

# Connecticut State Department of Education

## *At a Glance*

**DR. MIGUEL A. CARDONA, 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: 2,097 (1,683 full-time, 414 part-time)***

***Recurring operating expenses: \$2,980,664,407***

***Organizational structure: See chart***

## **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, Labor, 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.

As part of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, the State Department of Education has implemented an [accountability system](#) that uses a set of 12 indicators to show how well schools are preparing students for success in college, careers, and life. The system moves beyond test scores and graduation rates and instead provides a holistic, multifactor perspective of district and school performance, and incorporates student growth over time.

### **COVID-19 Global Pandemic**

In response to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the State Department of Education compiled dozens of resources for school districts and the public. The following links and others throughout this document contain the more highly accessed COVID-related memos, guidance documents, webinars, and resources the Department created.

- [Superintendent’s Digest Main Page](#)
- [COVID-19 Resource Main Page for Families and Educators](#)
- **School Reopen Guidance Documents and Addendums**
  - [Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut’s Plan to Learn and Grow Together](#)
  - [Addendum 1 Temporarily Opting into Voluntary Remote Learning Due to COVID-19](#)
  - [Addendum 2 COVID Guidance and Considerations for Preschool Located in Public Schools](#)
  - [Addendum 3 Fall Reopening Resource Document for Students with High Needs](#)
  - [Addendum 4 Interim Guidance for Decision-Making Regarding the Use of In-Person, Hybrid \(Blended\), or Remote Learning Models in Connecticut Schools during COVID-19](#)
  - [Addendum 5 Interim Guidance for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios in Connecticut School Districts](#)
  - [Addendum 6 Reopening Guidance for Educating Students with Disabilities](#)
  - [Addendum 7 COVID-19 Reopening Considerations for Connecticut K–12 Music Programs](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions about Reopening Schools, Volume 1](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions about Reopening Schools, Volume 2](#)
- [CT Learning Hub for Parents, Students and Educators](#)

## PUBLIC SERVICE

### Academic Office

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) 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:

- 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
- Distribute, monitor, 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:
  - a. Titles I, II, and III grant programs under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA);
- implementation of effective English learner (EL) programming and supports, including the Connecticut Bilingual Education Grant; and
- Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 as amended by the [Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act](#) (Perkins V) grant programs.

This year the Academic Office provided schools and districts with specialized COVID-19 coaching, support, and resources to assist in educating students from a distance, including:

- publishing four volumes of resources to support educators with distance learning;
- hosting and facilitating a webinar series of best practices;
- pivoting in-person professional learning and coaching to online.

### Bureau of Special Education

- Provides leadership to ensure that students with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education that prepares them for college or training, employment, independent living, and community participation.
- Ensures compliance with special education laws and regulations.

## **Performance Office**

### *Overview*

The Performance Office improves student outcomes through the use of data. Key goals/initiatives of the office are:

- [Data Collection](#): Collect accurate data in a highly efficient, secure, and timely manner.
- [Student Assessments](#): Implement high-quality assessments that are aligned to standards, inclusive, efficient, reliable, and enable valid interpretations of achievement and growth.
- [Information Technology](#): Utilize the latest technologies to implement robust data systems and reliable infrastructure that reduce districts' burdens and increase agency efficiencies.
- [EdSight - Data Integration/Reporting](#): Aggregate data and deliver accurate information in a secure, timely, and transparent manner.
- [Research and Analyses](#): Analyze and report data trends and insights to support informed decision-making and action by schools, districts, the CSDE, and other stakeholders.
- [Accountability](#): Develop performance models and metrics, establish targets, and publish reports that enable a suite of differentiated supports and interventions for schools and districts.

The Performance Office 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 Connecticut Report Cards; Next Generation Accountability reports; the special education Annual Performance Reports; data and research bulletins; and numerous interactive reports on topics like chronic absenteeism, discipline, educator demographics, graduation rates, and test results. In addition to the public portal, the EdSight Secure portal offers authorized users in districts and schools with secure access to actionable, student-level data. Reports include the Early Indication Tool, Smarter Balanced Growth, and LAS Links. The office also manages data submissions to the federal government, responds to numerous custom data requests, and engages in research partnerships.

## **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 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 and Priority School District 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.

#### *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 School Improvement Grant programs.
- Development and maintenance of the state’s electronic consolidated eGrants Management System applications (eGMS), including district applications for 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.

### **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

## **Finance and Internal Operations Office**

The Finance and Internal Operations Office coordinates the effective delivery of financial 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 and managing the annual calculation and disbursement of over \$3 billion to support state and local education initiatives, including implementation of our federal ESSA plan and the State Board of Education's Comprehensive 5 Year Plan for Education, adult education, general and special education, and choice programming.

Below are additional responsibilities of the Finance and Internal Operations Office:

- Budget process and implementation
- Asset management
- Purchasing, contract, and travel administration
- Accounts Receivable/Payable
- Cash management
- Operational services
- Federal and state grants
- Analysis of budget proposals and legislation for impact on CSDE grant related-functions
- Collection of local expenditure data for calculation and reporting purposes
- Prepayment grant system
- Payroll services

## **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, careers, and life. This is done in close collaboration with numerous education organizations including the state teachers' and administrators' unions, the Regional Education Service Center (RESC) Alliance, State Education Resource Center (SERC), the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE), the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS), the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS), and Connecticut's 24 Educator Preparation Programs (EPP).

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 evaluation and support systems and creating supportive school and district culture to reduce attrition and increase retention. Additionally, through the Collaboration for Effective Educator

Development and Reform (CEEDER) and University Principal Preparation Initiative (UPPI) grant opportunities, the Talent Office continues to build stronger partnerships between EPPs and school districts.

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.).

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).
- 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*).
- 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 certification in order to address the persistent shortage areas.

#### *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), CABE, CAS, 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, validate and in fall 2020, launch a new public-facing Educator Preparation Data Dashboard to provide real-time data about Connecticut Educator Preparation Programs

(EPPs) for the purposes of public transparency, program improvement, and accountability.

- Partner with the University of Connecticut (UConn), a recipient of a Wallace Foundation University Principal Preparation Program Initiative (UPPI) grant to support UConn's program improvement process, and share information and resources to support all Connecticut administrator preparation programs with a focus on equity-driven leadership.
- 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 were required to complete the assessment; in 2019-20 the State Board of Education adopted the multi-state cut scores for edTPA. The Talent Office helped facilitate a legislatively required edTPA Working Group during the fall 2019 and responded quickly during the pandemic to support EPPs, pre-service teacher candidates and student teachers.
- Provide oversight of the 12-member CSDE Review Committee, which considers the continuing approval status of all Connecticut 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 standards for professional learning.
- Oversee all aspects of statewide implementation of the TEAM program (training, allocation of funding, mentor training, etc.).
- Support districts in developing and implementing 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.
- Coordinate quarterly Teacher of the Year Advisory Council meetings with various CSDE departments. The council consists of semifinalists for Connecticut Teacher of the Year and provides input and feedback to the CSDE and the Commissioner on a variety of Department initiatives.
- 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 TV Access Now, with funding support from the Buck Foundation, developed and launched 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 was the first state to both partner and launch with Teach.org at the statewide 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.

### **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 provided by the Office of Internal Audit 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 Education and Career System (CTECS)**

The Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (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. CTECS is the state's largest high school system serving over 11,000 undergraduates and had over 2,700 adult-student registrations in postgraduate and apprenticeship programs throughout the 2019-20 school year. For the 2019-20 school year, the CTECS served a ninth through twelfth grade population that was 43% white and 57% minority, 40% female and 60% male. Out of the 169 Connecticut resident towns, 163 were represented within the CTECS student body. The CTECS Student Workforce offers a wide range of services, including construction, to the public at a fraction of the market price while providing students experience with real projects for real customers.

CTECS students excelled at more than just academics and trade technologies. CTECS takes pride in giving back to local communities. Teachers in manufacturing programs created face shields for frontline workers using 3D printing services in response to the COVID 19 epidemic. Schools held toy and blood drives, and fundraising activities for soup kitchens and the Connecticut Police Working Dog Association. Students also used the skills learned in their career technologies: hairdressing students gave free haircuts to veterans; and culinary students prepared meals for soup kitchens and veterans.

## Improvements/Achievements

### Academic Office

#### *Today's Skills, Tomorrow's Careers*

- On June 2020 the USDE approved Connecticut's Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) State Plan. This plan was created through an intensive stakeholder engagement process including the formation of a dedicated Perkins V stakeholder leadership group and gathering feedback through surveys, focus groups, and public hearings.
- On November 2, 2019, the Connecticut Computer Science Plan was adopted by the CT State Board of Education to provide a statewide vision to assist in the coherent implementation of K–12 computer science instruction and opportunities for all Connecticut K–12 students to engage in high-quality computer science education.

#### *Digital Citizenship, Internet Safety, Media Literacy*

On January 8, 2020, the Board adopted the Digital Citizenship, Internet Safety and Media Literacy Guidelines and Recommended Actions.

#### *Promoting the Arts and Civic Engagement*

The CSDE worked with various partners and state agencies throughout the 2019-20 year to promote the arts and civic engagement, including:

- releasing an interactive webinar series to assist LEAs in creating curricula that align to the Connecticut Arts Standards;
- co-sponsoring regional conversations with the Old State House to assist high school students and teachers in discussing important political and social issues; and
- Co-sponsoring the Red, White, and Blue schools program (Sec. of State), and the Veterans Recognition Program (Veterans Affairs).

#### *Early Literacy*

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the goal of early literacy and all students reading by grade 3 became even more urgent. Through the leveraging of CSDE early literacy initiatives, K-3 teachers in schools and districts were provided specialized professional learning and supports throughout the year regardless of COVID-19.

- The interactive reading foundational skills professional learning series (ReadConn) ended in March. Aligned to the teacher reading survey objectives, ReadConn supports the implementation of the Connecticut Core Standards in English Language Arts: Foundational Skills.

- Connecticut Literacy Model (CTLM) provided in-person supports before COVID and pivoted during COVID to ensure that CT Alliance districts continued to receive essential literacy training, professional development, and coaching.

### *English Learners*

A variety of in-person and resource support was provided to the field to advance teaching and learning for ELs, including the Pathways to Success for ELs Trainings, EL Guidelines for Administrators, updated Seal of Biliteracy guidance, and Teacher Table initiatives.

## **Bureau of Special Education**

### *COVID-19*

- The BSE developed [Guidance Documents and Resources for Parents and School Districts regarding Special Education during COVID-19](#)

### *General Monitoring and Supervision*

- Completed the revision to the individualized education program (IEP) document and elicited feedback on the draft document through public comment. Secured outside vendors to support (1) the development and implementation of a new statewide special education data/IEP system and (2) a five-year training plan to provide professional learning on compliant and high quality IEPs to local school districts.
- Revised POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND STANDARDS for approval of Approved Private Special Education Programs and associated Application and submitted to Commissioners Office for review
- Differentiated Monitoring and Support team created a companion document to the Annual Performance Report (APR) containing results based special education data points setting the groundwork to establish results based determinations.
- Redesigned Indicator 13: Secondary Transition general monitoring and supervision activities and 14: Post-School Outcome Survey and data collection processes.
- Collaborated with the Dept. of Emergency Services and Public Protection to revise the school security and safety plan standards, to include provisions relating to the emergency communication plan for deaf and hard of hearing students (Public Act 19-184).
- Revised and disseminated the Language and Communication Plan Language and Communication Plan (required for all deaf/hard of hearing students) to include the determination of an Emergency Plan for each student in alignment with the legislated requirements.
- Implemented phase 3, year 3 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. Multitiered supports were provided to a cohort of districts based on data obtained from the 2017 statewide assessments and the district literacy evaluation tool.

- Refined and implemented the Fiscal Risk Rubric related to sub-grantee risk in regards to the use of IDEA Part B Section 611/619 Grant funds.
- Partnered with the State Education Resource Center (SERC), New England Assistive Technology (NEAT) Center, and Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs) to provide resources, support, and technical assistance to school districts to assist with their efforts to provide Assistive Technology to students across the state.
- Conducted a special education compliance file review for 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 CT Transition Programs Offering Transition-Only Services for Students with Disabilities.

#### *Special Education Dispute Resolution*

- Trained and supervised hearing officers and mediators to support the dispute resolution system that addressed 304 requests for mediation and 232 requests for due process hearings.
- Developed a system to support remote mediations and hearings during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Investigated 131 special education complaints.

#### *Communications and Resources*

- Completion of the PreK sped needs assessment: The Quality of Programs in Which IEPs are implemented
- Development of transition from Part B to Part C training modules (w/OEC and Eastern CT State University)
- Kick-off and implementation of the 6<sup>th</sup> cohort of the UCONN PreK Leaders Program
- Designed and updated an electronic directory of CT Transition Programs Offering Transition-Only Services for Students with Disabilities.
- Collaborated with state agencies and key stakeholders to host the 5th Annual Secondary Transition Symposium: Every Voice Matters.
- Presented with the CT Secondary Transition Youth Advisory Board (YAB) at the National Technical Assistance Center for Transition (NTACT) Capacity Building Institute.
- Expanded the Youth Advisory Professional Development Series, including student forums, student leadership training, and advisory structures as part of the Student Voice Initiative.
- Redesigned the Secondary Transition and Specific Learning Disability (SLD) and SLD/Dyslexia webpages.
- Provided FREE Structured Literacy Program Training Series sessions to school districts, featuring several structured literacy approaches.
- Provided FREE SLD/Dyslexia online modules to the public.

- Developed and Implemented Pilot Training Program: Planning and Placement Team Leadership Initiative (PPTLI) to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.
- Implemented an innovative *8-Day Training Series on Planning and Placement Team Practices for Improved Student Outcomes* for educator cohorts representing 12 school districts and approximately 350 administrators, teachers and related service professionals. This training focused on five key principles: special education laws and procedures, improving student outcomes, improving quality of individualized education programs (IEPs), strengthening school and family partnerships, and decreasing the number of state complaints.
- Created, revised, or disseminated guidelines and online resources regarding special education initiatives such as the Model Special Education Procedures and Practices Manual, Guidelines for Physical Therapy in Educational Settings, Assistive Technology Guidelines, Assistive Technology Resource Guide, Best Practices for School Counseling in Connecticut, Parent’s Guide to Special Education in Connecticut, Procedural Safeguards in Special Education.
- Provided LRP Special Education Connections subscription to all LEAs as a resource to support federal and state special education requirements.
- Collaborated with state agencies to develop Connecticut Student Transition Resource Website (STR) for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Collaborated with the Talent Office to support the 2019 Paraeducator Symposium & Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year (POY) Recognition Ceremony

## **Performance Office**

The mission of the Performance Office is to improve student outcomes through the use of data. The accomplishments of the office during 2019-20 under each of its six goals are listed below:

### *Data Collection*

- Successfully collected accurate data about students, educators, districts/schools, and assessments in a timely manner as required by federal/state legislation and regulations. This includes the collection of millions of records via approximately 10 collections managed by 4 SDE staff.
- Followed data freeze protocols to facilitate timely reporting
- Delivered professional development, streamlined data collection systems, added new data validations, eliminated/trimmed data collections where possible, and provided documentation/communication to support districts and reduce their burden
- Managed several COVID-19 related projects including:
  - Conducted an initial outreach to LEA’s to determine immediate needs to support distance learning and triage support from the CSDE
  - Gathered data from LEA’s on graduation plans to ensure that all LEA’s had a safe and appropriate celebration.
  - Collaborated with the Governor’s Learn from Home Task Force and with LEA’s and Dell to configure, test, allocate, and deliver 60,000 laptops to high need districts

- Worked with LEA's and Scholastic to deliver book packs to over 187,000 PK-8 students in high need districts
- Conducted a second outreach to LEA's to determine the level of student participation in distance learning and barriers to full participation.
- Collected data on district reopening plans and fiscal needs to facilitate ongoing communication between LEA's , the Commissioner, OPM, and the Governor's office
- Collected data on the number of devices, cable connections, and Kajeet hotspots needed as part of the Governor's Everybody Learns Initiative to close the digital divide
- Collected student addresses and partnered with DSS for the provision of Pandemic-Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) cards to around 285,000 students statewide
- Collected Data Sharing Agreements from districts participating in the FAFSA Completion Initiative
- Worked with the USDOE and national colleagues to improve data comparability and utility.

### *Student Assessments*

- Successfully implemented and delivered the state English Language Proficiency (ELP) assessment. Validated and reported results on the ELP assessment via the EdSight Reporting system.
- Prepared training and materials, and communicated policy regarding the English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science summative assessments.
- Applied for a federal waiver in spring 2020 to cancel all summative testing due to COVID-19.
- Continued to expand training and support to districts in the use of interim assessment blocks that are aligned to state standards and designed to inform classroom instruction
- Conducted extensive monitoring/review of IEPs and Alternate Assessment Eligibility forms to evaluate the appropriateness of the evidentiary basis for the assignment of alternate assessments
- Prepared and submitted the Federal Peer Review Submission for standard and alternate Science Assessments as well as for the ELP assessment.
- Provided materials, training, and policy guidance in relation to the use of assessments as school reopened in the fall of 2020-21
- Coordinated fall 2020 SAT administration for grade 12 students who missed the opportunity to take the SAT in Grade 11.
- Oversaw member managed item writing for ELA section of Smarter Balanced including training teachers, meeting with teachers to create items, creating and revising items, entering items into Smarter Balanced item system.
- Prepared and sent over 22,000 letters to grade 10 and 11 students who demonstrated AP potential urging them to enroll in advanced course work.

## *Information Technology*

- Supported ongoing maintenance and implementation of several data collection applications to support agency priorities (e.g., PSIS, special education, teacher-course-student, Directory Manager)
- Completed the development and launch of the Education Finance System (EFS)
- Continued implementation of the Direct Certification application and expanded data matching with DSS to include Medicaid data
- Successfully automated student rostering for statewide summative assessments (e.g., Smarter Balanced, LAS Links) with multiple online vendors
- Designed, developed, and implemented a seat declaration application for the Regional School Choice Office (RSCO) application as well as a new data collection application for noncertified staff
- Systematized backup and disaster recovery protocols for all CSDE servers
- Organized and managed the CSDE's virtualized environment to improve productivity and achieve cost efficiencies
- Implemented iBOSS content filtering system
- Migrated all end users to Windows 10 environment.
- Phased out the use of McAfee Safeboot encryption software for all laptops and replaced with Microsoft Bit-Locker
- Enhanced teacher certification to new IVR system using AVAYA
- Migrated all end users to a Mobile environment
- Implemented O365 and completed Mail Migration to Cloud technology
- Successfully procured three new cloud-hosted SaaS solutions to respond to legislative/judicial mandates including a statewide special education system, a school choice lottery system, and an adult education management information system.

## *EdSight - Data Integration/Reporting*

- Developed and implemented numerous automation procedures to ensure data accuracy, reproducibility of results, and data processing efficiency (e.g., calculation of performance indexes, processing and storage of Next Generation Accountability System Indicators to satisfy federal school identification requirements, data suppression algorithms to maintain transparency while protecting student data).
- Implemented complex algorithms to locate and update student records in cases where students had been assigned multiple State Assigned Student Identifiers (SASID) to improved efficiency and allow districts to access longitudinal student data.
- Updated data in numerous interactive public reports (e.g., Connecticut Report Card (CRC) to include educator inexperience/out-of-field data, suspension rate, course enrollments by subject, graduation rates, educator demographics, primary disability, Smarter Balanced growth model, SAT, LAS Links, and Next Generation Accountability).

Published the annual Profile and Performance Reports (PPR) in accordance with federal requirements and Connecticut General Statutes 10-220 (c) to include key metrics on students,



educators, instruction, and performance for all districts and schools. Launched new reports including the following:

- Performance v. Growth Bubble Plot – an interactive data visualization tool which contrasts a district’s or school’s performance on statewide summative assessments in English language arts and mathematics with growth in those subjects,
- Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Assessment – an interactive report that includes results for the state, all districts, schools, and student groups on the NGSS assessments, and the
- ESSA Milestones – a static report designed to assist all districts and schools in tracking their own progress on key indicators from the Next Generation Accountability System.
- Implemented several enhancements to *EdSight Secure* - a visual data analytics portal that gives authorized users in districts and schools secure access to their own student-level data
  - a. Updated data in numerous interactive secure reports (e.g., Early Indication Tool, Smarter Balanced, SAT, LAS Links) and integrated new metrics within existing reports such as Lexile and Quantile measures in the Smarter Balanced report.
  - b. Launched new interactive reports including the following:
    - i. Student Summary – a cross-domain, longitudinal student-level view for currently enrolled students.
    - ii. FAFSA Completion Report that provides student-level FAFSA Completion Status for currently enrolled Grade 12 students,
    - iii. Next Generation Science Standards Assessment (NGSS) test results, and the
    - iv. Smarter Balanced Rough Cohort which shows achievement of a group of students across grades and time.
  - c. Provided additional data and enhanced machine learning models for the EIT for grades 1 through 12.
  - d. Shared historical, longitudinal student-data securely with the Department of Children and Families and with the Court Support Services Division (CSSD) of the Judicial Branch on a monthly/nightly basis.

### *Research and Analyses*

- Published numerous analyses and reports to support decision-making across the CSDE including the Condition of Education, special education performance reports, school discipline report, and restraints and seclusions
- Partnered with other agencies through P20WIN to gather critical information about employment and postsecondary outcomes of Connecticut high school graduates
- Conducted validation analyses of Smarter Balanced test results
- Investigated the relationship between taking Interim Assessment Blocks and performance on the summative test
- Conducted psychometric studies to validate the calibration and scoring processes of Connecticut’s new science assessments
- Used cohorts of longitudinal student data to develop the models, methods, and rationale for Connecticut’s Early Indication Tool

- Developed a new method to analyze Smarter Balanced summative assessment target-level data to provide more actionable information for schools and districts

### *Accountability*

- Implemented the fifth year of the next-generation multifactor district/school accountability model that provides a holistic picture of performance
- Continued to engage stakeholders through surveys and regional conversations with the goal of adjusting and improving the district/school accountability model.
- Developed and deployed new reports on EdSight for the accountability system
- Identified high performing and high growth schools as Schools of Distinction and nominated a subset for the National Blue Ribbon School award
- Facilitated sharing of best practices in accelerating academic growth through our annual conference, the Performance Matters Forum, and a monthly newsletter *Performance Matters*
- Provided customized technical assistance, in-district training ---sessions, documentation, videos, and support to facilitate the use of accountability results for program improvement
- Coordinated the administration of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and analyzed results to identify areas of strength for Connecticut’s students as well as their academic needs

### **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. C.G.S. 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 C.G.S. Section 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 ten highest-need Alliance Districts were first 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 focus areas. A district-specific, cross-divisional team composed of appropriate members from the Turnaround, Academic, Student Supports and Climate, Special Education, Talent, and Early Childhood offices 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. Monitoring meetings (virtual or in-person), 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 2019-20, 8 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 2019-20:

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
- Pearson School, Winchester

Cohort VI: joined the network in fall 2017

- New Britain High School, New Britain

Cohort VII; joined the network in fall 2018

- Wexler-Grant Community School, New Haven
- Windham High School, Windham

Cohort VIII; joined the network in fall 2019

- Roosevelt School, Bridgeport

A list of [frequently asked questions](#) about the Commissioner's Network is available on the CSDE website.

### *Priority School Districts and Summer School*

Under C.G.S. Section 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 scientifically-based reading research and instruction; (6) numeracy instruction; (7) support to chronically absent students; (8) enhancement of the use of technology to support instruction or improve parent and teacher communication; (9) 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 (10) 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 2019-20 school year were Ansonia, Bridgeport, Danbury, Derby, East Hartford, Hartford, Manchester, Meriden, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Norwalk, Norwich, Stamford, Waterbury, and Windham.

### *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. The 2019-20 charter school network included 22 schools statewide, located in 10 host districts, serving 10,808 students.

State charter schools in 2019-20 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, Jumoke Academy Charter School
- Manchester: Odyssey Community School
- New Haven: Amistad Academy, Booker T. Washington, Common Ground High School, Elm City College Preparatory School, Elm City Montessori (local charter), Highville Charter School
- 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
- Waterbury: Brass City Charter School
- 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 seven SIG schools, which have received federal allocations for comprehensive support. In 2019-20, these schools included:

- Bridgeport: Roosevelt School
- Brookfield: Brookfield High School
- New Haven: Troup School, James Hillhouse High School, and Truman School
- Charter schools: Explorations Charter School, Great Oaks Charter School

In 2019-20, the Turnaround Office also managed and monitored ESSA-SIG awards to 44 schools for targeted support under ESSA.

#### **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.
- Administered the provisions of the SEBAC and individual unit Agreements to the applicable bargaining units, including one-time bonuses, options for a 40-hour work week, longevity payments, new retirement deductions for SERS, etc.
- Served on Labor Management Committees for SVFT, AFSA, 1199, P-2, P-3A.

- As APO (“Administrative Purposes Only”) 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).
- As APO (“Administrative Purposes Only”) for the Office of Higher Education, administered all human resources functions (transfers, classification issues, notification, position actions, labor relations, payroll, performance evaluation, recruitment, professional development, coordination with DAS/OPM/OLR). Also, continuing work with DAS and OPM on the normalization of job classifications and salary plans to the Executive Branch.
  - 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, OEC and OHE.
  - Coordinated the HR services around the COVID-19 pandemic: reporting requirements; quarantine and absence advisement; advised employees of and administered time and labor for 5-248a, FFCRA and FMLA entitlement; assigned employee designations, notified employees of such and reported designations to the Office of Labor Relations; advised agency staff and participated in agency/CTECS re-opening plans; worked in conjunction with Affirmative Action regarding COVID-19 related ADA accommodations.
  - Through December of 2019, 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. On January 1, 2020, transitioned the leadership of Payroll Operations to the Bureau of Fiscal Services.
  - Participated in meetings with CTECS to plan the transition of all human resources functions to CTECS as a stand-alone agency.
  - Worked with the Department of Administrative Services to begin the transition of all HR staff to becoming DAS employees in 2020.

### **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 contracts, including personal service agreements, MOUs, MOAs and RESC Alliance agreements. 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.
- Performed over 40 state and federal education grant calculations.
- Processed over 2,500 individual grant budgets for approximately 500 subrecipients.
- eGrants system development

## **Talent Office**

- The Talent Office continues its commitment to increasing the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of the educator workforce and diminishing vacancies in persistent shortage areas. Since 2015-16, the percentage of educators of color in the Connecticut workforce has increased from 8.3% to 9.6%. The percentage of administrators of color has also increased, over that same period, from 12.24% to 13.77%. The growth in the number of educators of color in the workforce is encouraging. Efforts to engage broad stakeholder groups to achieve collective impact are ongoing.
- Issued 23,276 educator certificates and answered over 10,000 calls (as of March 15, 2020) to the call center and responded to tens of thousands of email regarding applicants between July 1, 2019, and June 30, 2020.
- Continued to implement various actions to streamline certification processes and procedures designed to increase efficiency while maintaining high-quality service to Connecticut educators even during the pandemic and while working remotely. The Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification continues to exceed the processing timelines of surrounding states including maintaining steady processing during the pandemic and with decreased staffing capacity in the Bureau.
- The Talent Office developed, launched and maintained EdKnowledge during the 2019-20 school year which hosts promising practices and models of success to attract, support, develop, and retain educators of color and is available on the CSDE website. Leadership and faculty at educator preparation institutions and local school districts can access the repository to seek potential ideas for replication across the stages of the educator continuum. Educators across CT are invited to submit promising practices to create a forum for sharing innovative ideas.
- This new resource is available on the CSDE website and has been promoted and piloted this year with several CT school districts. The guidebook was developed as a result of a four-part workshop series created in collaboration with The Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (GTL), The Northeast Comprehensive Center (NCC), and several CT Opportunity Districts in 2018. The guidebook, and companion resources, is intended to support districts in the development and implementation of a plan to attract, recruit, hire, and select educators of color per the requirements outlined in P.A. 18-34.
- The CSDE Talent Office partnered with the REL-NEI during the 2019-20 school year under the Pilot Project to Develop Workforce Diversity Plans. Eight district partners have been engaged in a four part series to develop workforce diversity plans. Each of the

districts convened a small team of educators, school, and district leaders to utilize the resources available in the Hiring and Selection Guidebook distributed by the CSDE this past fall and described above. Districts were asked to examine data using a provided demographic diversity profile and engage in a self-assessment during a guided consultancy. Work will continue with these eight districts with the possibility of engaging a second cohort in fall 2020.

- RESC/MTR Alliance Grant Contract which is facilitated by the CSDE Talent Office had three primary focus areas for the 2019-20 year; Virtual Career Fair, RESC Regional Consortia and district/LEA Based Project grants. The CSDE and the RESC Alliance hosted two virtual career fairs on June 2 and 3, 2020 aimed at increasing the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of Connecticut's educator workforce. Invitations were sent to certified teachers of color that were not appearing in our employment data system, recent graduates of CT educator preparation programs, Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic Serving Institutions on the East Coast. The fair attracted 33 districts to create virtual booths and 137 job-seeking candidates. Over the course of the two-day event more than 500 conversations took place via chat, audio, or video calls. Preliminary feedback was positive with suggestions to inform future events. Through Regional Consortia efforts, each of the six Regional Education Service Centers convened a diverse group of local educators to problem solve around attract, recruit, hiring, support, and retention strategies to develop workforce diversity plans. Each group met several times this past year with the opportunity to apply for a mini-grant to design and implement a project to meet an identified goal. Additionally, project proposals were submitted by 34 districts as a result of the regional consortia meetings. Examples of project proposals include: a District Equity Team and Leadership Program for Students of Color, Strengthening Partnerships with Educator Preparation Programs, Re-design of District Marketing Materials, and Increase Involvement with the Educators Rising Program, Develop an Educator Aspirant Program, Scholarships, and Sponsorship for Educators of Color to participate in ARCTEL Cross-Endorsement Program among others.
- TEACH Connecticut, the CSDE's online platform for recruiting teachers and elevating the profession, has a goal to support 175 future teachers in applying to an educator preparation program (EPP) between September 2019 and August 2020. On many leading performance metrics, the initiative is on track to meet this goal and surpass results from 2018-2019. For example, TEACH Connecticut has already hosted about three times the number of one-on-one advising calls this year compared to last. More than 50% of advising call participants are people of color, and this service is one of the most impactful of those offered. From March 2020 to present, TEACH Connecticut is continually seeing record-breaking interest and engagement from potential future teachers on several key metrics. This critical moment for digital recruitment has led to testing out new strategies and tactics to support future teachers of color. For example, TEACH Connecticut has supported more than 100 individuals through online information sessions on multiple topics in May and June, such as open office hours for ARC program applicants and an introduction to selecting an EPP for non-certified school/district staff members.



- 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, 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.
- The Talent Office worked to support the Relay/Graduate School of Education (GSE) Masters of Art in Teaching (MAT) program was granted provisional approval for the period April 1, 2020 through October 31, 2021. Applicant requirements for this MAT will be the same as they are now for the currently approved Connecticut Relay/GSE Alternate Route to Certification (ARC) program. Program candidates must hold an undergraduate degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education. The delivery model will also be the same as the current ARC program, with candidates assigned as a full-time teacher of record in a partner district and receiving on-the-job training while completing a combination of in-person and on-line coursework. CT Relay/GSE ARC is fulfilling its promise to recruit and train candidates of color for Connecticut schools. Since the beginning of the program, the majority (70%) of candidates have been and continue to be candidates of color.
- The Talent Office has partnered with Educators Rising is a network that cultivates highly skilled educators by guiding young people on a path to becoming accomplished teachers, beginning in high school and extending through college and into the profession. Since purposeful teacher recruitment and high-quality teacher preparation are urgent needs in virtually every community, Educators Rising supports, amplifies, and extends the impact of grow-your-own-teacher pipeline programs. Educators Rising has been awarded a grant from the Buck Foundation to implement the program in 6 new school districts for the 2020-2021 school year in CT: Stamford, Danbury, Meriden, Hamden, Mansfield and Capital Prep. The grant also allows there to be a liaison of this statewide initiative who will be located at the CSDE as a Teacher Leader-in-Residence to assist with implementation.
- As part of the New England Secondary School Consortium/Great Schools Partnership Minority Teacher Recruitment Task Force, the CSDE Talent Office and district partners (Windsor, Hartford, Bristol) collaborated with a group of diverse educators from each of the New England states in a series of in-person and virtual convening to discuss the need and value of increasing workforce diversity in each of the New England states. The group has provided its final round of feedback on a guidance document: Increasing the Racial, Ethnic, and Linguistic Diversity of the Educator Workforce: A Call to Action for Leaders. This work has been heavily influenced by the previous work of the CSDE Talent Office. The final document will be available in summer 2020.
- With support from the Wallace Foundation University Principal Preparation Initiative (UPPI) grant, the CSDE Talent Office designed a 2020 Professional Learning Series with content aligned to preparing and supporting Equity-Driven Leadership. The CSDE partnered with the New York City Leadership Academy (NYCLA) to provide a 3-day

training on Coaching to Advance Equity. This training focused on NYCLA's Equity Dispositions© and Coaching Competencies©. Representatives from CSDE professional and technical assistance partner organizations also participated in this training, and subsequently met to discuss how to build upon and sustain the focus on Equity-Driven Leadership in CT's schools and districts. A professional learning session on Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading, facilitated by Westat, was postponed due to recent school closures.

- The Connecticut Troops to Teachers (CTTT) Program closed out year two of a five-year grant period. The goals of the program are to 1) reduce veteran unemployment, 2) address teacher shortage areas, and 3) increase the number of male teachers of color in Connecticut classrooms. Program Coordinators are in place for the four Connecticut State Universities identified in the grant proposal. The CTTT Program expanded this year with an additional Program Coordinator selected at the University of Connecticut to begin in fall 2020. Two Communities of Practice (CoPs) were hosted by our partner districts (Groton and New Britain) in the fall and early spring. A third CoP, in the New Haven area, was scheduled to meet this past spring, however, the COVID-19 pandemic prohibited that from happening this year.
- The CSDE convened the CT Teacher Table in November to identify ways to attract candidates to Bilingual and Special Education. As a result, the CSDE team developed logic models based on the work of participants to reduce barriers for obtaining Bilingual and Special Education certification and attract more candidates to the profession. A mini-grant from the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) allowed for the development of Professional Learning Units (PLUs) for mentors of early career teachers in Bilingual and Special Education. These PLUs will assist mentors by offering specific supports to early-career teachers in these priority shortage areas. The mini-grant also funded a broad survey of district leaders for the purpose of gathering data, as well as feedback, specific to the recruitment and support of Bilingual and Special Educators. All deliverables are expected by fall 2020.
- The CSDE Talent Office implemented a third round of funding by the Office of Special Education Programs and partnered with the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development and Reform Center (CEEDAR) to continue efforts around reforming Connecticut EPPs. This continued efforts supported the work of the faculty at four EPPs: Central and Western Connecticut State Universities; Fairfield University; and Sacred Heart University and five local school districts in aligning the training and support of Connecticut educators from pre-service to in-service, specifically focusing on using edTPA, Connecticut's pre-service performance assessment, as a bridge between student teaching and TEAM.
- The CSDE Talent Office collaborated with the RESC Alliance leadership, district TEAM (Teacher Education and Mentoring Program) facilitators and TEAM stakeholder groups to support individual educators and local district staff adjust to the shift in TEAM allocations including ensuring that all districts had equitable access to mandated trainings. Developed and implemented a mechanism to successfully distribute \$1,449,087 of TEAM allocations to RESCs and LEAs to support the implementation of TEAM at the

local level, including shifting trainings to a virtual environment and providing flexibility for continued success.

- 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. The Talent Office worked quickly to address concerns regarding TEVAL during the spring 2020 and has worked closely with CSDE leadership to provide flexibility and guidance for educator evaluation for the upcoming school year.

### **Office of Internal Audit**

Key accomplishments include the following:

- Conducted a review of the School Readiness (SR) and Child Day Care (CDC) programs administered by a Non-Profit organization at various locations to determine if the number of children reported by the Non-Profit organization on the monthly slot utilization reports for the months of January, February, and March 2019 submitted to the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) were accurate. We reviewed supporting documentation including but not limited to enrollment applications, attendance reports and daily sign in logs. Our review disclosed that four children reported in February 2019 were not enrolled and attending during the reporting period and one child reported was included in both the SR and CDC programs for the March 2019 reporting period. The Non-Profit organization acknowledged the exceptions and implemented additional procedures over their monthly enrollment and attendance reconciliation process.
- Provided program management with financial analysis, audit services, and recommendations for the Charter School and Magnet School programs. These services included participating at twelve site visits for charter school renewals and evaluating the financial and management controls related to fiscal operations and recommended improvements for each charter school.
- Conducted several compliance reviews of various business office functions performed at Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS) high schools including general fund revenues, student trustee account operations, automotive production, masonry production, payroll and attendance and the use of P-Cards to evaluate compliance with CSDE and CTECS policies and procedures. OIA identified instances of noncompliance with established policies and procedures associated with general fund deposits, production activities, student trustee account operations, and payroll and attendance processes. In addition, OIA recommended the suspension of CTECS P-Cards until revisions in procedures and processes were implemented.
- 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.

- 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.
- Conducted a review of a City's documentation in support of the Board of Education's (BOE) appropriation for FY2018-2019 including the reporting of the CSDE Special Education Excess Cost Grant funds received and the treatment of expenditures by the BOE and the City to ensure that the BOE's budget was not reduced for Special Education Excess Costs Grant funds. Based on a review of City and BOE documentation, OIA noted internal control weaknesses in that the City and BOE do not use the same accounting system. This has led to difficulties with tracking BOE revenues and expenditures and reconciling the two on a monthly basis. Since the BOE does not include anticipated Special Education Excess Cost grant revenue in its budget, the BOE makes a journal entry into the BOE's General Ledger system when the Special Education Excess Cost grant funds are deposited into the City account. Although it does not appear that the City makes general ledger adjustments when the grant funds are deposited, OIA notes that the City pays all of the costs associated with special education services, which would reduce the BOE's expenditures for special education costs. Since the BOE does not have an accounts payable balance at year's end, we believe that the City has been reducing the BOE Special Education expenditures for the grant funds received. OIA recommended that the City and BOE establish and follow procedures for the treatment of Special Education costs and the receipt of CSDE Special Education Excess Cost grant funds in order to ensure compliance with Connecticut General Statute Section 10-76g(b). We also recommended that the City and BOE consider implementing the same accounting systems and continue to work together on a monthly basis to ensure that the BOE and City general ledgers are reconciled.
- 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 the Office of Policy & Management (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. In addition, OIA 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.

- Conducted a financial and programmatic review of a Connecticut Community College (CCC) Carl D. Perkins Postsecondary (Perkins) grant and College Career Pathways (CCP) grant for the fiscal years beginning July 1, 2016, through June 30, 2019. The purpose of this review was to determine whether the administration of the Perkins and CCP grants and related expenditures complied with federal grant requirements and CSDE reporting requirements. OIA found non-compliance with grant requirements in that the CCC was providing funds directly to local districts, could not provide documentation for expenditures reported to CSDE, grant funds were spent in subsequent grant periods, unexpended funds not being returned to CSDE and expenditures were misclassified on the expenditure report submitted to CSDE. Based on OIA's review, a total of \$159,839 was deemed ineligible.

### **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, CTECS prepares students for both postsecondary education and licensed apprenticeships or immediate productive employment.

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.

Grasso Tech opened the doors to its new building in September and a new program: welding. Vinal Tech's Criminal Justice and Protective Services Program unveiled the program's Emergency Operations Center (EOC), a first-of-its-kind nationwide in the high school setting, to provide students with hands-on, career development experience as they provide support to federal resources deployed around the US in times of disaster. Kaynor Tech opened a new State of Connecticut-approved school for adult apprenticeship training in January with classes in the following licensed trade areas: Electrical, Barbering, Heating\Cooling, Plumbing and Sheet Metal.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the district kept students engaged in learning by moving to a distance learning platform in 2020 utilizing technology with Google Classrooms, and all high school students had use of Chromebooks. From August 2019 to March 2020, over 700 students participated in work based learning programs, and there were over 200 job shadowing placements.

Three juniors from Cheney Tech became the first all-female group to win the 1st District Congressional App Challenge. Jalah Edison, Rocio Rivera, and Jazzlin Grisby were recognized by U.S. Rep. John B. Larson. Rachel Markovics, a Vinal Tech senior, was the first female high

school student to compete in the Connecticut Automotive Technology Competition over 20 years. Norwich Tech seniors True Smith and Camryn Baron won the Automotive Technology Competition. Donald Duca (Graphics, Norwich Tech), Levi Moon (Plumbing, Norwich Tech), and Cole Christador (Masonry, Ellis Tech) were invited to participate in the WorldSkills USA Trials. Abbott Tech junior, Joey Masood, won first place in the Technical High School category in the State Science Fair with his project - "Efficient Production Through a Temperature Differential Using a Greenhouse." In addition to the win, he won a University of Hartford scholarship and admittance to the 2020 International Genius Olympiad (which unfortunately was cancelled along with SkillsUSA and other competitions due to COVID-19).

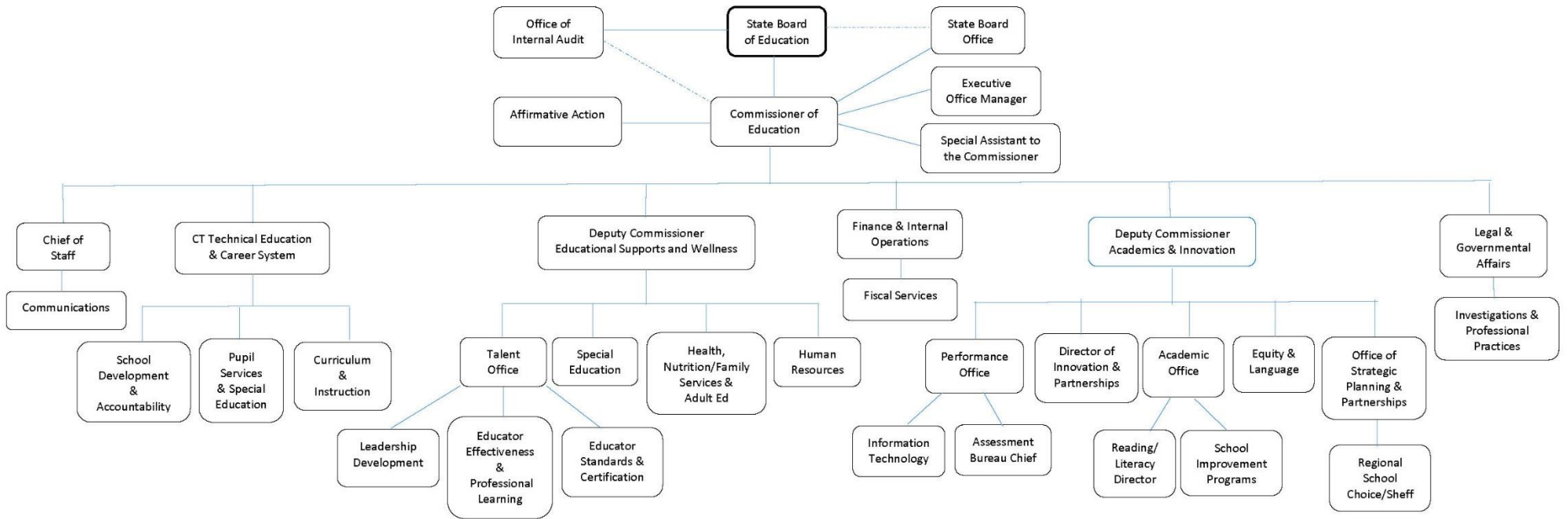
## **Information Reported as Required by State Statute**

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, learning 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 131 employees: 60 white males, 47 white females, 3 black males, 6 black females, 5 Hispanic males, 6 Hispanic females, 0 AAIANHNPI (Asian, American Indian, Alaskan Native, Hawaiian Native, or Pacific Islander) males, and 4 AAIANHNPI females. Of the 131 hires, 60 individuals were goal candidates: 12 white males, 35 white females, 2 black males, 3 black females, 2 Hispanic males, 2 Hispanic females, 0 AAIANHNPI males, and 4 AAIANHNPI female.

**ORGANIZATION CHART FOR THE CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**



March 13, 2020