



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Commissioner of Education *CRJ*

DATE: November 9, 2023

SUBJECT: Student Recruitment for Choice Programs and Specialized Schools

The Connecticut State Department of Education is reissuing this correspondence to reinforce the important legal requirement that districts provide full access to district students for recruitment purposes to specialized schools¹ and school choice programs, as required by Section 10-220d of the Connecticut General Statutes. This law exists to afford students access to educational options that may be beneficial to them. Therefore, it is important that districts facilitate this access to the maximum extent feasible as outlined in the letters from prior years, available here: <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Digest/2022-23/Student-Recruitment-for-Choice-Programs-and-Specialized-Schools-11-2022.pdf>. In implementing this requirement, please note the points set forth below.

While the physical-access requirement of this provision was relaxed during the pandemic, given the expiration of the nationally declared Public Health Emergency, districts again are required to provide specialized school representatives with opportunities to enter school district buildings and access students to provide in-person information within appropriate schedules during and after school. In addition to in-person interactions, districts should also allow school representatives to reach prospective students in alternative ways, including but not necessarily limited to virtual fairs, “live chats,” parent/student informational nights, brochures, and descriptive handouts.

School districts also should be aware that the General Assembly has amended this provision of the law in recent years to expand and facilitate access to information regarding specialized programming. First, the legal requirement that districts provide information relating to specialized schools on the district website remains in place. In addition, as noted in my correspondence regarding this issue last year, effective July 1, 2022, the General Assembly added language specifically providing that districts require school counselors to provide information to middle and high school students and parents relating to the availability of vocational, technical, technological and postsecondary education and training at the technical education and career schools, as well as agricultural science and technology education centers.

¹ The term “specialized schools” is used here to refer to the collection of interdistrict educational opportunities pertinent to the legislation, which include the following: technical education and career schools, regional agricultural science and technology education centers (“ASTE”), interdistrict magnet schools, charter schools and interdistrict student attendance programs (Open Choice).

This information also must be published on the school district website.² New this year, effective July 1, 2023, boards of education additionally are required to “annually distribute” to middle school students information concerning these educational offerings. Please note that this requirement refers to *all students* – not a subset that the district may believe is eligible for, or interested in, such opportunities.

Thank you for your efforts to ensure that students are aware of these valuable opportunities, which are an important part of the educational landscape in Connecticut. If you have any questions regarding this subject, please contact CSDE staff attorney Matthew Venhorst at matthew.venhorst@ct.gov. Thank you.

² In addition to providing general information about programs on the district website, school districts can use the following links for these purposes:

- Interdistrict magnet schools and Open Choice: <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Services/K-12-Education/School-Choice/Regional-School-Choice>
- Charter schools: <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Charter-Schools/Charter-Schools>
- Technical education and career schools: <https://www.cttech.org/>
- Regional agricultural science and technology education centers: <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/School-Choice/CT-School-Choice/Agricultural-Science-and-Technology-Education>