



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Connecticut State Advisory Council for Special Education

Full Council Committee Meeting

Date: March 25, 2026

Time: 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Location: Lyceum Resource & Conference Center, 227 Lawrence St, Hartford, CT

Zoom Meeting:

<https://ctserc.zoom.us/j/98149190331?pwd=qbPgt52aFtad5Muyk6aoWKvx5nfbrE.1>

Meeting ID: 981 4919 0331

Passcode: 137986

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Missy Wrigley (chairperson), Brandalyn Williams (vice chairperson), Brian K. Smith, Catherine Summ, Representative Robin Comey, Jeffry Spahr, Jennifer Lussier (secretary), Eve Hurley, Lori Fortuna, Louis Tallarita, Nachi Bhatt, Tom Cosker, Mary Beth Bruder, Susan Yankee, Jonathan Metcalf, Ana Wittig, Stacey Palker, Meghan Gallagher, Amy Messinger, Jake Shumbo, Goviana Morales, Dimpy Malvania, Evan Simlack (Janelle Marella), Michael Scanlon, Allison Kopie, Cassandra Reilly, Nancy DeCrescenzo, Sean Cronin (CSDE), Bryan Klimkiewicz (CSDE)

Members Absent: Denise Drummond, State Senator Sujata Gadkar-Wilcox, Representative Dan Gaiewski, Kim Williamson, Lena Esposito

SERC Administration: Lauren Johns, Christine Kuehlewind

I. Call to Order and Welcome: 9:39 am

II. Council Purpose and Function

III. Introduction/Roles

IV. Public Comment: 9:50 am- No Public Comment

- i. SAC meetings are public meetings; members of the public may participate by calling in:
Call In: 1-312-626-6799
Meeting ID: 981 4919 0331
Participant Code: 137986

V. Consent Agenda: 9:51 am



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



- i. Approval of Full Council Minutes, February 25, 2026:
Tom Cosker motions to approve the meeting minutes with corrections,
Jennifer Lussier seconds, vote unanimous in favor to approve.

Old Business

VI. Executive Matters: 9:52 am

- i. Discussion of SAC Table at Capitol in lieu of Legislative Breakfast
 - The annual legislative breakfast could not be held or rescheduled.
 - Alternative plan: SAC will host an informational table at the State Capitol.
 - Details:
Date: April 20, 2026
Time: 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM
Location: Capitol (South Lobby)
 - Purpose: Share SAC information and legislative priorities with lawmakers.
 - Members are encouraged to volunteer for short shifts at the table.
 - A follow-up email will include logistics (sign-ups, parking, materials).
 - Materials will include SAC one-pagers and reports.
 - Legislators will be notified closer to the event.
- ii. Policy & Procedure Manual
 - SAC is working on finalizing operational procedures tied to its bylaws.
 - Executive committee members are asked to provide availability for planning sessions.
 - Goal: Complete before the May meeting.

VII. Membership/Nominating Report/Updates: 10:01 am

- Strong interest in SAC membership with 12 applications received: 9 special education teachers, 1 student, 2 unspecified roles (to be clarified). Current vacancies include: 3 student positions, 1 parent, 2 legislative, 1 special education teacher, 1 charter school representative, 1 Department of Correction representative.
- Anticipated that at least one student and one teacher position will be filled soon.
- Ongoing recruitment encouraged, especially for paraeducators and charter school representatives.
- Membership committee meeting expected in April (or early May).



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



- Recruitment & Outreach Discussion: Suggestion to recruit students through transition programs using flyers. Agreement to distribute recruitment materials through transition program networks. Emphasis on SAC positions are volunteer-based (no paid roles).

VIII. Nominating Committee: 10:06 am

- Seeking candidates for SAC leadership:
Chair position (current chair plans to step down)
Vice Chair
Secretary (current secretary willing to continue if no other candidates)
- Members may self-nominate or nominate others (with prior consent).

IX. Legislative Report/Updates: 10:10 am

- Written testimony submitted on several bills, including:
ADA codification in state law
Section 504 protections/oversight
Use of cameras in seclusion rooms
Private equity ownership in private providers
- Bills have moved out of committee to the House floor.
- Ongoing focus on planning the April 20 Capitol outreach event.
- Weekly legislative meetings continue.

New Business

X. Roundtable: 10:15 am

- Upcoming Events: IDD awareness event (June 13 at Camp Harkness) and Fall Fest/unified barbecue (September); details to be emailed.
- Transition Programs: State finalizing standards with a 6-year review cycle, site visits, public reports, and annual updates. Focus on support and best practices. Statewide training underway for coordinators, educators (age 14+), and paraeducators. SAC may receive a future presentation.
- Ongoing collaboration with the State Department of Education on oversight of out-of-state programs. Active role in a behavioral health committee (school-based and special education subgroups) focusing on intervention best practices and restraint/seclusion policies. More stakeholders invited to join.
- Bureau of Education Services for the Blind: Hiring 3 teachers for the visually impaired and 1 implementation teacher.



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



- Discussion Points: Need to improve communication with the behavioral health committee, ensure SAC representation in subgroups, and update meeting logistics/registration links.

XI. BSE Updates: 10:45 a.m.

- Presentation by Alycia Trakas (CSDE) – IDEA Part B Grant

Overview of the IDEA Part B grant application process:

Annual submission with a 2-year funding cycle.

Includes public posting (60 days), comment period (30 days), and public hearings.

Explanation of funding structure:

Section 611: ages 3–21 (CT extends to end of school year at age 22).

Section 619: ages 3–5 (preschool).

Funding breakdown (approximate):

Majority (~85–87%) goes to local education agencies (LEAs).

Smaller portions for:

State administration (~2–5%)

State-level activities (~10–20%)

- Additional CSDE Updates

State-level funding supports key special education activities, including dispute resolution systems, professional development (largest area), mental health supports, workforce development, technology, and transition services.

Stakeholders requested clearer breakdowns of spending and more accessible materials, while the State Department of Education is gathering survey feedback to guide future funding decisions.

Ongoing work includes development of MTSS guidance, expanded monitoring and compliance efforts, new tools (e.g., procedures manual, autism worksheet), and revisions to the Parent Guide with a focus on accessibility.



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Key themes highlighted challenges in communication and accessibility, emphasizing the need for clearer, more engaging formats and proactive outreach to families. There is also interest in better ways to measure student outcomes and continued updates on staffing, behavioral supports, and data systems.

Adjourn: 12:10 pm- Jake Shumbo motions to adjourn, Tom Cosker seconds, vote unanimous in favor.

State Advisory Council Meeting Dates/Locations:

Meeting	Date	Time	Location
1.	September 24, 2025	9:00-10:30 am	Virtual Meeting
2.	October 15, 2025	10:00 am-2:00 pm	Legislative Office Building, 300 Capitol Ave #5100, Hartford (Room: 1C)
3.	November 19, 2025	9:00-10:30 am	Virtual Meeting
4.	January 28, 2026	9:00-10:30 am	Virtual Meeting
5.	February 25, 2026	10:30 am -12:00 pm	Virtual Meeting
6.	March 25, 2026	9:30 am-12:30 pm	Lyceum Resource & Conference Center, 227 Lawrence St, Hartford
7.	April 22, 2026	10:00-2:00 pm	Goodwin University, 1 Riverside Drive, East Hartford
8.	May 20, 2026 (Tentative-if needed)	9:00-10:30 am	Virtual Meeting