

# Connecticut State Department of Education



## At a Glance

**DIANNA R. WENTZELL, *Commissioner***

**Ellen E. Cohn, *Deputy Commissioner***

***Established - 1838***

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

***Central office - 450 Columbus Blvd, Hartford, CT 06106***

***Number of employees – 1,856.08***

***Recurring operating expenses - \$ 2,825,363,620***

***Organizational structure - See chart on page 32***

## 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 2018 regular session of the Connecticut General Assembly is available on the Department of Education’s website. This comprehensive summary of public acts applicable to school districts includes information on new legislation and was emailed to all superintendents in the state.

### **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**

In December 2015, President Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which replaced the No Child Left Behind Act as the nation’s school accountability law.

ESSA is grounded in the concept of equity and the promise of an excellent, well-rounded education for every student regardless of race, color, national origin, family income, citizenship, or disability status. To achieve this, the law gives states the flexibility they need to innovate, while simultaneously holding them accountable for student outcomes.

Connecticut submitted its plan to meet the requirements of ESSA to the U.S. Department of Education in April 2017. A four-member USED panel reviewed it and sent it back with clarifying questions and helpful feedback. The CSDE addressed the reviewers’ comments, making clarifications and adjustments where necessary. The plan was resubmitted in July and USED approved it on August 15, 2017.

The plan incorporates a holistic [Next Generation Accountability System](#) that uses a broad set of 12 indicators to help tell the story of how well a school is preparing its students for success in college, careers, and life. The new system moves beyond test scores and graduation rates and instead provides a more holistic, multifactor perspective of district and school performance, and incorporates student growth over time.

The plan also includes different levels of interventions and supports for district and school improvement based on the results of the accountability system. It includes elements designed to help recruit, prepare, induct, evaluate, support, and advance a strong and diverse educator workforce. It addresses the needs of English learners, and outlines supports for students in high-need schools in preschool through grade 12 to succeed and decrease the risk of dropping out. It addresses opportunities for academic enrichment, extended learning time, project-based learning, art, and music. It details supports for programs that promote safe and healthy schools, after-school programming, youth development activities, and prevention programs.

## **Public Service**

The Department of Education serves educators, students, 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, the Turnaround Office, the Office of Internal Audit, and the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS).

### **Academic Office**

The Connecticut State Department of Education's Academic Office provides guidance and leadership regarding legislated educational mandates to assist Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in preparing students to succeed in college, career, and civic life. The Academic Office supports LEAs and schools in effectively implementing rigorous standards, curriculum, and instruction. The Academic Office engages all stakeholders for the stewardship of human, fiscal, and intellectual resources toward the mission of ensuring equity and excellence for all students.

The Academic Office provides technical assistance, professional learning, and resources to support LEAs and schools with various initiatives including:

- operationalization of the Connecticut State Board of Education's Goal 2 of the five-year comprehensive plan, *Ensuring Equity and Excellence for All Connecticut Students*;
- implementation and development of effective instruction aligned to Connecticut's rigorous academic standards and frameworks;
- building LEA internal capacity and structures pertaining to early literacy and numeracy success for all students;
- supporting expansion of access to humanities and STEM programming for all students; and
- Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV) grant programs.

### **Performance Office**

The Performance Office improves student outcomes using data. Key services of the Performance Office include:

- collecting, aggregating, and delivering accurate data in a highly efficient, secure, timely, and transparent manner;
- implementing high-quality assessments that are aligned to standards, efficient, reliable, and enable valid interpretations of achievement and growth;
- analyzing and reporting data trends and insights to support informed decision-making and action by schools, districts, the Department, and other stakeholders; and
- developing and implementing the Next Generation Accountability System that provides a holistic perspective of district/school performance and enables the CSDE to deliver a suite of differentiated supports and interventions for schools and districts.

The following structures within the Performance Office provide the requisite services:

- Data Collection
- Student Assessment
- Data Integration and Reporting (EdSight)
- Psychometrics and Research
- Accountability and Analysis

The Performance Office also provides a variety of reports and analyses with actionable data on Connecticut's districts and schools. [EdSight](#) is the one-stop portal for all data/reports published by the office. These reports include the Condition of Education; the Profile and Performance Reports; the special education Annual Performance Reports; data and research bulletins; numerous interactive reports on various topics like chronic absenteeism, discipline, educator demographics, graduation rates, and test results. The office also manages data submissions to the federal government and responds to custom data requests.

### **Office of Student Supports and Organizational Effectiveness**

The Office of Student Supports and Organizational Effectiveness (OSSOE) 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 OSSOE provide additional services:

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

- Promotes health, fitness and wellness, as well as supporting food and nutrition services and the provision of health and nursing services.
- Promotes positive school environments through physical, social-emotional, behavioral and mental health supports, and school climate development efforts.
- Supports school, family and community engagement and youth development programs.
- Supports the delivery of quality adult education programming.

#### *Bureau of Choice Programs, Regional School Choice Office (RSCO) and Sheff*

- Supports magnets, Open Choice — statewide and Interdistrict Cooperative Grant Programs.
- Provides educational choices designed to promote increased student achievement and reduce racial, ethnic, and economic isolation.
- Promotes regional school choice programs and activities.
- Manages the RSCO lottery in the Hartford regions.
- Ensures equity and access by meeting the requirements of the court settlement in *Sheff v. O'Neill*.

## **Talent Office**

The mission of the CSDE Talent Office is to develop and deploy talent management strategies to schools and districts statewide in order to ensure that each and every student in the state has access to great teachers and leaders to prepare for success in college, career, and life. This is done in close collaboration with numerous education organizations including the state teachers' and administrators' unions, the RESC Alliance, the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE), the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) and the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS).

The Talent Office develops strategies intended to attract and recruit individuals to the teaching profession, ensure strong preparation at Connecticut educator preparation programs, support early career induction through the Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) program, continuously improve practice through high quality professional learning and effective systems for evaluating annual performance and create supportive school and district culture to reduce attrition and increase retention.

Since 2016, with the development of the State Board of Education's five-year comprehensive plan, the Talent Office has amplified efforts to increase the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of Connecticut's educator workforce and address persistent shortage areas (e.g., math, science, comprehensive special education, bilingual etc.)

In alignment with these goals, the Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification has made significant progress over the past two years to streamline certification processes, to the extent possible, given existing regulations (Regulations Concerning State Educator Certificates, Permits and Authorizations).

The following bureaus within the Talent Office implement the strategies outlined above:

### *Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification*

- Issue new and continuing certificates to nearly 30,000 educators annually.
- Provide customer service to individuals (current and prospective Connecticut educators) and all 24 of Connecticut's educator preparation providers, as well as representatives of all public school districts.
- Pursue avenues to modernize certification to better meet contemporary workforce needs (e.g., new certification endorsements such as Computer Science, STEM) given outdated regulations (1998).
- Explore and operationalize changes to the current certification system to streamline internal processes to both enhance the customer experience, and address reduced staffing capacity.
- Coordinate all aspects of Connecticut's pre-service licensure assessment system (e.g., Praxis II, Foundations of Reading, Connecticut Administrator Test, ACTFL, edTPA).
- Collaborate with higher education and professional organizations to explore increasing pathways to bilingual certification in order to address the persistent shortage of teachers in this area.

## *Bureau of Educator Effectiveness*

- Coordinate Connecticut's new and continuing program review and approval process for the 24 educator preparation programs, including Alternate Routes to Certification (ARCs).
- Implement the recommendations made by the Educator Preparation Advisory Council (EPAC), a broadly representative stakeholder group composed of several organizations, including the Board of Regents (BOR), Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE), Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS), Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents Inc. (CAPSS), American Federation of Teachers-Connecticut (AFT-CT), Connecticut Education Association (CEA), with the goal of transforming the way teachers and principals are prepared.
- Develop and in fall 2018, launch a new public-facing Educator Preparation Data Dashboard to provide real-time data about Connecticut EPPs for the purposes of public transparency, program improvement, and accountability.
- Facilitate and coordinate all aspects of the phased implementation of edTPA, a teacher candidate performance assessment that will be required of all pre-service teacher candidates during student teaching. Effective during the 2018-19 academic year, all candidates are required to complete the assessment; in 2019-20, a passing score will be required for successful program completion.
- Provide oversight of the 12- member CSDE Review Committee, which considers the continuing approval status of all CT EPPs, based on each provider's participation in the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) review process.
- Coordinate and advance the statewide implementation of Connecticut's educator evaluation and support system, and new standards for professional learning.
- Oversee all aspects of statewide implementation of the Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) program (training, allocation of funding, mentor training, etc.)
- Support districts in the development and implementation of standards-based, high-quality systems for professional learning.
- Participate on the Connecticut Advisory Council for Teacher Professional Standards and the Connecticut Advisory Council for Administrator Professional Standards.
- Participate on the Connecticut Paraprofessional Advisory Council to support the development of paraprofessionals' roles and responsibilities. The council advises the Commissioner on a quarterly basis regarding the needs for the training of paraprofessionals and the effectiveness of the content and the delivery of existing training.
- Coordinate statewide recognition events as part of an effort to both recognize excellent educators and to elevate the image of the teaching profession as a recruitment strategy: Connecticut State Teacher of the Year process, Milken Educator Award, Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year.

- Develop and deploy strategies, to increase the racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity of Connecticut's educator workforce to more closely mirror the increasing diversity of Connecticut's student population.
- Develop and deploy strategies to address longstanding shortages in specific shortage areas (e.g., math, science, comprehensive special education, bilingual, world language, etc.)
- Assist with planning for and facilitating the CSDE Minority Policy Oversight Council.
- Develop and maintain a repository of promising practices (EdKnowledge) designed to increase the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of the educator pipeline.
- In collaboration with Teach.org and the AdCouncil, with funding support from the Buck Foundation, develop TeachConnecticut, a comprehensive recruitment campaign consisting of a website, social media, television, and radio advertisements, designed to elevate the image of the teaching profession more generally and specifically to encourage a teaching career in Connecticut. Connecticut is the first state to partner with Teach.org at the statewide versus local or regional level.
- Coordinate statewide efforts to provide pathways to teaching for veterans through a \$1.1 million grant awarded to the CSDE by the Department of Defense.

### **Finance and Internal Operations Office**

The Finance and Internal Operations Office coordinates the effective delivery of financial, human resources, and technology 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 annual calculation and disbursement of over \$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
- Federal and state grants



- Analysis of budget proposals and legislation for impact on CSDE grant related-functions
- Local expenditure data for calculation and reporting purposes
- Prepayment grant system

#### *Bureau of Human Resources*

- Staff recruitment, hiring, and communication of employee benefits
- Coordination with the Department of Administrative Services and the Office of Policy and Management regarding personnel matters
- Performance evaluation processes
- Training and staff development
- Contract negotiations and labor relations

#### *Bureau of Information Technology*

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

### **Division of Legal and Governmental Affairs**

The Division of Legal and Governmental Affairs provides legal counsel to the State Board of Education, the Commissioner, and Department offices, including the Connecticut Technical High Schools, on a wide range of issues pertaining to education and school operations. The division also provides guidance and assistance to local school districts, educational organizations, and other constituents regarding the interpretation of laws and regulations pertaining to education. In addition, the division manages certain statutory responsibilities of the Department, including but not limited to, teacher and administrator contract negotiations, monitoring of racial imbalance requirements, investigations and enforcement proceedings concerning revocation of educator certificates, school accommodations, Freedom of Information Act requests, and regional school district establishment and governance.

#### *Bureau of Investigations and Professional Practices*

The Bureau of Investigations and Professional Practices was created in 2016 to address all aspects of misconduct among certified/authorized/permitted educators. This includes investigating educator misconduct that may or may not result in a criminal conviction and reports of abuse/neglect substantiated by the Department of Children and Families (DCF). During the 2018 legislative session, the General Assembly passed legislation that expanded the Department's available certification actions to include revocation, suspension, probation and denial. When warranted, the bureau will initiate the process necessary to seek an appropriate certification action against an educator's certificate, authorization, or permit, which ultimately requires an administrative hearing before a hearing officer. This bureau also assists local

districts, magnet, and charter schools in the state in the hiring process by providing, in accordance with law, background information of educators that the districts seek to hire. Additionally, the Bureau works with district administration and human resources staff to develop awareness regarding professional practices by discussing educator ethics and situations that could lead to disciplinary action including dismissal or certification action against an educator or teacher candidate.

### **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, Alliance and Opportunity Districts, Priority School Districts, Charter Schools, and Titles I, II, and III federal grants; implementation of effective English learner (EL) programming and supports, including the Connecticut Bilingual Education Grant; building capacity and infrastructure in the state's highest-needs districts; fostering collaboration across districts; expanding educational options by opening high-quality new schools; piloting innovative strategies, scaling promising practices, and serving as the catalyst for statewide reform.

Additional services provided by the Turnaround Office include:

#### *School and District Support*

- Support district transformation through the state's Alliance District, Opportunity District, Priority School District, and Bilingual Education Grant programs.
- Support school turnaround through the Commissioner's Network and Title I School Improvement Grants (SIG).
- Provide ongoing support, technical assistance, and monitoring through differentiated and targeted fieldwork.
- Support districts on school climate, bullying, Restorative Practices, cultural competence, and childhood trauma through training and development, inquiry handling, and information dissemination.

#### *Internal Operations and Accountability*

- Support effective implementation of the Connecticut State Board of Education's Five-year Comprehensive Plan, specifically Goal 4: "Great Schools."
- Distribution, monitoring, and ongoing management of state grants and bonds, as well as federal Title I, II, III, and School Improvement Grant programs.
- Development and maintenance of the state's electronic consolidated eGrants Management System applications (eGMS), including district applications for Titles I, II, and III; Alliance District; Priority School District; and Title I Part A School Improvement Grants.

- Promote accountability and data-driven improvement.

#### *Charter Schools*

- Provide public school choice options to students and families.
- Create and implement systems and processes for charter monitoring and accountability.
- Promote reduction of racial, ethnic, and economic isolation, and serve high-need student population groups.
- Support Priority School Districts or districts with a racial or ethnic minority enrollment of at least 75 percent.
- Support new schools in underserved geographic locations.

#### *ESSA Consolidated State Plan Implementation (including Titles I, II, and III)*

- Manage, provide resources for, and ensure effective implementation of federal programs under the state’s Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated Plan, including the following federal grant programs:
  - Title I, Part A - Improving Basic Programs
  - Title I Part A - School Improvement Grants (SIG)
  - Title I, Part D - Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk
  - Title II, Part A - Supporting Effective Instruction
  - Title III - Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students

#### **Office of Internal Audit**

The mission of the Office of Internal Audit (OIA) is to assist the State Board of Education and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) management in identifying, avoiding, and mitigating risks. In support of this mission, OIA reviews and analyzes all aspects of CSDE’s and the Office of Early Childhood’s (OEC) operations.

Key services the Office of Internal Audit provides include:

- reviewing and evaluating the soundness, adequacy and application of accounting, financial and operating controls and procedures, and the cost effectiveness of such controls and procedures;
- determining the extent of compliance with established statutes, regulations, policies, plans and procedures;
- auditing accounts and financial transactions, including performing forensic analyses and;
- recommending improvement in the operations and the use of resources in the Department.

#### **Connecticut Technical High School System**

The Connecticut Technical High School System was renamed to the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS). CTECS provides a unique and rigorous high school learning environment that: (1) ensures student academic success and trade/technology mastery

instilling 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 global workforce needs and expectations through business/school partnerships.

CTECS consists of 17 high schools, one technical education center and two post graduate schools for aviation maintenance technicians. The CTECS 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 2017-18 school year.

[Public Act 18-182](#) will transition CTECS into an independent executive branch agency effective July 1, 2021.

## **Improvements/Achievements 2017-18**

### **Academic Office**

#### *New Standards and Frameworks Adopted in 2017-18*

- Agriculture Science and Technology Education (ASTE): On May 2, 2018, the Connecticut State Board of Education (Board) approved the Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (AFNR) Career Cluster Content Frameworks, Connecticut Edition. These standards prepare students for careers in the areas of agriculture mechanics, animal science, aquaculture and marine technologies, natural resources and environmental systems, and plant science.
- Computer Science Standards: On June 6, 2018, the Board approved the 2017 Computer Science Teachers Association Standards and the Connecticut Computer Science Education Implementation Guidelines. These guidelines provide information regarding the structure of the standards, models of implementation, and resources. Because of the standards and the new graduation requirements, computer science can now count towards graduation requirements for high school students.
- ISTE Standards for Students: On June 6, 2018, the Board approved the ISTE Standards for Students providing a framework for amplifying digital age learning, citizenship, and teaching across the content areas.

#### *Improved Performance Indicators*

- Connecticut Statewide Career and Technical Education (CTE): The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has established a new Perkins performance accountability measure to provide a more accurate assessment of students' career and technical skill proficiencies. Instead of using the Annual Career and Technical Education Assessment (i.e., NOCTI), Connecticut now assesses technical skills through successful completion of two (2) Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses in one of the pathways in Connecticut's CTE program areas.

#### *Expanding Access*

- Global Engagement: On May 2, 2018, the Board approved the Connecticut Certificate of Global Engagement Guidelines to assist Connecticut districts and high schools in establishing a program to recognize high school graduates who have successfully completed a global education curriculum and engaged in co-curricular activities and experiences that foster the development of global competencies and global citizenship.
- Social Studies: To promote civic engagement, the CSDE worked with various partners and agencies throughout the 2017-18 year. In cooperation with the Old State House, the CSDE co-sponsored three regional conversations in different parts of the state where high school students discussed important political and social issues.

## *Operationalizing Goal 2*

The Academic Office identified two powerful strategies and provided support, guidance, and training to assist schools and districts in improving teaching and learning in:

- **Early Literacy Success:** Through the leveraging of early literacy initiatives, K-3 administrators, special education teachers, teachers of English Learners, and regular education teachers were provided specialized professional learning and supports to assist K-3 students in the understanding of early literacy standards, valid and reliable reading assessments, and scientifically research-based reading instruction.
- **High-quality Mathematics Curriculum and Instruction:** The Academic Office provided technical assistance and professional learning to administrators and teachers on evidence-based practices, including an interactive 3-part webinar series. The CSDE launched the inaugural year of the Commissioner’s Summer Math Challenge and 12,490 students registered.

## *Bureau of Special Education*

### *General Monitoring and Supervision*

- Assigned the top ranking of “Meets Requirements” for its 2018 annual determination based on the state’s performance on the 17 indicators monitored through the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).
- Implemented phase 3, year 2 of the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), Indicator 17 of the SPP/APR, including an in-district technical support system. (SSIP’s) focus is early literacy instruction (K-3) and increasing the reading performance of all third-grade students with disabilities statewide. Multi-Tiered Supports were provided to a cohort of districts based on data obtained from the 2017 statewide assessments and the District Literacy Evaluation Tool.
  - In collaboration with the Reading/Literacy Director, offered Special Education ReadConn Professional Development Series to districts. The series identifies critical early literacy skills and delivery of explicit instruction regardless of the reading approach or program and was designed specifically to support both K-3 special education teachers and K-3 general education teachers who serve students with disabilities.
- Designed and introduced a fiscal monitoring system that determined the overall risk level associated with any subgrantee (LEA) award use of IDEA Part B funds. Supports and resources were delivered to LEAs in a tiered model depending upon the determined risk status, Universal, Advanced, Targeted or Intensive.
- Conducted a special education compliance file review for 56 districts in collaboration with the Performance Office to review practices related to the Statewide Alternative Assessment system and IEP documentation of student present levels of performance.
- Designed and updated an electronic directory of Approved Private Special Education Programs.

### *Special Education Dispute Resolution*

- Trained and supervised new hearing officers and mediators to support the dispute resolution system that addressed 287 requests for mediation and 234 requests for due process hearings.
- Investigated 169 special education complaints.
- Contracted with 21 new surrogate parents to support over 1,400 students with disabilities in the care of the Department of Children and Families.
- Introduced a student member to the State Advisory Council for Special Education and under the leadership of a new chairperson updated by-laws, and instituted a new training/orientation process.

### *Communications and Resources*

- Redesigned LEA professional learning opportunities to align activities with the 17 indicators within the Special Education State Performance Plan.
- Developed a Youth Advisory Professional Development Series including student forums, student leadership training, and advisory structures as part of the Student Voice Initiative.
- Provided LRP Special Education Connections subscription to all LEAs as a resource to support federal and state special education requirements.
- Created and disseminated guidelines and online resources regarding Independent Education Evaluations at Public Expense and In-School Observations.
- Revised restraint and seclusion guidelines and resources to reflect legislative updates.
- Collaborated with state agencies to develop Connecticut Student Transition Resource Website (STR) for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Provided technical assistance and training related to the new Maintenance of Effort calculator to assist districts with “supplement not supplant” standards within the IDEA Part B grant.

## **Performance Office**

The mission of the Performance Office is to improve student outcomes using data. To that end, the office has five goals. Accomplishments during 2017-18 under each goal are listed below:

Goal: Collect accurate data in a highly efficient, secure, and timely manner.

- Successfully collected accurate data about students, educators, districts/schools, and assessments in a timely manner as required by federal/state legislation and regulations; implemented data freeze protocols with fidelity to facilitate timely reporting.
- Delivered professional development, streamlined data collection systems, eliminated/trimmed data collections where possible, and provided documentation/communication (through the new ct.gov portal) 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 language proficiency.
- Delivered all assessments, including the ELP assessment, via computer.
- Developed and piloted new science alternate assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.
- Expanded training and support to districts in the use of interim assessment blocks that are aligned to state standards in ELA and mathematics and designed to inform classroom instruction.
- Provided preliminary assessment results to districts within a week after testing to help educators use the information for planning and professional development.

Goal: Aggregate data and deliver accurate information in a secure, timely, and transparent manner.

- Developed and deployed EdSight Secure – a new visual data analytics portal that gives authorized users in districts and schools secure access to their own data; provided regional training sessions to users.
- Implemented the early indication tool for students in grades 1 through 6; created an interactive, visual report within EdSight Secure that allows users to filter, sort, and/or disaggregate the data in several different ways so that they can identify students who need additional support to achieve academic milestones.
- Updated data in the numerous interactive public reports available through EdSight (e.g., suspension rate, course enrollments by subject, graduation rates, educator demographics, primary disability, Smarter Balanced growth model, SAT).
- Integrated three years of LAS Links ELP assessment data and created interactive reports for achievement, mastery, and growth within both EdSight public and EdSight Secure.

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, special education performance reports, restraints and seclusions, LAS Links Growth Model Technical Report, and Bilingual Education Report.
- 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.
- Partnered with other agencies through P20WIN to gather critical information about employment and postsecondary outcomes of Connecticut high school graduates.
- Conducted custom analyses to identify special education students who are taking the alternate assessment for in-depth IEP reviews.



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 third year of the next-generation multifactor district/school accountability model that provides a holistic picture of performance.
- Published bright spots by identifying schools of distinction for high achievement as well as high growth, and nominating Blue Ribbon schools.
- Provided technical assistance, documentation, and support to facilitate the use of accountability results for program improvement.
- Successfully defended Connecticut's innovative approaches to achievement and growth measurement and procured approval of Connecticut's plan with the federal government; created brief YouTube videos to help educators better understand these innovative approaches.
- Analyzed NAEP results from prior years to identify areas for curriculum/instructional improvement.

### **Office of Student Supports and Organizational Effectiveness**

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

- A change in state statute eliminated truancy and defiance of school rules as a Family with Service Needs (FWSN) court referral effective in the 2017-18 school year. The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), with the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC), designed a community-based referral system for referrals to Youth Service Bureaus. Districts are able to use this system to connect students who are truant to community support and care networks. The CSDE also produced a Catalog of Truancy Intervention Models for use by schools and districts in addressing high rates of truancy.
- In school year 2017-18, 890 participating schools and residential childcare institutions served 18,101,822 breakfast meals, which demonstrates an increase of 75,728 breakfast meals over school year 2016-17.
- The Summer Meals Programs served 1,775,084 meals to 39,204 children at 688 sites statewide. Connecticut continues to be one of 10 top-performing states in meals served to children and teens compared with school year lunches served. Among top performing states, Connecticut is second in the nation in the provision of summer breakfasts when compared to summer lunches. This demonstrates the CSDE's commitment to ensure the provision of more than one healthy meal for children each day in the summer, when school meals are not available.
- Connecticut was awarded a demonstration project from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to use Medicaid data to determine eligibility for free and reduced-price school meals. The CSDE, with assistance from the Department of Social Services (DSS), successfully implemented the Medicaid Direct Certification Demonstration Project statewide, which resulted in increasing the number of students directly certified for free and reduced-price meals by over 75,000. This also reduces the burden on families by eliminating the need for submitting applications to determine eligibility. Schools participating in the School Meal Programs benefit by reducing the number of applications requiring accuracy verification.

- During the 2017-18 school year, more than 2,100 students who were displaced from Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands and areas of the United States by hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria were enrolled in public schools throughout Connecticut. Connecticut responded quickly and effectively to meet the needs of the children and families who were displaced. The CSDE worked with districts to organize and provide for basic needs, ensure social and emotional supports to families, and provide essential academic programs and instruction.
- The CSDE, the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC) and the Connecticut Early Childhood Funders Collaborative (ECFC), joined with parents, educators and communities to create a common definition, framework and guiding principles for advancing state and local family engagement efforts. The purpose is to encourage a shared understanding and collaboration among educators, providers, partners and families, leading to a robust culture of partnership between families and professionals throughout all education and human service programs.
- The OSSOE, in collaboration with the Turnaround Office, developed CSDE Evidence-Based Practice Guides to inform school and district decision-making regarding instructional and student support programming and to optimize the use of the local, state, and federal school improvement fund. The guides address key topics including (1) family engagement, and (2) school climate that included sections on school discipline and chronic absence.
- Over the past six years, the total number of suspensions and expulsions has declined by 31.7 percent from approximately 127,000 in 2009-10 to approximately 86,800 in 2016-17. The unduplicated count of students receiving at least one suspension or expulsion also declined over the same period by 27.9 percent from approximately 50,800 in 2009-10 to approximately 36,600 in 2016-17.
- The School-Based Diversion Initiative (SBDI) is a multiagency collaboration directed toward reducing negative youth contact with police and school-based arrests and increasing local educational agency (LEA) capacity to address psychological, emotional, developmental and behavioral needs among students in collaborating schools. In schools with the Leaders-in-Residence, outcomes for school year 2017-18 include an overall 34 percent decrease in court referrals and a 58.5 percent increase in referrals to Emergency Mobile Crisis Services. While raw numbers for referrals to Mobile Crisis remained steady or increased, there was an overall decrease in exclusive reliance on Mobile Crisis and an increase in mental health capacity within the schools themselves, along with increased community collaboration.
- The CSDE Adult Education Unit has worked with the Department of Labor and the Department of Rehabilitative Services to complete the second year of implementing the goals of the Unified State Plan as mandated by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The CSDE has enhanced and supported programs and services that are more comprehensive, cost-effective and responsive to community needs by supplementing Connecticut's commitment of state and local adult education dollars with WIOA Title II dollars. Sixty organizations, including school districts, volunteer programs, community-based organizations, and other agencies provided adult education services in Connecticut by recruiting and retaining educationally and economically disadvantaged adults. By focusing on the needs of learners, families, communities, and employers, adult education programs succeeded in improving the skills of Connecticut's

learners, enabling thousands of residents to attain a secondary-school diploma, helping to close the skills gap in the workplace, assisting non-English speakers to learn English, easing the transition to post-secondary education, preparing residents to attain U.S. citizenship and helping families to break the intergenerational cycle of illiteracy.

#### *Bureau of Choice Programs, RSCO, and Sheff*

- The bureaus oversee the implementation of the Open Choice program statewide. The program allows urban students to attend public schools in nearby suburban towns and suburban and rural students to attend public schools in the Bridgeport, Hartford, and New Haven regions. In 2017-18, 3,055 students participated in the Open Choice program, attending 253 schools outside of their home district.
- In 2017-18 the Sheff Office and the Bureau of Choice Programs established and implemented the Reduced-Isolation Setting and Residency Standards for interdistrict magnet school programs statewide. This was completed in compliance with C.G.S. 10-264r. To remain eligible for a magnet school operating grant, the interdistrict magnet schools must satisfy the requirements of the standards.
- In 2016-17, and in accordance with the C.G.S Section 10-74k, OSSOE staff, working with the Alternative Schools Committee, a broad coalition of stakeholders, developed the *Guidelines for Alternative Education Settings*. In 2017-18, in accordance with C.G.S. Section 10-233d(d)3, the OSSOE and the Alternative Schools Committee developed the *Standards for Educational Opportunities for Students Who Have Been Expelled*, which were approved by the State Board of Education in January 2018. The standards describe the circumstances when an alternative educational opportunity must be offered to students who have been expelled, student placement, the development of an individualized learning plan, transition planning, and guiding principles for such educational opportunities.
- Under ESSA Title IV, Part A, a new grant opportunity was made available to states and LEAs. The Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants are intended to improve students' academic achievement by increasing the capacity of states, LEAs and local communities to provide all students with a well-rounded education; improve school conditions for student learning; and improve the use of technology in order to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students. Connecticut received approximately \$3,350,000 for this grant in 2016-17. All LEAs receiving Title I funding were eligible to apply and receive these entitlement funds.

#### **Talent Office**

- Completed numerous actions aligned to the six high-level principles for the transformation of educator preparation programs for both teachers and school leaders recommended by the Educator Preparation Advisory Council (EPAC) and approved by the Connecticut State Board of Education (SBE), including development of a public facing Educator Preparation data system, a new teacher/employer survey, a new principal survey, successful phased implementation of a new administrator licensure assessment, edTPA, and the review and approval of new, innovative educator preparation programs.
- Continued to provide ongoing support to Relay Graduate School of Education, an

alternate route to certification approved by the SBE in November 2016. Relay focuses their recruitment efforts on non-certified individuals of color in alignment with the CSDE/SBE goal to increase the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of Connecticut's educator workforce. In 2017-18, 60 percent of the 91 candidates enrolled were people of color.

- Continued to implement various actions to streamline certification processes and procedures designed to increase efficiency while maintaining high quality service to Connecticut educators. This effort was intended to both improve service to Connecticut educators and address decreased staffing capacity in the Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification.
- Issued 24,415 educator certificates and answered 17,605 calls to the call center.
- In the absence of state funding to support TEAM during 2017-18, collaborated with the RESC Alliance to support individual educators and local district staff as they managed this unexpected transition
- Continued to provide technical assistance to support implementation of 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.
- As follow-up to a research and state policy scan conducted in 2016-17, developed *EdKnowledge*, an online repository of resources specific to strategies, promising practices, and models of success to increase the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of Connecticut's educator workforce. The repository will be launched in fall 2018.
- Continued to engage with and facilitate the work of the faculty at seven EPPs: Central, Southern, Eastern and Western Connecticut State Universities, University of Bridgeport, Fairfield University, and Sacred Heart University and five local school districts: New Britain, Hamden, Windham, Danbury and Bridgeport, through the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability and Reform (CEEDAR) Center Grant. Using the work accomplished from a previous CEEDAR grant, which led to the publication of the *Guide to Developing Quality Fieldwork Experiences for Teacher Candidates*; EPPs assessed current fieldwork experiences and developed a plan to reform clinical experiences and enhance partnerships with PK-12 districts to support the development of learner ready teachers on day one of the school year. Implementation of action plans is expected in fall 2018.
- Partnered with the University of Connecticut (UConn) on the University Principal Preparation Initiative (UPPI), through a grant funded by the Wallace Foundation, to transform principal preparation. In its second year, the focus of UPPI is to engage with a preparing institution, state and district partners to improve the effectiveness of principals, specific to raising the quality of urban schools. To meet the aims of UPPI, UConn formed a Networked Improvement Community (NIC) to draw upon the knowledge and expertise of leaders from partner districts (Hartford, New Haven, Meriden), state-level administrators, and university faculty. NIC's goal is to make significant changes to the (1) content and pedagogy of principal preparation instruction, (2) supervised clinical practice, and (3) measure graduates' impact. Connecticut has eight administrator preparation programs all of which are invited to the table to contribute to the work of "transforming the Connecticut principalship" through several joint convenings.

- Established a partnership with the Connecticut Department of Labor (DOL) to provide career counseling and employment services to prospective educators. The CSDE Talent Office conducted informational sessions about pathways to certification and provided resources to career counselors in five regional job centers across the state. The DOL is offering resume writing workshops customized for certified teachers who are not currently employed in Connecticut public schools. These workshops were held at regional job centers and at a CSDE sponsored networking event.
- Partnered with TEACH.org, a national digital recruitment platform, to develop and launch TEACH Connecticut. Connecticut is first in the nation to engage with TEACH.org as a statewide initiative. This multi-stakeholder partnership will engage school districts, educator preparation programs, and other stakeholders to develop a comprehensive recruiting and marketing system designed to elevate the image of teaching and is intended to recruit the next generation of Connecticut educators.
- Wrote a successful grant application resulting in a \$1.1 million dollar grant from the Department of Defense. The five-year grant is intended to create a Connecticut Troops to Teachers program. The goal of the program is to actively engage veterans in the tri-state area who are interested in pursuing a second career in education. Veterans will be encouraged and supported to seek certification in a priority shortage area for potential employment in high-poverty/high-minority school districts.
- Collaborated with the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (GTL) and the Northeast Comprehensive Center (NCC), federally funded technical assistance providers, to design and deliver a four-part series designed to examine the potential for unconscious bias in hiring and selection practices. Representatives from several Opportunity Districts, parent groups, and professional organizations are currently participating in the series.
- Assisted the four Connecticut State Universities (CSUs) to initiate a memorandum of understanding with their local school district to implement S.A. 16-10, *An Act Establishing a Pilot Program for Minority Students in High School to Pursue a College Degree*. The statute requires the CSUs to offer at least one tuition free, credit-bearing course to minority high school juniors and seniors to promote an interest in education as a potential career. As a result, the CSDE anticipates more students of color enrolling in Connecticut teacher preparation programs in the next three to five years.
- Facilitated two workshops with the State Student Advisory Council on Education to discuss the challenges related to increasing the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of Connecticut's educator workforce to more closely align with the increasing diversity of Connecticut's student population. At the request of the chief talent officer, the Commissioner has advised that, in 2018-19, the sole focus for the council will be on developing strategies to elevate and market the profession to attract a diverse educator workforce.
- Surveyed 739 certified educators of color, not currently employed in Connecticut public schools, to determine continued interest in a teaching position. Of those surveyed, 178 indicated an interest in receiving additional information. The CSDE Talent Office hosted a Connecticut Educator Networking Event in partnership with the Department of Labor and the CSDE Turnaround Office. Fifteen Alliance Districts and nearly 50 certified educators of color attended an in-person networking event on June 26, 2018. Initial impact of this strategy will be measured by October 1, 2018, at which time all Connecticut districts will report to the CSDE about staffing for the 2018-19 school year.

## **Division of Finance and Internal Operations**

### *Bureau of Fiscal Services*

- Continued to improve the stability and operation of all agency fiscal processes to ensure all cost-saving measures are implemented effectively and result in overall budgetary savings.
- Processed over 45,000 vouchers for payment, including over 19,000 grant payments in excess of \$3.2 billion.
- Processed over 8,000 purchase orders.
- Processed and managed over 200 personal service contracts.
- Managed budgets for nearly \$3.5 billion of expenditures across over 100 state and federal accounts.
- Assisted in the development of the Department's mid-term budget request for education grant programs.
- Prepared various state and federal financial reports.
- In collaboration with the Bureau of Information Technology, completed development of the new Education Financial System. The system consolidates annual data collections from districts for the ED001 End-of-Year School Reports, federal expenditure reporting, and the Uniform Chart of Accounts reporting.
- Performed over 40 state and federal education grant calculations.
- Processed over 2,500 individual grant budgets for approximately 500 subrecipients.

### *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 Education and Career System (CTECS).
- Managed position management/refill/recruitment process to fill key agency vacancies, including instructional vacancies.
- Served on negotiating teams for State Vocational Federation of Teachers, American Federation of School Administrators, 1199, A&R, NP-2, NP-3, P-2, P-3A for SEBAC and individual unit negotiations.
- Administered the provisions of the SEBAC and individual unit agreements to the applicable bargaining units, including one-time bonuses, options for a 40-hour workweek, longevity payments, new retirement deductions for SERS, etc.
- Served on Labor Management Committees for SVFT, AFSA, 1199, P-2, and P-3A.
- As APO for the Office of Early Childhood, administered all human resources functions (transfers, classification issues, notification, position actions, labor relations, payroll, performance evaluation, recruitment, professional development, coordination with DAS).
- Issued mandatory sexual harassment and diversity training, as well as online workplace violence training, active shooter training, ethics training, and tracked agency participation for SDE and OEC.
- Payroll activities included the timely processing of biweekly paychecks, employee health insurance benefits, retirements, payroll deductions, longevity, collective bargaining

provisions for SDE and OEC, including self-service time and labor for OEC.

- Initiated the process to begin the transition of all human resources functions to CTECS as a standalone agency.

#### *Bureau of Information Technology*

- In collaboration with the Bureau of Fiscal Services, completed development of and launched the new Education Financial System. The system consolidates annual data collections from districts for the ED001 End-of-Year School Reports, federal expenditure reporting, and the Uniform Chart of Accounts reporting.
- Extended EdSight Secure to allow school building-level access to student and teacher data.
- Collaborated with SAS, Pinnacle Systems, DAS/BEST and the CSDE's Performance Office to get SAS Visual Analytics operational and securely facing school district users.
- Updated application for the School Nutrition Office to include Husky A/Medicaid status as a new determining factor, allowing over 75,000 additional students to be directly certified as eligible to receive school lunch benefits in National School Lunch Program districts.
- Deployed two new Information Systems Technology shops – one at Emmett O'Brien Technical High School and the other at Windham Technical High School.
- Deployed 1,000 new computers and installed 20 servers across the CTECS.

#### **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.
- Developed guidance on critical civil rights issues affecting students in Connecticut, including in the areas of immigration, enrollment, and the rights of transgender students.

## **Turnaround Office**

The CSDE Turnaround Office oversees the work of Connecticut's 33 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 33 lowest-performing districts. Conn. Gen. Statute 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, Groton, Hamden, Hartford, Killingly, Manchester, Meriden, Middletown, Naugatuck, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Norwalk, Norwich, Putnam, Stamford, Thompson, Torrington, Vernon, Waterbury, West Haven, Winchester, Windham, Windsor, and Windsor Locks.

### *Opportunity Districts*

Under Connecticut's ESSA Consolidated State Plan, the 10 highest-need Alliance Districts were designated in 2017 as Opportunity Districts that would receive a significantly greater system of supports. Under the Opportunity District program, each district defines its three highest strategic need areas. A district-specific cross-divisional team composed of appropriate members from Turnaround, Academic, Student Supports, Climate, Special Education, Talent, and Early



Childhood has been assigned to collaborate and work closely with each district to provide an even higher level of resources, targeted and differentiated evidence-based support, district capacity building, and oversight to advance those priorities. In-person monitoring meetings, including district leadership and the cross-divisional team, are also conducted three times per year.

Opportunity Districts include Bridgeport, Derby, East Hartford, East Haven, Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Norwich, and Waterbury.

### *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. In 2017-18, 15 schools were included 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. Schools are selected and accepted into the network for a minimum of three years. The Connecticut State Board of Education may allow schools to continue in the network for an additional year, not to exceed two additional 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. The Commissioner's Network included the following schools in 2017-18:

#### Cohort II: joined the network in fall 2013

Paul L. 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

Luiz Munoz Marin School, Bridgeport  
Lincoln-Bassett Community School, New Haven  
O'Brien STEM Academy, East Hartford  
Uncas School, Norwich

#### Cohort IV: joined the network in fall 2015

East Hartford Middle School, East Hartford

#### Cohort V: joined the network in fall 2016

Batcheller Early Education Center, Winchester  
Clinton Avenue School, New Haven  
Columbus School, Bridgeport  
Pearson School, Winchester

#### Cohort VI: joined the network in fall 2017

New Britain High School, New Britain

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 non-school 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. Specific funding for Summer School is also a specific component of Priority School District funding.

The Priority School Districts for the 2017-18 school year were Ansonia, Bridgeport, Danbury, Derby, East Hartford, Hartford, Manchester, 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 receives funding under its three-year phase-out.

### *Charter Schools*

Connecticut has both state and local charter schools that represent innovative school models utilizing diverse, research-based educational methods. A local charter school is a new school or part of a public school that is converted into a charter school approved by the local board of education and the SBE. As independent local education agencies, charter schools are granted significant autonomy in exchange for strict accountability and high expectations for school performance. The CSDE's charter school performance framework holds charter schools accountable for impact and results in four key areas: school performance; stewardship, governance, and management; student population; and legal compliance. Currently, there are 24 charter schools statewide, located in 11 host districts, serving approximately 10,000 students.

State Charter Schools in 2017-18 included:

Bridgeport: Achievement First Bridgeport Academy, The Bridge Academy, Capital Preparatory Harbor School, Great Oaks, New Beginnings Family Academy, Park City Prep Charter School  
Hartford: Achievement First Hartford Academy, Jumokey Academy Charter School  
Manchester: Odyssey Charter School  
New Haven: Amistad Academy, Booker T. Washington, Common Ground High School, Elm City College Preparatory School, Elm City Montessori (local charter), Highville Charter  
New London: Interdistrict School for Arts and Communication (ISAAC)

Norwalk: Side by Side Charter School  
Norwich: Integrated Day Charter School  
Stamford: Stamford Academy, Stamford Charter School for Excellence, Trailblazers Academy  
Waterbury: Brass City Charter School  
Windham: Path Academy  
Winsted: Explorations Charter School

*Title I Part A School Improvement Grants*

The Turnaround Office manages and distributes the state's allocation of Title I Part A School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds, providing technical support to 12 SIG schools, which have received allocations for comprehensive support under No Child Left Behind (NCLB). In 2017-18, these schools included:

Bridgeport: Roosevelt  
Brookfield: Brookfield High School  
Hartford: McDonough  
Meriden: Barry  
New Haven: West Rock, Troup, Hillhouse, and Truman  
New London: Jennings  
Norwich: Veteran's  
Charter Schools: Explorations Charter, Great Oaks Charter

In 2017-18, the Turnaround Office also managed and monitored final SIG awards to 22 schools for targeted support under NCLB.

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

- Alliance Districts participated in an Early Childhood Pre K-3 Symposium. Sessions highlighted collaboration between school districts, agencies, Head Start and philanthropic organizations; establishing effective partnerships; improving young learners executive functioning skills; improving educational experiences for African American, Latino, and low-income children and their families; and identifying risk factors in communities that may impact a child's learning.
- Leadership teams from Commissioner's Network, SIG, and Charter Schools participated in professional learning sessions (NetStat) three times a year to share best practices, network, and problem solve with colleagues from other schools. Sessions focused on areas of school improvement, including, supporting English learners, reducing chronic absenteeism, improving literacy and math instruction, engaging students through the integration of technology, implementing Restorative Practices, and using data to inform and improve instruction
- 32 Alliance Districts completed school climate and/or Restorative Practices training and professional development to more than 3,500 educators, statewide.
- Provide formal monitoring sessions for Alliance Districts twice during the year, in addition to ongoing support.
- Provide technical assistance to Commissioner's Network Schools on a biweekly basis.

- Published evidence-based practice guides as a resource to support implementation of the state's ESSA Consolidated Plan.
- Distributed \$7.4 million in state bond funding for school improvements related to student learning.

### **Office of Internal Audit**

Key accomplishments include the following:

- Conducted a review of purchasing transactions made by a Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS) High School with a local vendor. The purpose of the review was to determine if payments were made in compliance with State of Connecticut and CSDE policies and procedures. OIA analyzed various documentation including program applications, memorandum of understanding, purchase orders, invoices, correspondence, and other supporting information. OIA found several internal controls deficiencies related to contracting and purchasing as well as inadequate management oversight.
- Conducted a compliance review of production work at a CTECS school to evaluate compliance with CTECS policies and procedures. OIA identified instances of noncompliance with established policies and procedures such as lack of required documentation of production work, un-timely payments, and lack of required approvals. In addition, internal control issues were noted with CTECS production processes and within the production order database system.
- Conducted a review of a state charter school's Public School Information System (PSIS) data submissions for October 2016 and October 2017 to verify student enrollment numbers and determine the location(s) at which students were reported to have been enrolled. Based on review of documentation provided, OIA determined the number of students for whom no enrollment confirming documentation was provided, the number enrolled in unapproved satellite locations, part-time students and students with no grades or days in attendance. OIA recommended that CSDE pursue a refund for grant overpayments.
- Ascertained the extent to which assets were accounted for and safeguarded from losses by monitoring reports of irregularities involving funds or equipment at various schools. OIA made referrals to appropriate state agencies, school administration, and CSDE management.
- Evaluated the quality and completeness with which management performed assigned responsibilities during audit activity.
- Coordinated work with external certified public accountant (CPA) firms and the Auditors of Public Accounts (APA) to provide assurance to the Board, departmental managers, and state and federal regulators that resources are being used efficiently, effectively and in compliance with applicable statutes, regulations, policies and procedures.
- Provided audit services for the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) including preparation of the compliance supplement for OEC grants and monitoring of federal and state single audits of OEC's grantees.
- Advised grantees receiving federal awards of their responsibilities to have audits performed in accordance with Uniform Grant Guidance requirements, reviewed audit reports for compliance with Uniform Grant Guidance provisions and required grantees to

provide corrective action plans to ensure resolution of audit findings that may include questioned costs. OIA worked with appropriate program management to determine whether or not questioned costs were allowable and, if necessary, notified the Bureau of Fiscal Services (BFS) of the need to recover funds.

- Worked with OPM on issues identified in audits performed by CPA firms of grantees receiving state financial assistance from the CSDE. This activity included addressing questioned costs and compliance or internal control findings. OIA also developed audit compliance supplements for the grants administered by CSDE to be included in the State Single Audit Compliance Supplement for use by CPA firms.
- Provided program management with financial analysis, audit services, and recommendations for the charter school and magnet school programs. These services included participating at four site visits for charter renewals and evaluating the financial and management controls related to fiscal operations and recommending improvements.

### **Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS)**

CTECS 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 CTECS prepares students for both postsecondary education and licensed apprenticeships or immediate productive employment. For the 2017-18 school year, the CTECS served a ninth through twelfth grade population that was 46 percent white and 54 percent minority, 40 percent female and 60 percent male. Out of the 169 Connecticut resident towns, 165 were represented within the CTECS student body. The graduation rate for the Class of 2017 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. There were 771 students who participated in work based learning programs. The district embraces blended learning and the use of technology with Google Classrooms and will deploy 3,300 Chromebooks to freshman for class and home use.

CTECS students were among the best in the nation and state. Three students from the district won gold medals at the SkillsUSA Nationals competition: the Platt Tech Team placed first in Career Pathway Showcase. Silver medals were earned by Ellis Tech students: one in masonry and one in plumbing. Overall CTECS students placed in the top 10 of 17 different events at the SkillsUSA competition. Four Platt Technical High School students were chosen for NASA'S HUNCH (High School Students United with NASA to Create Hardware) Design and Prototyping Final Review at Johnson Space Center in Houston. The Platt Tech HUNCH Team was one of three teams chosen from schools all around the country. CTECS students have won various awards and scholarships such as the Midstate Chamber of Commerce student education award winners from Wilcox Tech. KBE Building Corporation gave \$19,000 in scholarship checks to 19 graduating seniors from CTECS. Abbott Tech was represented by a student for excellence in math and science at Fairfield University. Cheney and Prince Tech students collaborated to win the Best Use of Music in a video during the 10th annual DMV-Travelers Teen Safe Driving video PSA competition.

CTECS students excelled at more than just academics and trade technologies. CTECS 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: hairdressing students gave free haircuts; and culinary students prepared meals for soup kitchens and veterans.

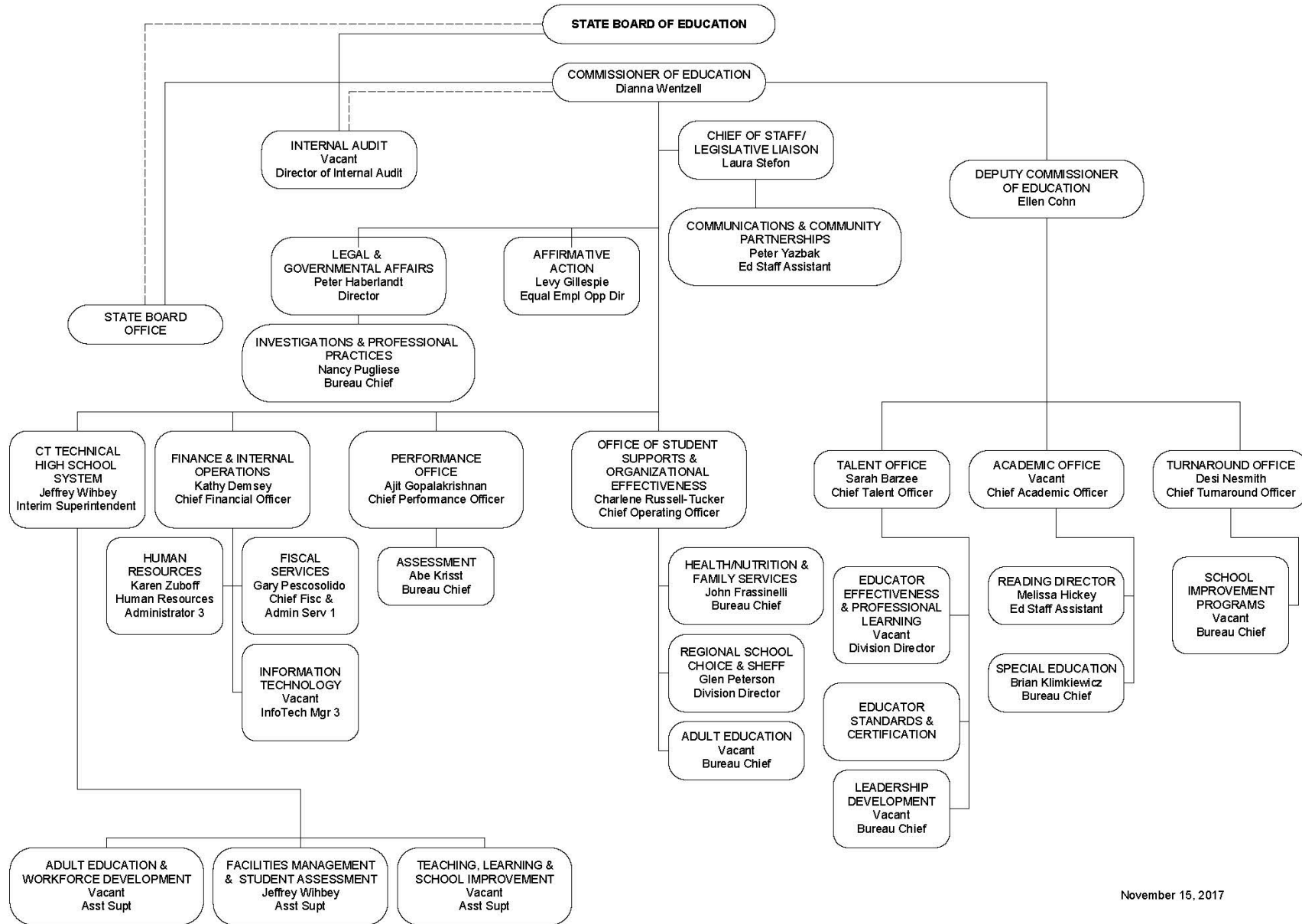
## **Information Reported as Required by State Statute**

The State of Connecticut Department of Education is committed to a policy of affirmative action/equal opportunity employment for all qualified persons. The Connecticut Department of Education does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of age, ancestry, color, criminal record (in state employment and licensing), gender identity or expression, genetic information, intellectual disability, marital status, mental disability (past or present), national origin, physical disability (including blindness), race, religious creed, retaliation for previously opposed discrimination or coercion, sex (pregnancy or sexual harassment), sexual orientation, veteran status or workplace hazards to reproductive systems, unless there is a bona fide occupational qualification excluding persons in any of the aforementioned protected classes.

The Affirmative Action Office, 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 relative to affirmative action and equal opportunity employment. This includes investigating discrimination complaints, as well as determining and documenting reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

During this reporting period, the Department hired 68 employees: 26 white males, 33 white females, two black males, one black female, three Hispanic males, two Hispanic females, zero AAIANHNPI (Asian, American Indian, Alaskan Native, Hawaiian Native, or Pacific Islander) males, and one AAIANHNPI female. Of the 68 hires, the Department hired 33 goal candidates that consisted of two white males, 27 white females, zero black males, one black female, zero Hispanic males, two Hispanic females, zero AAIANHNPI males, and one AAIANHNPI female.

## ORGANIZATION CHART FOR THE CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



November 15, 2017