



## Connecticut Remote Learning Audit Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the Connecticut remote learning audit?

The Connecticut General Assembly (CGA) enacted legislation in 2021 that requires the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to conduct a comprehensive audit of remote learning provided to Connecticut students during the first two school years affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (2019-20 and 2020-21). Please see section 389 of [Public Act 21-2ss](#) for more information.

### What is the purpose of the remote learning audit?

Connecticut educators have worked very hard to serve students throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and state leaders want to learn from their experiences so Connecticut can be better prepared for the future. Specifically, the audit is designed to learn about teaching and learning in the beginning of the pandemic and throughout the 2020-21 school year. The audit focuses on learning models, instructional approaches, professional development and support provided to teachers to support remote learning, improvements in remote learning and technological capabilities over this period, and changes in student academic and behavioral outcomes since the start of the pandemic. The remote learning audit includes Connecticut public schools, charter schools, endowed and incorporated academies, RESCs, state agency education programs, and approved private special education programs.

### Who is conducting the remote learning audit?

The CSDE has asked the Connecticut COVID-19 Education Research Collaborative (CCERC) to conduct this audit on behalf of the CSDE. The CSDE established the CCERC with federal coronavirus relief funds to conduct research and evaluation studies related to the impact of COVID-19 on education. For more information on CCERC, visit <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Performance/CCERC>. For more information on the CCERC remote learning audit team, visit <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Performance/CCERC/Evaluation-Projects>.

### How is the remote learning audit being conducted?

The remote learning audit is designed to gather, integrate, and analyze three types of data:

- Administrative data on student academic outcomes (for example, grades, scores on standardized tests), student behavioral outcomes (for example, enrollment and attendance data): provided by SDE
- District data on policies and practices related to remote learning: collected from district leaders via the CSDE 2020-21 learning models survey and the **CCERC remote learning district inventory**.
- School/classroom data on teaching and learning during the pandemic: collected from classroom teachers via the **CCERC remote learning teacher survey** and **CCERC remote learning focus groups**.

### What is the CCERC remote learning district inventory and who can participate?

The CCERC remote learning district inventory is a comprehensive inventory of district policies and practices related to remote learning during the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years. In early April, the superintendent or leader of each Connecticut public school district, charter school district, endowed and incorporated academy district, RESC, state agency education program, and approved private special education program was emailed a unique weblink for the online remote learning district inventory. These leaders were asked to work with their leadership teams to complete the district inventory on behalf of their district. The district



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inventory collects information about learning models, technology, staffing, professional development, student support services, etc., during different phases of the pandemic. Only the CCERC remote learning audit team from Yale University and University of Connecticut will have access to district-level results. All other entities, including the CSDE, will receive results in which districts are not identified. The deadline for the district inventory has been extended to June 17, 2022.

### What is the CCERC remote learning teacher survey and who can participate?

The CCERC remote learning teacher survey is designed to learn from the experiences of classroom teachers who taught in Connecticut schools during the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years. **Connecticut schools** includes public schools, charter schools, endowed and incorporated academies, RESCs, state agency education programs, and approved private special education programs. **Classroom teachers** means general education teachers, special education teachers, ESL teachers, subject area teachers, specialist area teachers, and other PK-12 teachers who provide direct instruction in the classroom setting. This survey launched on May 20, 2022 and will close on June 24, 2022. The teacher survey should take less than 15 minutes to complete. It asks teachers about their experience with learning models, instructional practices, technology resources, student engagement, professional learning, etc.

The survey is **confidential**; teachers will NOT be asked to provide their name or contact information as part of the survey. Teachers will be asked to identify their district and teaching assignment, but only the CCERC remote learning audit team from Yale University and University of Connecticut will have access to results that include district names. Teachers who participate in the survey will be invited to complete a separate form if they wish to participate in prize drawings conducted to express appreciation for teachers' participation. The prize drawings will award 135 gift cards ranging from \$50-\$500 to support teachers' work with students. The odds of winning will depend on how many Connecticut teachers complete the survey, but we estimate the odds of winning are between 3 in 1000 if 100% of Connecticut teachers participate and 3 in 100 if 10% of Connecticut teachers participate. We will conduct all prize drawings at the close of the survey.

### What are the CCERC remote learning focus groups and who can participate?

The CCERC remote learning focus groups will be conducted to explore themes that arise in on the CCERC remote learning teacher survey. allow the remote learning audit team to explore teacher experiences more deeply. Focus groups will be conducted on Zoom and last approximately 90 minutes; focus groups will be audio-recorded. Teachers who participate in the CCERC remote learning teacher survey will be invited to complete a separate form expressing interest in participating in a virtual focus group. Focus group participants will be selected to ensure that a variety of district/program types and grade levels are represented. Focus group questions will explore teachers' experiences with learning models (remote, hybrid, and in-person learning), instructional approaches, teaching strategies, technology, curriculum modifications, techniques to increase student engagement, support services for students, as well as professional development and other supports for teachers.

To protect confidentiality, teachers' names and contact information will be recorded separately from their focus group responses. Only the CCERC remote learning audit team from Yale University and University of Connecticut will have access to individual results. Any other entities, including the CSDE, will receive only summary results in which districts are not identified. In appreciation for their participation, teachers who participate in a focus group will be offered a \$100 e-gift card to support their work with students.



### **Are there any possible risks to people who participate in this study?**

The risks to people who participate in this study are low. There are no physical risks. The CCERC remote learning audit team will make every effort to protect the confidentiality of any study information that might identify individuals. CCERC will remove district and school names before sharing data with the CSDE, and we will share only de-identified summary results with school or district leaders.

### **Are there any possible benefits to people who participate in this study?**

People who participate in this study will receive no direct benefit from participating; however, we hope there will be societal benefits such as adding to the knowledge about how districts and schools can provide effective learning experiences during a health crisis. Further, we hope our results will help the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and local school districts to prepare for future disruptions and to identify where additional resources are needed to support student learning during pandemic recovery.

### **How will study information be protected?**

Teacher names and contact information will be used only to conduct prize drawings, schedule focus groups, and distribute e-gift cards. Teachers can participate in the teacher survey without providing their name or contact information. If teachers choose to provide their name and contact information for focus groups, prize drawings, or other incentives, this information will not be linked in any way to teachers' survey responses and/or focus group responses. Survey responses and focus group responses will be stored securely in separate password-protected locations from teacher names and contact information provided for focus group scheduling or the distribution of incentives.

We will make every effort to protect the confidentiality of information teachers provide in the survey or focus groups that might identify individuals (for example, school name or grades taught), but we cannot guarantee total confidentiality. Identifiable teacher information will be stored securely and viewed only by the remote learning audit team and other people within UConn and Yale University who help administer and oversee research. We will share identifiable information with others only if U.S. or State law requires it. To prevent identification of survey respondents, we will remove any district/school names from the data before sharing it with CSDE. No individual-level survey or focus group responses will be released publicly, and individual schools or districts will not be identified as part of any reports, research papers or presentations.

### **Are Connecticut teachers required to participate in the remote learning audit?**

The participation of teachers in the remote learning audit is voluntary. Teachers may decide not to participate or, if they begin, they may withdraw at any time without penalty. Withdrawing or refusing to participate will not affect the teacher's relationship with UConn, Yale University, CSDE, or their district.

### **Who should I contact with questions about the remote learning audit?**

If you have questions about the Connecticut remote learning audit, you may contact:

- Dr. Michael J. Strambler, Principal Investigator, at (203)789-7645 or [michael.strambler@yale.edu](mailto:michael.strambler@yale.edu)
- Dr. Stephen L. Ross, UConn Principal Investigator at (860)486-3533 or [stephen.l.ross@uconn.edu](mailto:stephen.l.ross@uconn.edu)
- Joanna L. Meyer, Project Manager, at (203)789-7645 or [ccerc-rl@yale.edu](mailto:ccerc-rl@yale.edu)

For any questions about the protection of human subjects in research, please contact the UConn Institutional Review Board/Human Subjects Research Office at [irb@uconn.edu](mailto:irb@uconn.edu) or at (860) 486-8802.