5: On-Track Coaching Overview Video**  
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**KidStat Data Protocol**  
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**FAFSA External Resources and Research**  
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**Educator Innovation Fund RISE Strategy Guide**  
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[www.ctrise.org/resources](http://www.ctrise.org/resources)

100+ videos and downloadable resources, templates, and tools.

# Staying Connected

## Contact Information

Emily Pallin, [epallin@ctrise.org](mailto:epallin@ctrise.org)

Sam Purdy, [spurdy@ctrise.org](mailto:spurdy@ctrise.org)



Follow us on Twitter!

**@ctrisenetwork**

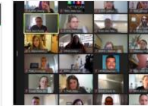
## BLOG



04.15.2021

### The Journey to College and Career for Grade 9 Families

This spring, RISE invited Grade 9 families from all RISE high schools to participate in virtual family workshops in both...



04.12.2021

### Winter Learning Sessions Offer Bright Spots for Freshman Success and College & Career Readiness

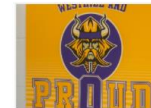
Last month, we held Winter Learning Sessions to lift up promising practices and innovative responses to shared challenges. This year...



04.08.2021

### Platt High School's FAFSA Task Force is Helping Students Secure Financial Aid

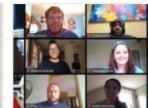
Platt students and educators have been finding new ways to ensure high school seniors have the tools and resources to...



03.09.2021

### Westhill High School's Grade 9 Team is Calibrating for Success

Grade 9 team leads at Westhill High School took the opportunity to step into their students' shoes and identify ways...



03.08.2021

### On-Track Coordinators Share New Strategies for Student Engagement & Executive Functioning

This year has shown that collaboration between educators is critically important as the pandemic has required us all to try...



02.22.2021

### RISE Network Releases Report on Remote and Hybrid Learning Data, Offers Recommendations for Real-Time Improvement

The Connecticut RISE Network, a nonprofit education support organization that partners with 10 public high schools and nine districts, today...



02.10.2021

### College & Career Readiness Spotlight on School Counselors!



01.01.2021

### Protected: Dr. Chris Emdin Keynote and Q&A for Connecticut RISE



12.16.2020

### 130+ RISE Educators Come Together for Fall Learning Sessions on

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# Discussion

Questions and Ideas