
**Administrative
Report to the Governor**

**Connecticut
State Department of Education**

2021-22

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At-a-Glance

Charlene Russell-Tucker, 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: 1,788 (1629 full time, 159 part time)

Recurring operating expenses: \$3,103,281,373.19

Organizational structure: [CSDE Organizational 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; the Connecticut Departments of Children and Families, Developmental Services, Labor, and Corrections; and the State Education Resource Center.

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.

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, careers, 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
- distributing, monitoring, managing, providing resources for, and ensuring effective implementation of federal programs under the state’s Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated Plan, including the following federal grant programs:
 - 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);
 - Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund established to address the impact COVID-19 has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools across the nation were distributed to Connecticut school districts through the American Rescue Plan, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act to prevent, prepare for and respond to the Coronavirus, ESSER II and ARP ESSER;
 - implementation of effective multilingual (ML)/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.

Bureau of Special Education

The [Bureau of Special Education](#):

- Provides leadership, guidance, training and technical assistance to schools, districts, parents, and interested stakeholders to ensure students with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education that prepares them for college or training, employment, independent living, and community participation.
- Enforces the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for each entity responsible for educating children with disabilities and ensures they meet IDEA program requirements.
- Supports continuous improvement activities that result in improved educational and functional outcomes for all children with disabilities.
- Collaborates with other state agencies to align procedures and practices to support students with disabilities from age 3 through 21.

Connecticut Technical Education and Career System

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; (2) prepares students for postsecondary 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 postgraduate schools for aviation maintenance technicians. CTECS is the state's largest high school system serving approximately 11,500 grade 9-12 students and nearly 5,000 adult students in the evening extension and apprenticeship program. Out of the 169 Connecticut resident towns, 166 were represented within the CTECS student body.

Work-based Learning (WBL) is offered as a way for students in grades 11 and 12 to gain real-world experience, work in teams, solve problems and meet employers' expectations. It takes place during the school day and students not only receive credit toward their career and technical education (CTE) courses, but also get paid. Through partnerships with local companies, students work on real projects, gaining hands-on career development experience. In the 2021-22 school year, 993 students participated in WBL.

Unique to CTECS is the Student Workforce – a business run by students and faculty providing students with real projects for real customers here in Connecticut. A wide range of services are offered to the public at a fraction of the market price. Services range from automotive repair, printing services, dining opportunities, hairdressing, electrical and more. The work helps prepare students for the transition from high school to the workforce and is an invaluable training experience in their chosen career.

Industry input is vital to providing a quality and relevant career and technical education programs that graduates students prepared to enter the workforce. Historically, all trade areas hold advisory committee meetings with local business and industry partners. In 2021-22, this effort expanded and a statewide advisory meeting convened. Additionally, over 600 employers participated in WBL.

Effective July 1, 2022, the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System has separated from the State Department of Education and is now operating as a standalone agency.

Division of Legal and Governmental Affairs

The [Division of Legal and Governmental Affairs](#) provides legal counsel to the State Board of Education, the Commissioner of Education, and Department offices and bureaus on a wide range of issues pertaining to education and school operations. The division also provides guidance and assistance to local school districts and educational organizations 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 certification action against educator certificates, school accommodations appeals from decisions of local and regional boards of education, Freedom of Information Act requests, and regional school district establishment and governance. The division also assists the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) in its representation of the State Board of Education and the Department of Education in litigation matters. Members of the division also take telephone calls from members of the public and provide practical suggestions on matters presented during these calls. Members of the division also participated in the Regional School Choice Office Family Fun event at Dunkin Donuts Park.

Bureau of Investigations and Professional Practices (Bureau within the Division)

The Bureau of Investigations and Professional Practices investigates educator misconduct, where such misconduct has the potential to result in certification action. In 2018, the Legislature expanded the statutory language 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. Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-221d, this bureau collaborates closely with the Department of Children and Families, criminal justice authorities, and local school districts to ensure the safety of schoolchildren. Additionally, the bureau works with district administration, human resources staff, and educator preparation programs 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.

Finance and Internal Operations

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 (1) managing and aligning financial resources to support CSDE's organizational structure in the successful implementation of key strategic priorities and (2) managing the annual calculation and disbursement of almost \$3.1 billion to support state and local education initiatives, including the State Board of Education's Comprehensive Five-Year Plan for Education, adult education, general and special education, and choice programming. The Finance and Internal Operations Office is responsible for the administration of nearly \$1.8 billion in federal COVID-19 relief funds pursuant to the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act; the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act; and the American Rescue Plan Act.

Additional responsibilities of the Finance and Internal Operations Office include budget process and implementation; asset management; purchasing, contract, and travel administration; accounts receivable/payable; cash management; operational services; federal and state grants distribution, monitoring, and reporting; analysis of budget proposals and legislation for impact on CSDE grant-related functions; collection of local expenditure data for calculation and reporting purposes; eGrants management system; payroll services.

Human Resources

The Bureau of Human Resources provides the following services:

- Staff recruitment, hiring, orientation, and onboarding.
- Coordination with the labor department and Office of Policy and Management (OPM) regarding personnel matters.
- Performance evaluation processes.
- Training and staff development.

The bureau has been consolidated with other agency HR offices and is now part of the Department of Administrative Services.

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 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.

Office of Strategic Planning and Partnerships

The mission of the CSDE [Office of Strategic Planning and Partnerships](#) is to oversee and support numerous educational programs and projects within the agency, including Open Choice and Interdistrict Magnet School programs and other school choice opportunities across Connecticut as they relate to legislative requirements, educational operations, operating budgets, and grants. The Office is responsible for leading agency efforts to meet the state’s obligation pursuant to the *Sheff v. O’Neill* litigation and manage implementation of the most recent agreement and final resolution in that case. Consistent with state priorities, the Office leads the agency effort toward expanding and establishing programs for high school students aimed at providing college and career readiness opportunities through educational and business partnerships. Office staff conduct in-depth data analyses and research for a variety of important CSDE projects. As the policy and long-term planning branch of the agency, this office collaborates cross-divisionally, cross-agencies, and with outside parties to develop clear and consistent policies, procedures, and resources for agency, school, and district leadership.

Key services the Office of Strategic Planning and Partnerships provides include:

- leads agency initiatives involving College and Career Readiness to ensure that Connecticut high school students are provided opportunities for post-graduate education and workforce prospects through partnerships and program development with both institutions of higher education and state businesses;
- leads agency initiatives aimed at increasing dual enrollment opportunities for Connecticut students to earn college credit while in high school;
- represents agency interests on the Governor’s Workforce Council and Education Subgroups;
- manages implementation of the Comprehensive School Choice Plan pursuant to the final agreement in the *Sheff v. O’Neill* litigation and facilitates collaboration among school choice leaders, district- and school-level staff, desegregation experts, community organizations, and educational and business partners to advance *Sheff* goals and initiatives;
- oversees Open Choice programs statewide and associated pilot programs, which allow urban students to attend public schools in nearby suburban towns as identified in state statute;

- oversees the Interdistrict Cooperative Grant program pursuant to C.G.S. 10-74d to reduce racial and economic isolation statewide and as a part of the remedy for the *Sheff v. O'Neill* stipulation;
- manages the community education, and application and placement process for choice schools and programs in the Greater Hartford Region through the [Regional School Choice Office](#) (RSCO);
- oversees all interdistrict magnet school programs throughout Connecticut to ensure that state funded magnet schools are operating in a manner consistent with state statute, and Department of Education policy;
- manages the per-pupil grants for Open Choice and Interdistrict Magnet School Programs to maximize learning opportunities for students from different backgrounds centered on excellence and achievement;
- responds to inquiries from various parties including state agencies, legislators, and superintendents, and answers media inquiries through the CSDE Communications Office;
- drafts proposed legislation to support educational initiatives related to school choice and college and career readiness;
- conducts in-depth data analyses and research for a variety of important CSDE and legislatively mandated projects and implementation of the Comprehensive School Choice Plan pursuant to the final agreement in the *Sheff v. O'Neill* case.

Office of Student Supports and Organizational Effectiveness (OSSOE)

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.

Performance Office

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 state academic 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 diversity, resident town dashboard, 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, FAFSA Completion, Student Summary, 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.

Talent Office

The mission of the CSDE [Talent Office](#) is to ensure that every Connecticut public school student has access to racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse educators by providing school districts with support, strategies, and tools to hire and retain talent. These educators are culturally competent and equipped to prepare all students for success in college, career, and life. The Talent Office works in close collaboration with numerous education professionals and organizations including: district and school talent and diversity, equity and inclusion professionals; state teachers' and administrators' unions; the Regional Educational Service Center (RES-C) Alliance; the State Education Resource Center (SERC); the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE), the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) and

the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS); Connecticut's 19 educator preparation programs (EPPs); and students and families, community organizations, and other external partners.

Strategies and resources offered by the Talent Office are intended to (1) attract and recruit racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse individuals to the teaching profession, and support and sustain them in the teaching profession; (2) ensure equitable access to educator preparation information, support career changers in pursuit of their educator credentials, identify employment opportunities and funding supports (for example, [TEACH Connecticut](#) and [CHESLA Alliance District Teacher Loan Subsidy Program](#)); (3) 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 educator preparation programs and school districts; and (4) support early career educator induction through the Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) program and continuously improve practice through high-quality professional learning, effective and equitable evaluation and support systems.

Since 2016, in alignment with 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 (BESC)

- Issues new and continuing certificates to nearly 30,000 educators annually.
- Provides customer service to current and prospective Connecticut educators and all 19 of Connecticut's EPPs, as well as representatives of all public school districts.
- Pursue avenues to modernize certification to better meet contemporary workforce needs given outdated regulations (1998).
- Continues to make significant progress to streamline certification processes, to the extent possible, given existing regulations (Regulations Concerning State Educator Certificates, Permits and Authorizations).
- Explores and operationalizes changes to the current certification system to streamline internal processes to both enhance the customer experience and address reduced staffing capacity.
- Coordinates all aspects of Connecticut's pre-service licensure assessment system (e.g., Praxis II, Foundations of Reading, Connecticut Administrator Test, ACTFL, edTPA).
- Collaborates with higher education and professional organizations to increase pathways to certification to address persistent shortage areas.

Bureau of Educator Effectiveness (BEE)

- With grant funds from the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability and Reform (CEEDAR) Center, funded by the US Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), the CSDE has engaged with state and national partners to

develop [tools and resources](#) to prepare teachers and leaders to implement evidence-based practices within multitiered systems of support, with a specific focus on ensuring that students with disabilities, struggling learners, and English learners receive rigorous, evidence-based instruction from all teachers.

- The CSDE recently added a focus within the CEEDAR Center grant funds to improve clinical internship opportunities for aspiring administrators to better understand how to support and address the needs of students with disabilities and multilingual learners.
- Participates on the Connecticut Advisory Council for Teacher Professional Standards and the Connecticut Advisory Council for Administrator Professional Standards.
- Continues to plan for, coordinate, and facilitate meetings with the Educator Evaluation and Support 2022 Council, including key stakeholders, to reimagine educator evaluation in Connecticut. The council recommended to the State Board of Education that the flexibilities for implementing the *Connecticut Guidelines for Educator Evaluation* be extended as an option for the 2022-23 school year, as the council works to develop revised guidelines to present to the State Board of Education for adoption in early 2023, and implementation in the 2023-24 school year.
- Participates on the Connecticut Paraeducator Advisory Council to support the development of paraprofessionals' roles and responsibilities. The council advises the Commissioner quarterly regarding the needs for the training of paraprofessionals and the effectiveness of the content and the delivery of existing training. The CSDE supported the council in implementing the legislative requirements of Section 13 of H.B. 6621, which directed the Paraeducator Advisory Council to study paraeducator working conditions and recommend to the Legislature potential changes to state policy and legislation that would positively impact Connecticut paraeducators.
- Coordinates statewide recognition events as part of an effort to 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.
- Oversees all aspects of statewide implementation of the TEAM program (training, allocation of funding, mentor training, etc.).
- Supports districts in developing and implementing standards-based, high-quality systems for professional learning.
- In collaboration with [Teach.org](#) and TV Access Now, with funding support from the Buck Foundation, developed and launched TeachCT, a comprehensive recruitment campaign consisting of a website, social media, and television and radio advertisements, designed to elevate the image of the teaching profession generally and to encourage teaching careers. Connecticut was the first state to partner and launch with Teach.org.
- Continues to 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.

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 local continuous improvement and statewide reform.

A cornerstone of this work is the CSDE Cycle for Continuous Improvement. This cycle supports district and school teams in gathering data and evidence, analyzing the data to prioritize areas of focus, determine strategies and interventions, monitor the impact of strategies and interventions, and then review the impact on student outcomes to analyze growth or need for additional strategies.

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.
- Provide opportunities for Alliance Districts and Commissioner Network Schools to collaborate, share, and learn best practices from each other.

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 support and improvement.
- Support and review district improvement plans to incorporate new plans under ESSER, ESSER II, and ARP-ESSER federal funding aligned to statewide priorities. Specific to all

allocated relief funding, the Turnaround Office provided just in time technical assistance in the alignment of strategies to statewide priorities.

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 new schools in underserved geographic locations.

Improvements & Achievements

Academic Office

Equitable Schools

- Partnered with the Performance Office to develop a Resource Allocation Report dashboard in EdSight to support district and school analysis of allocation of funds across schools.

Effective Instruction

- Adopted American Association of School Libraries (AASL) National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries.
- Adopted MBA Research Standards for Business Management and Administration, Finance, and Marketing.
- Partnered with SERC to release the [Black/African American and Latino/Puerto Rican Studies course](#) as outlined in PA 19-12 on the [GoOpenCT](#) open education resource website.
- Partnered with SERC to create curricula design leadership and curricula development teams to create model curricula units outlined in PA 19-12 for math, English language arts, science, social studies, and financial literacy.
- Released Standards for Remote Learning standards for grades 9-12.
- Released 6-8 model math units, 6-12 model financial literacy units, 6-8 model science units.
- Created a series of quick start guides to support implementing the model units on GoOpenCT.
- Provided district with resources to develop or evaluate local curricula: 10 Things You Can Do to Renew District Curricula over the Summer.
- Released reimagined [CT Learning Hub](#) to provide increased access to instructional resources for teachers, families, and students.

Expanding Quality STEM Access

- Implemented and led the Lieutenant Governor Bysiewicz's Computing Challenge.
- Executed Connecticut Computer Science Plan strategic goals including the provision of professional learning for 75 teachers to increase number of computer science opportunities in schools.
- Co-led CTforCS Steering Committee to bring Connecticut Computer Science Plan to scale with multiple stakeholders.
- Launched five-year Noyce grant with University of Connecticut (UConn) on the Connecticut Noyce Master Teacher Leader Fellows Program providing an opportunity to offer a renewed system of support to advance math teacher leadership in Connecticut,

- address teacher development and long-standing inequities in the mathematics outcomes among CT school children.
- Assisted CT stakeholders in the design of flexible pathway and rigorous programs of study for CT students, the CSDE collaborated with various partners to provide over 60 high schools with sustained professional learning and coaching supports including:
 - CTE Career Advisement for School Counselors with AdvanceCTE;
 - Universal Curricula Design Training with CAST;
 - Career Pathways Skill Institutes Cohorts with NC3T;
 - Industry Ambassadors and Manufacturing Training with CCAT; and
 - STEM Externship Program with CT Science Center and ReadyCT.

Literacy and Numeracy Success

- Implemented and lead the Governor’s [summer reading challenge](#) and the Commissioner’s [summer math challenge](#).
- Increased over 550 teachers’ expertise in identifying and providing instruction in the necessary foundational reading skills, spotting student skills gaps, and monitoring students’ progress to create a solid foundation in early literacy skills through ReadConn Professional Learning.
- Partnered with UConn, Literacy How, and Hill for Literacy to provide a tiered-model of support (CT Literacy Model) to 76 schools across 13 Alliance Districts focused on districtwide K-3 reading improvement.
- Launched Science of Reading Masterclass in partnership with CAPSS to support 11 districts with the implementation of the science of reading.

Career and Technical Education

There are currently 20 CT Agricultural Science and Technology (ASTE) Centers, and each has an active FFA Chapter Organization (formally known as Future Farmers of America). In 2021-22, CT FFA students:

- Completed 437,831 hours of their Supervised Agriculture Experience (SAE).
- Directly impacted economy by \$1,170,484.
- Completed 8,900 hours of community service.

Bureau of Special Education

General Monitoring and Supervision

- Assigned the top ranking of “Meets Requirements” from the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) for its 2021 annual determination. This determination is based on the state’s performance on a totality of information including State Assessment Participation, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), drop out/graduation data, previous year State Performance Plan (17 special education indicators), monitoring and public information, fiscal conditions, validity, and reliability of data.
- Participated and presented in national Results Based Accountability Collaborative to improve our current Differentiated Monitoring System moving from Special Education

Compliance to Compliance and Results (improved outcomes for students with disabilities).

- Submitted our State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) (6-year plan) which establishes special education targets for 17 indicators that include compliance and results-based targets that are set by the state. Targets are rigorous yet achievable, show improvement over baseline, and set with the advice of stakeholders. The CSDE established a stakeholder group that was representative of the state and included a diverse population of stakeholders. Twenty meetings and information gathering sessions were held from September through December. Regional and public Sessions were also held. The state collected, reviewed, and analyzed feedback collected to develop the SPP/APR. The CSDE also created an [SPP/APR website](#) to share the results and to provide a platform to collect ongoing information and provide future updates.
- Updated State Systemic Improvement Plan (theory of action and resources: Data Based Interventions) to improve state assessment testing results for third-grade students with IEPs.
- Hosted Disproportionality Summit to support districts identified with significant disproportionality in special education identification. Reviewed identified school districts for their policies, procedures, and practices related to referral and identification processes.
- Incorporated results-based indicators in the Local Education Agency Special Education Determinations (chronic absenteeism rates).
- Continued monitoring and support related to local special education funding (Fiscal Risk Rubric).
- Differentiated Monitoring Team continued a statewide Special Education Data Application and Collection review process to ensure IEP Compliance (Annual Reviews, Three Year Reevaluations, Free Appropriate Public Education/FAPE at 3, Primary Disability Category of Developmental Delay at age 6, Secondary Transition (through age 21) including a new process to track and monitor LEA compliance with extended “reached maximum age” through the student’s 22nd birthday. Updated existing guidance, provided additional training and technical assistance regarding the A.R. court order (Extending student’s Maximum Age of Eligibility).
- Designed and implemented a remote process for conducting initial approvals and continued approvals for Approved Private Special Education Programs (APSEPs).
- Conducted 16 APSEP reapprovals, three initial approvals, and six program changes.

Training and Support

- After two years of planning and preparation, the CSDE designed and launched a comprehensive special education data system (CT-SEDS), which will improve efficiencies in required data collections and result in higher quality Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and Section 504 Plans. As of July 1, 2022, CT-SEDS is live and is being used across the state by all our local education agencies, approved private special education programs, charter schools, magnets, and regional education programs.

- After three years of planning and preparation, the CSDE implemented a new and improved IEP template, which is built into CT-SEDS as a process-based data entry system. The IEP was designed to be easier for parents and students to understand and easier for practitioners to utilize.
- Collected special education data from school districts three times in preparation for the transition to CT-SEDS.

The CSDE designed and implemented [IEP Quality Training](#) statewide during 2021-22 school year. IEP Quality Training was designed to improve consistency of IDEA implementation across the state with a specific focus on the new IEP document. Training evaluations and feedback was overwhelmingly positive. This training effort was a result of multiple partnerships with six Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs), the State Education Resource Center (SERC), and Priority Districts and with over 3,600 educators trained across the school year:

- During fall 2021, delivered training to 1,010 educators across 20 Pilot Districts (virtual, in-person, hybrid).
- During spring 2022, delivered training to 2611 educators statewide (virtual and in-person).
- The CSDE recorded five [CT-SEDS Preview Series](#) to assist the field in their preparation for the new statewide Special Education Data System. These include the IEP Preview Series (11 Recordings), Section 504 Preview Series (two recordings), Administrative Training Preview Series (three recordings), Specific Learning Disability Preview Series (four recordings), and Restraint and Seclusion Preview Session (one recording).
- The CSDE developed [12 user manuals](#) and quick guides to support the field with their transition to CT-SEDS.
- In partnership with UConn implemented Year 1 of the Aspiring Special Education Leaders initiative to support the development and preparation of 22 potential new special education directors.
- Partnered with the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) to support 20 administrators through mentoring, coaching, and program review/improvement.
- Collaborated with adult agencies and key stakeholders to host the 7th Annual Secondary Transition Symposium.
- Supported the expansion of the Transition Youth Advisory Board (YAB) (students and young adults ages 16 to 26) and the Special Education Youth Advisory Council (SEYAC) (students in grades 6-12); including student forums, student leadership training, and advisory structures as part of the Student Voice Initiative.
- Provided free Structured Literacy Program Training Series and Systematic Teaching of Basic Literacy Skills to school districts featuring several structured literacy approaches.
- Provided free SLD/Dyslexia online modules to the public, including educator preparation programs.
- Successfully implemented and supported the following special education communities of practice (COP): special education teacher (elementary/middle/high), speech and language, occupational therapy, physical therapy, school psychologist, board certified behavior analysis, social worker, teacher of the deaf, assistive technology.
- Expanded partnerships with SERC and the RESC Alliance to provide training, resources, and technical assistance to stakeholders to support students with disabilities.

- Served all districts in improving attendance rates and decreasing chronic absence through conducting Talk Tuesday Sessions and a monthly COP.
- Expanded assistive technology for all local education agencies with subscriptions and membership to New England Assistive Technology.

Special Education Dispute Resolution

- Designed a due process module within CT-SEDS to improve efficiencies related to formal complaints, mediations, and due process hearings.
- Participated and completed the Center for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education (CADRE) written state complaint workgroup, which resulted in improved procedures and practices and continuous improvement of forms/communications related to dispute resolution.
- Trained and supervised hearing officers and mediators to support the remote implementation of the dispute resolution system.
- Reviewed 162 special education complaints resulting in 71 investigation reports.
- Processed 269 requests for mediation.
- Processed 215 due process hearing requests (10 resulting in fully adjudicated hearing decisions).
- Supported the State Advisory Council for Special Education, which is a group of 37 individuals (50% parents) who are charged with advising the State Department of Education and legislators on the unmet needs of students with disabilities.
- The Surrogate Parent Program supported over 1,114 students ages 2 through 21 in foster care.
- Guided and supported 50 new or potential PPT chairpersons within the Planning and Placement Team Institute initiative in implementing special education procedures and practices.

Grants Funding and Communications

- Provided local education agencies with the opportunity to apply for a stipend to support special education recovery activities and paraeducator professional development. (\$2 million).
- Designed and implemented COVID-Relief Activities in the areas of special educator recruitment, special education evaluations, assistive technology training and support, National Association for the Education of Young Children Accreditation process. (\$1.7 million).
- Improved Electronic Grants Management system and supported IDEA Part B 611 (ages 3 through 21) (\$127,023,278) and 619 (ages 3-5)(\$3,795,876) grant applications for local education agencies.
- Supported application process and technical assistance related to the additional ARP IDEA funds for Sections 611 and 619: \$27,238,088 flow through to local education agencies for students ages 3 through 21 and \$2,495,071 for students ages 3 through 5.

- The CSDE hosted a Fiscal Summit, bringing together leaders from general education, special education, and business offices within school districts to plan, prepare, and share best practice strategies on the effective use of the infusion of federal COVID relief funds, included braiding funding sources to support students with disabilities.

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.

CTECS students and staff excelled at more than just academics and trade technologies:

- In 2021-22 the C.A.R.E.S. program launched at all CTECS locations. C.A.R.E.S. stands for Creating Attitudes and Relationships the Empower Staff and Students. The mission of C.A.R.E.S. is to build and support positive relationships.
- In a first-of-its-kind statewide civic engagement initiative, [Voice4Change](#) empowered high school students to propose and vote on how more than \$1.5 million in federal relief funds would be invested to reimagine Connecticut’s schools. CTECS students submitted proposals to the State Department of Education outlining how they would spend \$20,000 in their school; 12 CTECS locations had winning proposals.
- CTECS implemented of the Connecticut’s Seal of Biliteracy for the school year 2021-22. Over 150 students earned the seal.

Students used the skills learned in their career technologies and received recognition:

- Platt Technical High School was awarded the College Board’s AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award for its high number of girls in the traditionally male-dominated IT program.
- Over 100 students showcased their skills and earned honors at the SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference held in Atlanta, GA. Competing against more than 6,500 students from the United States, CTECS students earned four gold medals, one silver medal, one bronze medal, and a total of 21 top-20 placements.
- In 2021-22 students earned 13,340 industry recognized credentials.

Division of Legal and Governmental Affairs

- Served as general counsel to the State Board of Education, the Commissioner, deputy commissioners, 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.

- Provided legal advice related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the substantial disruption to the traditional approach to education, including but not limited to legal input on updates to the Department's *Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together* document, and numerous other support and guidance documents. Worked closely with the Office of the Governor, Department of Public Health, and other state agencies to coordinate emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the education context, including but not limited to providing input on necessary executive orders due to the public health and civic preparedness emergencies.
- 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).
- 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.
- Administered statutorily required functions, including, but not limited to, responses to requests under the Freedom of Information Act; management of contract negotiations under the Teacher Negotiations Act, including the recruitment of impartial arbitrators; contract review, including the preparation of contract templates; private school approvals; racial imbalance; and other 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.
- Advised bureaus within the Department on the promulgation of regulations and implements the regulation-making process under the Connecticut Uniform Administrative Procedures Act.
- Investigated requests to revoke, suspend, or place on probation 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 actions under Section 10-4b of the Connecticut General Statutes.
- Consulted with school districts concerning the statutory process of forming or modifying a regional school district.
- Worked with Department staff and school districts to implement State Board of Education Standards for Educational Opportunities for Expelled Students.

- Represented the State of Connecticut on the Interstate Compact for Educational Opportunities for Military Children and manage the State's activities pursuant to the Compact, codified at Section 10-15f of the Connecticut General Statutes.
- Advised the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System regarding admissions, employment-related policies, and other education related matters.
- Provided legal advice and participated in departmental committees with respect to the receipt and distribution of federal funds under the American Rescue Plan and other legislation to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on schools and students.
- Reviewed contracts for whole school management services between charter management organizations and charter schools for legal compliance and advised the State Board of Education on approval of these contracts.
- Participated in the review of charter contracts for charter schools required by Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-66aa(6) and coordinated with the Office of the Attorney General as to approval as to form.
- Advised on and assisted in the development in the Comprehensive School Choice Plan, to establish a long-term plan for the stability, sustainability, and predictable and efficient operation of the integration process relating to *Sheff v. O'Neill*. This plan, which the Connecticut General Assembly and the Connecticut Superior Court approved in March 2022, will lead to the end of court jurisdiction in this case, which was first filed in 1989.
- Collaborated with the Office of the Attorney General to advise the Regional School Choice Office regarding a lottery selection process, which selects students based on multiple socioeconomic factors rather than based on race.
- Responded to daily emails from districts, parents, and other constituents regarding unmasking our school students, hybrid learning, remote learning, changing scenarios during COVID, and other assorted issues related to the pandemic as it affected students and educators in the state.
- Collaborated closely with the Department of Public Health and Department of Social Services to develop a weekly student COVID screening program for all unvaccinated public school students statewide in grades K-6 plus in the largest 8 towns (over 70,000 population), all students in grades 7-12 and students in grades K-6 attending a private school located within the physical boundaries of the largest eight towns.
- Served as consultant to the temporary regional school study committee for the school districts of Litchfield and Regional School District #6 (Goshen, Morris, and Warren). Following successful referenda in all involved towns, this process culminated in the establishment of the first new regional school district since the 1980s.
- Advised the Bureau of Special Education (BSE) regarding systemic complaints and requests for investigation from the Office of the Child Advocate (OCA). Corresponded with OCA and school districts as appropriate.
- Advised the BSE regarding annual school district special education compliance determinations. Corresponded with school districts as appropriate.
- Advised the BSE regarding the rollout of a new Individualized Education Program (IEP) template and Section 504 database for use by school districts.

- Moderated special populations meetings with special education attorneys and nonprofit organizations.
- Assisted with determinations of priority/alliance school districts.
- Drafted guidance regarding student immunization legislation and fielded related inquiries from school districts, local health departments, and members of the public.
- Participated in meetings regarding education for Native American/Indigenous students on behalf of the CSDE.
- Provided advice to another state agency on acceptance of high school diplomas.
- Provided advice to local school districts concerning vision screening for school children.

Bureau of Investigations and Professional Practices

Denial of Pending Applications – 2021-2022

Referrals from the Department of Children and Families (DCF):

- Of the 445 DCF finalized investigations of school employees that were received by this office:
 - Two applications were denied because the applicant was listed on the central registry.
 - 12 were referred for possible revocation due to a registry placement. (Note: In several cases, the DCF finding was overturned on appeal.)
 - Due diligence reviews were conducted for 10 individuals with substantiated findings; two cases are pending review.

Educators who have a criminal history record:

- Of the 52 applications received:
 - No denial of applications occurred, however, 12 applications are currently under investigation.
 - 40 applications were returned to the CSDE Certification Office for processing post investigation or withdrawn.

Educators who have been dismissed for cause:

- Of the 15 applications received:
 - Four applications are currently under investigation.
 - 11 applications were returned to the Certification Office for processing post investigation or withdrawn.

Educators whose professional license or certificate was revoked, denied, or suspended in Connecticut or other states:

- Of the nine applications received:
 - Four applications are currently under investigation.
 - Five applications were returned to the Certification Office for processing post investigation or withdrawn.

Educators with a record of unsuccessful service/employment for a school district and/or nonpublic school:

- Of the 24 applications received:
 - No denials were made; 22 applications were returned to the Certification Office.
 - Two applications are currently being investigated.

Revocation, Suspension or Probation Action Against an Active Certificate Holder – 2021-22

During the 2021-22 year, the following nine cases reached completion and resulted in the following action:

- One SBE Revocation Action
- One automatic revocation based upon CT General Statutes.
- Four revocations by surrender by educators.
- Three stipulated agreements, including suspension of their certificate for three certificate holders and probation for one certificate holder.

Certificate Holders Pending Investigations:

- 11 Cases pending DCF appeal process.
- Three cases in which certification action is requested by a school district/interested party.
- Nine cases in which the Department of Education initiates action based upon criminal history, dismissal from employment, etc.

Finance and Internal Operations

Bureau of Fiscal Services

- Continued to improve the stability and operation of all agency fiscal processes to ensure cost-saving measures are implemented effectively and result in overall budgetary savings.
- Processed over 42,000 vouchers for payment, including over 18,600 grant payments in excess of \$3.5 billion.
- Processed over 6,200 purchase orders.
- Processed and managed over 200 contracts, including personal service agreements, MOUs, MOAs and RESC Alliance agreements.
- Managed budgets for over \$3.8 billion of expenditures across over 100 state and federal SIDs.
- Developed the Department's budget request for education grant programs.
- Prepared various state and federal financial reports.
- Performed approximately 40 state and federal education grant calculations.
- Processed over 3,700 individual grant budgets for approximately 500 subrecipients.
- Continued expansion of the eGrants system, including new reporting functionality.

- Managed budgets for over \$1.8 billion of federal COVID-19 relief programs pursuant to the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act; the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act; and the American Rescue Plan Act.
- The department has separated CTECS to its own independent agency and will continue to provide fiscal and payroll support, and training, in the near term to ensure a successful transition.

Human Resources

- Staff recruitment, hiring, on-boarding, mandatory drug testing, professional development for State Department of Education (SDE), including the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System.
- Managed position management/refill/recruitment process to fill key agency vacancies, including instructional vacancies.
- Trained hiring managers and HR staff on new UKG system to request and approve positions.
- Streamlined processes and internal communication by creating shared folders and documents containing active recruitment log and staff recruitment materials.
- 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, annual increment and cost of living allowances, including retroactivity, new retirement deductions for State Employee Retirement System, 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 (OEC), administered all HR functions (transfers, classification issues, notification, position actions, labor relations, payroll, performance evaluation, recruitment, professional development, coordination with DAS).
- As APO for the Office of Higher Education (OHE), administered all HR 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.
 - Worked with DAS partners to adopt new training programs, including diversity trainings through LinkedIn, issued mandatory sexual harassment prevention training, as well as online workplace violence training, ethics training, and tracked agency participation for CSDE, 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 and 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.

- Participated in meetings with DAS Core-CT security and HR Policy teams to plan the transition of all human resources functions to CTECS as a standalone agency. Transferred 5,029 position numbers from CSDE to CTECS.

Office of Internal Audit

- Conducted several compliance reviews of various business office functions performed at CTECS high schools, including general fund revenues, student trustee account operations, automotive production, payroll, and attendance to evaluate compliance with CSDE and CTECS policies and procedures. OIA identified instances of noncompliance with established policies and procedures associated with business office operations associated with General Fund cash receipts and deposits, automotive production, payroll operations, Student Trustee Account operations and certain other matters that warrant attention. Additionally, we provided recommendations to the schools and central office related to the internal control structure and staffing of the schools' business offices.
- Performed a review of mileage reporting for state-owned vehicles assigned to various CTECS high schools. The purpose of this review was to follow up on incomplete and/or missing monthly mileage reports submitted by the schools to CSDE fiscal office for state-owned vehicles. Mileage reporting for state-owned vehicles is mandated by the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) General Letter No. 115 - Policy for Motor Vehicles Used for State Business (November 2019). We recommended that CTECS central office storekeepers work with CTECS facility staff to review and reconcile all state-owned vehicles housed at CTECS facility locations and make the necessary adjustments in Core-CT asset management. In addition, we recommended that CTECS central office take necessary steps to safeguard state assets.
- Ascertained the extent to which assets were accounted for and safeguarded from losses by monitoring reports of irregularities involving funds or equipment at various Connecticut Technical Education and Career System high schools. OIA made referrals to appropriate state agencies, school administration, and CSDE management.
- 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 within CSDE and OEC to determine whether or not questioned costs were allowable and if necessary. When applicable, notified the Bureau of Fiscal Services (BFS) of the need to recover funds.

- Worked with the Office of Policy and 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.
- Provided program management with financial analysis, audit services, and recommendations for the charter school and magnet school programs. These services included participating at site visits for charter school renewals and evaluating the financial and management controls related to fiscal operations and recommended improvements for each charter school.

Office of Strategic Planning and Partnerships

- Developed a series of policies and communications for school leaders and program operators so that education statutes and departmental policies are provided in a clear, concise manner.
- Represented the agency and Commissioner on Governor's Workforce Council (GWC) and Education Subgroups, participating in meetings, assisting in the development of education related strategies consistent with goals of the GWC in terms of workforce development initiatives.
- Advanced college and career readiness efforts by working with districts, other state agencies and outside partners toward the goal of creating programs which maximize student opportunities to gain early college credits, career related internships, and credentials so that students are prepared for postsecondary plans.
- Participated, alongside the state's attorney general, in key negotiations with parties to the *Sheff v. O'Neill* litigation, leading to final resolution of the historic case and development of the state's long-term desegregation plan.
- Communicated key terms of the Comprehensive School Choice Plan to educational and community stakeholders to facilitate support and cooperation in implementation of the *Sheff v. O'Neill* final settlement agreement.
- Implemented key terms of the Comprehensive School Choice Plan in accordance with the required schedule and facilitated collaboration among school choice leaders, district and school-level staff, desegregation experts, community organizations, and educational and business partners to advance *Sheff* goals and initiatives.
- Conducted complex data analyses to support negotiations strategies in the *Sheff v. O'Neill* case and development of the placement protocols to align with compliance goals and the plan.
- Convened a working group of key stakeholders in the *Sheff* Region to facilitate efficient and effective planning of the school choice system in the Greater Hartford Region.

- Launched and enhanced a new user-friendly application and placement platform in the *Sheff* Region to facilitate informed decision-making by prospective families regarding school choice opportunities.
- Issued and awarded a new transportation RFP to serve 18,000 school choice students across the Greater Hartford Region to foster participation in school choice through safe and reliable transportation services.
- Managed the Interdistrict Magnet Schools statewide, which served 38,054 students at 88 schools in 17 districts/RESCs at a cost of \$260,812,034.
- Distributed \$3,562,495 to RESC operators in PK tuition costs to support early education engagement of prekindergarten age Hartford-resident students.
- Managed the Open Choice programs statewide, which serves 2,945 students at 224 schools in 46 school districts at a cost of \$16,349,000 in enrollment tuition to those schools; 23 districts in the Sheff region served 232 students in PreK-K at a cost of \$1,508,000 in enrollment tuition to those districts; and transportation cost of \$17,285,252, including summer programs and supplemental transportation costs.
- Provided grant opportunities to 28 Open Choice districts in the Sheff region with funds equaling \$299,900 as part of the school choice plan to increase acceptance rates and enhance educational opportunities.
- Distributed \$1,695,401 to the RESCs in administrative costs to operate the Open Choice program statewide.
- Distributed \$2,082,500 in funding to magnet operators and open choice schools in order to increase acceptance rates in furtherance of *Sheff* and choice plan-related goals.
- Managed the Interdistrict Cooperative Grant program, which had 3,928 students participate in 12 programs statewide and issued \$2,166,208 in grants funds to assist reducing racial and economic isolation.
- Revised the grant application for Open Choice districts to build in attrition and performance metrics as an incentive to retaining students and enrolling students in the upper grades.
- Distributed \$3,548,925 to 28 districts and one RESC in the Sheff region to promote academic and social success of participating Open Choice students.
- Collaborated with UConn to implement an analysis of the school choice transportation system to increase efficiencies and respond to family decision-making.
- Responded to numerous data requests from *Sheff* plaintiffs, legislators, and the media.

Office of Student Supports and Organizational Effectiveness

Interagency Council for Ending the Achievement Gap (IAC)

- Quarterly meetings are convened in partnership with the Commissioner of Education and Lt. Governor's offices in response to the Achievement Gap Task Force Master Plan.

Attendance and Engagement

- **The Attendance and Engagement Advisory Team** together with an internal work group consists of stakeholders that provide feedback and input into planning technical assistance and supports to districts. This input has been helpful to understanding the needs of the districts and formats and delivery models that work best for districts. Participants were intentionally selected to represent a wide range of positions that have roles and responsibilities related to attendance.
- **Talk Tuesdays** is an opportunity for participants to discuss topics they are facing related to attendance in their schools and districts. It is a less formal “drop –in” meeting with no registration needed. Held every other Tuesday morning since the onset of the pandemic; network includes the lowest performing districts and schools in the state. Participants play a wide variety of roles in the districts from superintendents, principals, to family-school liaisons. Session participation averaged approximately 50 participants. Topic areas included: implementing systems to address attendance; building and sustaining strong relationships; focusing on student groups with low attendance; data tracking and monitoring; and connecting to learning.
- **Statewide Attendance and Engagement Community of Practice** sessions – held monthly, sessions are open to all district attendance leads, engaged expert speakers, and provided opportunities for districts to share and learn from each other in small group settings.
- **Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP)** – LEAP is a home visiting and family engagement program established by Governor Ned Lamont and his administration in April 2021. It is in 15 selected districts and designed to assist K-12 students and their families with high levels of absenteeism resulting from COVID-19 pandemic. LEAP’s purpose is to improve student attendance through strengthening and expanding trusting relationships between schools and families who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic by focusing resources and supports including home visits, resource referral and connections with community agencies. As of April 2022, over 10,000 students across the 15 LEAP districts had received more than 21,000 contacts from home visitor staff to encourage and support increased student attendance in school. An external evaluation of LEAP is launching that will provide expanded data analysis and accountability for the LEAP program.

Social-Emotional Supports

- Connecticut is leading the way in transforming how we support students' social-emotional development by starting with their strengths and assets, not deficits. The Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA) system is based on CASEL's five competencies and measures growth over time. The DESSA system is used to strengthen MTSS by assisting educators to be more proactive in identifying students' needs and creating tailored interventions. The DESSA-mini assessment measures students' prosocial factors and social-emotional skills as an early indicator tool. Identifying and addressing these needs early on will leads to positive social-emotional and behavioral development

and improved academic performance. The supplemental assessment is a comprehensive follow-up with at-risk students (targeted) to identify specific areas of need. The screening and assessment tools are available to all districts. The CSDE is undertaking a phased rollout with over 80 districts participating to date. We have provided 162 training sessions, 4,900 educators have been trained, and students are showing meaningful positive growth.

- The CSDE launched the Social-Emotional Learning Hub and PSA, where Connecticut educators and families can find on-demand resources made available to inform, educate, and highlight the right resources to develop compassionate learning spaces, anytime, anywhere, that provide for social and emotional well-being. Also, the newly updated CSDE social-emotional webpage.
- Pursuant to Public Act 21-95, *An Act Concerning Assorted Revisions and Additions to the Education Statutes*, the CSDE developed student social-emotional habits for grades 4 to 12. The CSDE developed the *Components of Social, Emotional and Intellectual Habits: Grades 4 through 12*, actively engaging key stakeholders, including national experts, during the development process. Furthermore, stakeholders from across the state were engaged in the review of the document. A synthesis of feedback responses among Connecticut administrators, teachers, parents, students, and leaders from student support services, education-related organizations, and institutes of higher education revealed widespread support for the *Components of Social, Emotional and Intellectual Habits: Grades 4 through 12*. The guidelines are informed by extensive evidence-based research on social and emotional development. The document is a continuation of the *Components of Social, Emotional, and Intellectual Habits: Kindergarten through Grade 3* approved by the Connecticut State Board of Education in 2018. Both documents represent the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that form an essential blueprint for social-emotional habits and academic success. The purpose of the document is to provide a model to districts and schools for integrating social, emotional, and intellectual habits into academic content areas so that students will learn, practice, and model essential personal life habits. These habits, over time, will contribute to students' academic and personal success.
- In partnership with EASTConn we developed the Cultivating Trauma-Sensitive Classroom Practices: A resilience-focused professional learning webinar for all educators (EASTCONN Psychological & Behavioral Consultation Services).
- The CSDE has written a proposal that is rooted in the conceptualization of social-emotional learning (SEL) as embedded within a multitiered systems framework (MTSS). Technical assistance and coaching will center on the use of data and systems to drive integrated, sustainable implementation of evidence-based, high-leverage SEL practices.
- The CSDE developed *Leveraging Multitiered Systems of Support (MTSS) to Enhance Educational Leadership* resource guide to align with the *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders Standards*.
- *Leveraging Multitiered Systems of Support (MTSS) to Enhance Educational Leadership*.
- Webinar: *Leveraging Multitiered Systems of Support (MTSS) to Enhance Educational Leadership*.

- Other SEL presentations and resources:
 - CT Friday Café Social-Emotional Wellbeing for Students: A Priority for Families and Schools.
 - Promoting SEL Using a Strength-Based SEL Assessment in CT Schools, Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC).
 - Promoting Student Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in Connecticut Schools, CT Association of Schools (CAS).
 - CSDE's Entry Points for Implementing SEL.
 - Social Emotional Learning and Statewide Assessment Tools.
 - 12 information sessions on DESSA.

School-Based Diversion Initiative

The School-Based Diversion Initiative (SBDI) is a multiagency collaboration directed toward reducing exclusionary school discipline and school-based arrests and increasing local educational agency (LEA) capacity to address emotional, developmental, and behavioral needs among students in collaborating schools. To date, SBDI has served 65 schools across 23 districts. During the 2021-22 school year, 11 schools in five districts participated in SBDI, where school staff received professional development, restorative practice training, discipline policy consultation and community coalition building to engage families, law enforcement, and providers. In comparison to the last full in-person school year (SY 2019-20) outcomes for the 2021-2022 school year include a projected decrease in court referrals by 60%, a 12% decrease in Mobile Crisis referrals, and a 9% decrease in out-of-school suspensions. Cumulatively since 2010, participating SBDI schools have reduced court referrals by 36%, increased Mobile Crisis referrals by 23%, and decreased out-of-school suspensions by 10%.

Behavioral Health Pilot

- The CSDE conducted a statewide Behavioral Health Survey (BHS) of Connecticut public schools, along with a follow-up focus group, during the fall of 2021. The purpose of the survey and the subsequent focus group was to provide the CSDE with an understanding of the work taking place regarding mental health services in districts. The survey focused on districts' staffing, implementation, capacity building, and resources. The findings of the BHS and responses from the focus groups provided information regarding current trends, emerging issues, and programmatic initiatives related to behavioral health in K–12 public schools across the state.

The CSDE encouraged all public school districts to participate in the survey. Survey responses were received from 77 districts. The majority of staff completing the survey were:

- Directors of pupil services: 29%
- Superintendents: 20%
- Student support services staff (social workers, school psychologists, school counselors): 20%

- The CSDE invited approximately 30 districts to join the post-survey focus group based on their indication of limited district resources identified in the survey. The CSDE selected the pilot districts to represent each Connecticut county.
- The CSDE has set the vision that each school in the state will have coordinated resources for behavioral health supports to address the needs of students, families, and staff. In collaboration and communication with members of the Child Well-Being Taskforce and other local providers, the CSDE plans to use ARP ESSER funds to pilot and test systems that further connect schools to the community and ensure that students and educators have the support they need. These funds will allow the CSDE to set up a system of coordinated care that will have a long-term impact on the health and wellness of Connecticut's students and the adults that support them. The Behavioral Health Pilot (BHP) will examine the efficacy of programs while also assessing the process in which the CSDE supports districts in expanding their behavioral health supports. Upon completion of the Behavioral Health Readiness Assessment Map, the BHP Liaison, and the district, alongside the guidance of the Child Well-Being Taskforce and other partners and local providers, will determine the need and which proposed interventions and supports will be piloted. Each district will be assigned a BHP consultant and liaison. The liaisons will consult with district officials and staff to complete a Behavioral Health Readiness Assessment Map. The School Mental Health Quality Assessment-District Version (SMHQA) is designed for school district teams to:
 - assess the comprehensiveness of their school's mental health system; and
 - identify priority areas for improvement.

School Discipline

- The CSDE in partnership with OEC created Resources for Educators and Families for Early Elementary. All behavior has meaning. When trying to understand a child's behavior, it is important to step back, calmly reflect, and consider all perspectives.
- *Decision Guide for Behavioral Supports Preschool to Grade 2.*
- Tip Sheet: *Seek to Understand a Child's Behavior.*
- Tip Sheet: *De-escalation Strategies.*
- Videos (YouTube).
- Mobile Crisis Intervention/211 for children experiencing a behavioral or mental health crisis.
- The Early Childhood Consultation Partnership (ECCP).
- The Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children.
- *Understanding Challenging Behavior in Young Children.*
- The Connecticut School Discipline Collaborative - The purpose of this multi-disciplinary group is to advise the Commissioner of Education and State Board of Education on strategies for transforming school discipline to reduce the overall and disproportionate use of exclusionary discipline. Stakeholder Engagement-members reflect a diverse range

of expertise in the fields of education, public policy, law, youth development, and community leadership.

- Facilitated a panel discussion with superintendents and principals to share their expertise on school discipline, behavioral health, and building systems coherence during this extraordinary time. Panelists described how to amplify the attention to school discipline work for students and adults while fostering a positive school ethos to support students in reaching their fullest potential to flourish and thrive. CSDE Presentation November 18, 2021, CSDE Presentation March 24, 2022.
- Family guides on suspension and expulsions. The guides are meant to be used by families as well as schools to ensure a shared understanding of school discipline statutes, requirements, rights and responsibilities of all parties, and best practices.
- Revisited a prior discussion and gallery walk of the Historical Timeline of Public Education Policy in the United States and the impact on the educational system. Underpinning this work is contextualizing policies so Connecticut can ensure fair, just, and equitable practices in our schools. Information regarding the collaborative can be obtained on the [CSDE website](#). For the historical timeline display, e-mail: library@ctserc.org.
- In partnership with the Performance Office, we provide an annual report to the State Board of Education (SBE) on student discipline, including suspensions and expulsion data.
- Deployed tiered systems of supports, guidance, and professional learning in area school discipline that remove barriers to success and maximize students' potential.
- Other professional learning activities:
 - Developing sessions, coaching and technical assistance for a continuum of supports to address behavioral concerns, particularly intensive interventions for grades PreK-2.
 - Training for districts on 10 evidence-based strategies for building relationships in the classroom, embedding the language of expectations into praise and correction, escalation and de-escalation, and classroom implementation of behavior support plans. Additionally, high-leverage instructional practices to support academic progress, along with specific literacy strategies.
 - Training on the Pyramid Model Practices is a conceptual framework of evidence-based practices to promote young children's social and emotional development.
 - Updated the data-informed tiered professional learning framework grounded in equity, access, and evidence to identify and concentrate resources, expertise, and efforts where they are needed most. The framework provides prevention and early intervention strategies to promote a safe and positive school culture and identify vulnerable students.
 - Redesigned tier one to support capacity-building to develop, enhance, and expand Connecticut's Statewide Systems of Support to LEAs and schools using the Multitiered System of Supports (MTSS). MTSS provides guidance for the *2020-21 Report on Student Discipline in Connecticut Public Schools*, selecting,

integrating, and implementing the best evidence-based behavioral practices for improving behavioral outcomes for all students.

- Continue a two-day professional learning opportunity: "Using Restorative Practices within a Multitiered System of Supports," including technical support. School teams were provided with an overview of restorative practices and implementation within an MTSS.

School Counseling

- The CSDE created the Connecticut Comprehensive School Counseling Framework (CCSCF) training series. This series offers free professional learning in the form of web-based learning modules designed for Connecticut school counselors, school counselor directors, counselor educators, pre-service school counselors, and administrators. The CCSCF is based on the American School Counselor Association National Model while providing more information to align with Connecticut's needs. The CCSCF is vital to the school community to help maximize student success in academic performance, developing and managing social-emotional skills, and planning for postsecondary options (higher education, workforce, or military). This course provides an overview of the framework and provides school counselors an introduction to the core components.

Nutrition

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) authorized nationwide waivers that the CSDE opted in to, which gave participating school districts the option to serve nutritious meals at no cost to all children 18 years old and younger and persons older than 19 years old with a disability. The nationwide waivers also allowed schools to serve meals using grab and go, bus stop routes, or household delivery models (versus congregate meal service); allowed parents and/or guardians to pick-up meals on behalf of the children in their household from schools or community sites; gave flexibility to schools to distribute multiple days' worth of meals at once and serve meals on the weekends and school holidays and breaks; and allowed meals to be served in bulk sizes as opposed to individual, unitize meals. From March 2020 through June 2022, participating schools and community-based organizations served 145,955,160 meals at no cost to families.
- Connecticut's Child and Adult Care Food Program's At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program (Supper program) provides nutritious evening meals to children through structured afterschool programs that are located at sites where at least half of the children in the school attendance area are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals. Meals are provided in conjunction with educational or enrichment activities after the regular school day ends, on weekends and holidays, and during other times of the year when school is in session. Due to the public health emergency, USDA issued nationwide waivers that allowed the CSDE to authorize Supper program providers to serve grab and go meals (vs. congregate meal service), multiple meals at one time, parent and/or guardian pick-up, household delivery, meals to be served in bulk sizes, and flexible distribution times. Enrichment activities also continued to be provided to participants. During school year 2021-22, Connecticut schools provided 821,910 Supper meals and 292,848 snacks at 206 sites.

- During the summer of 2021, the CSDE Summer Meals Programs served 3,521,243 meals from over 750 meals sites. More than 550 summer meals sites are approved to operate in summer 2022.
- In partnership with DSS, the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) benefits have brought over \$463.7 million to more than 350,000 children statewide without households having to complete an application. This program provided debit cards that could be used to purchase food at retail establishments to support food security in families when in-person school was interrupted due to COVID-19.
- The CSDE distributed \$691,161 to schools participating in the National School Lunch Program to reimburse schools for administrative costs associated with the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) benefits.
- The CSDE distributed more than \$9 million in Supply Chain Assistance Funds to schools for purchasing domestic product for their school meal services.
- The CSDE was awarded almost \$14 million in federal funds through the (Section 722 of PL 116-260, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Title VII, Chapter 3) Child Nutrition Emergency Operational Costs Reimbursement Program to distribute additional funds to provide to local operators of the School Breakfast Program (SBP), NSLP, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) with additional reimbursements for emergency operating costs they incurred during the public health emergency. The CSDE distributed \$2,119,878 in Emergency Operating Costs Reimbursement to CACFP participating childcare centers and family day care homes and \$11,623,605 to schools across the state to help offset the economic toll that the public health emergency had on sponsoring organization and school program operations.

Family Engagement 2021-22

- Connecticut's Definition and Framework for Family Engagement was featured in a report by the Carnegie Foundation called *Embracing a New Normal: Toward a More Liberatory Approach to Family Engagement*. It was identified as a best practice for co-creation with families and other constituencies. Connecticut's definition will also be featured in an upcoming compendium of research in family engagement to be published by Scholastic Inc. in October 2022. In collaboration with the CT Parent Advocacy Coalition, CSDE created a companion document focused on partnerships from the perspective of parents of children who receive special education services. This new report was presented at the CSDE Special Education Transition Symposium.
- CSDE launched a Family Learning Hub as part of the CT Learning Hub. The Family Learning Hub provides a range of resources for families to support children's success. It also provides information and tools for educators and other professionals to build productive partnerships with families.
- In partnership with Connecticut Children's, the CSDE offered "Virtual House Calls" for families: Returning to School Safely During COVID-19 in August and Staying in School Safely During COVID-19 in December. Physicians specializing in infectious disease, developmental psychology and school health offered guidance to families on successful

social, emotional, and physical wellness. The sessions attracted over 2,800 registrations. Sessions were recorded and captioned in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Arabic.

- CSDE convenes a peer-to-peer learning network for professionals involved in family engagement called Friday CAFÉ (Community and Family Engagement). Friday CAFÉ meets once a month during the school year. Friday CAFÉ hosted over 500 participants this year, two-thirds of whom were from urban areas. Evaluations indicate that 93% of participants report they learn new information that will help them build partnerships between families and schools and 95% say they would recommend Friday CAFÉ to someone else.
- The Division of Student Supports worked with the Turnaround Office to conduct a High School Community of Practice on Family Engagement with the seven high schools in the Commissioner's Network. The project focused on student voice in family engagement. Schools conducted focus groups with students to learn how students would like teachers and families to work together to help them succeed in high school and beyond. CSDE was invited to present this innovative approach at two national conferences.
- CSDE collaborated with the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) to increase funding for the Parent Trust Fund grant program in a shared effort to support parent involvement in civic engagement. Grants were funded through CSDE's Parent Trust Fund state allocation of \$267,193 as they had been in previous years. The collaboration added \$270,000 from OEC's federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (CFDA 93.434). Together these two funding sources increased the number of grantee sites and expanded geographic distribution, thereby increasing the beneficial impact of parent leadership activities in Connecticut.

Adult Education

- The CSDE Adult Education Unit collaborated with the Department of Labor and the Department of Aging and Disability Services to update the Unified State Plan as directed by the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The CSDE has enhanced and supported programs and services to be 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. The CSDE launched a new longitudinal data system used for analyzing educational and workforce outcomes. 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 multilingual learners to learn English; facilitating the transition to postsecondary education opportunities; preparing residents to attain U.S. citizenship; and helping families to break the intergenerational cycle of illiteracy.

Homeless Children and Youth

- The CSDE awarded \$3.8 million of federal funding under Connecticut’s American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief – Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY) program. Funding to 116 LEAs includes investments in:
 - Supporting districts and schools in identifying children and youth experiencing homelessness and providing funding for services to mitigate the impacts of COVID 19.
 - Providing supports to ensure that children and youth experiencing homelessness can attend school and participate fully in school activities.
 - Addressing the needs exacerbated by COVID 19 by students experiencing homelessness, including social-emotional well-being, mental and behavioral health, and academic supports.

Family Resource Centers

- The CSDE distributed \$1.4 million in additional funding to Connecticut’s network of Family Resource Centers (FRCs) to quickly scale programming to serve additional families and children impacted by the pandemic. Funding will allow FRCs across the state to assist schools with providing added supports and services for children and families in communities that continue to adapt to the changing dynamics and recovery from the pandemic.

Performance Office

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 five CSDE Performance 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
- Developed and implemented a new Seal of Biliteracy collection, integrated truancy and Title 1 data at the student-level, and began development of a new student-level physical fitness assessment data collection.
- Implemented a process to collect student-level data from 200 summer enrichments camps in 2022
- Partnered with EdAdvance to collect and analyze the outcome of students identified as disengaged or absent, where outreach from the Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP) took place.
- Worked with colleges statewide to collect information on Dual Enrollment programs offered to high school students.

- Finalized the launch of a new cloud-hosted statewide special education data system (CT-SEDS), which includes an IEP component at the student level and will allow for improved communication and information sharing between schools and districts. This system will eliminate multiple existing summary data collections in the state related to students with disabilities.
- Managed COVID-19 related projects including:
 - a. Collected student addresses and partnered with DSS for the provision of Pandemic-Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) cards to approximately 285,000 students statewide.
 - b. Collected attendance data monthly from districts, separately for in-person and remote learning days.

Information Technology

- Supported ongoing maintenance and implementation of several data collection applications to support agency priorities, e.g., Public School Information System (PSIS), Directory Manager, Education Finance System, Teacher Certification, Educator Data System, special education, teacher-course-student, discipline.
- Modified and enhanced the extension to existing PSIS system to support collecting address and monthly attendance from school districts, separately for remote and in-person days. These data supported the provision of Pandemic-EBT benefits in partnership with the Department of Social Services. Attendance data also supported the agency and districts to monitor and support greater student engagement.
- Continued implementation of the Direct Certification, including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)/Temporary Family Assistance (TFA), Medicaid, Foster Care application.
- Successfully automated student rostering for statewide summative assessments (e.g., Smarter Balanced, LAS Links, DESSA-SEL assessment, CT-SEDS) with multiple online vendors.
- Worked with a cloud-hosted vendor to fully implement the Regional School Choice Office (RSCO) school choice lottery system.
- Developed and implemented a new application module within the TCS application to collect student achievements such as the Seal of Biliteracy.
- Began development of a new application to collect physical fitness assessment data at the student level.
- Continued implementation of cloud-hosted SaaS adult education system.
- Leveraged F5 technology to support newer TLS version to support legacy web server.
- Successfully implemented a proof-of-concept with Microsoft partner (Quisitive) for cloud migration of data collection environment; now focused on full implementation.
- Collaborated with DAS/BITS and vendor to procure ct.gov URL for cloud-hosted special education jobs application.
- Procured and set up new environments for the CSDE data warehouse for public reporting and data management and launching of new visually interactive public reporting portal.

- Coordinated with vendor to upgrade the teacher certification IVR system to Hyper-V and latest AVAYA software version.
- Supported continued implementation and expansion of O365 system.
- Provided ongoing continued support for remote or hybrid work due to the pandemic.
- Finalizing retirement of the WANG system to a web-based cloud connectivity and integrate with CORE accounts.
- Began the process of upgrading off-site disaster recovery storage systems.
- Implemented hardware life cycle management for CSDE users.

EdSight - Data Integration/Reporting

- Successfully launched the new EdSight public website. This launch included a redesigned homepage, navigation of all stored process content to the SiteCore content management system, and six new visual dashboards with export functionality (Find Schools, Enrollment, Resident Town, Sheff Schools, Educator Diversity, and College Enrollment, Persistence, and Graduation).
- Developed/updated and deployed several secure reports including a graduation report, resource allocation review (RAR), and Educator Diversity Dashboard.
- Updated data in numerous interactive public reports (e.g., Connecticut Report Card (CRC), suspension rate, course enrollments by subject, enrollment, attendance, graduation rates, educator demographics and staffing levels, and primary disability).
- Reported Connecticut Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion through the secure and public EdSight portals to support the Governor's FAFSA Challenge initiative.
- Provided 2020-21 student level assessment data to LEAs through EdSight Secure including student learning model and test mode (i.e., in-person or remotely proctored).
- Upgraded data warehouse server hardware and migrated SAS and SQL content from old to new installations. Assisted by BITS, CSDE IT, and SAS Institute staff. Updated Microsoft and SAS server and client software to the latest versions.
- Added current and historical Commissioner's Network, Alliance and Priority District, and Turnaround/Focus filtering to the data warehouse for display in the EdSight Secure RAR and EdSight Public Find Schools reports.
- Used the data warehouse to respond to several data requests from researchers, districts, and CSDE personnel, providing suppressed data according to CSDE suppression guidelines.
- Published the annual Profile and Performance Reports (PPR) in accordance with federal requirements and Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-220 (c) to include key metrics on students, educators, instruction, and performance for all districts and schools.
- Continued sharing 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 and participated in discussion surrounding use of the data warehouse to support the Interrupted Scholars Act: Juvenile Justice data exchange.

- Provided US Department of Education with all required data on a timely basis through the EdFacts system.

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.
- Successfully implemented and delivered the state summative English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science state summative assessments.
- Continued to expand training and support to districts in the use of interim assessment blocks that are aligned to state academic standards and designed to inform classroom instruction.
- Conducted standard settings, alignment studies, and new item development for science assessments.
- Continued partnership with the Consortium for the Alternate Assessment of English language proficiency (CAAELP) to develop and administer an alternate assessment for eligible students who are English learners with significant cognitive disabilities.
- Coordinated with practitioners to set conditions for a safe and valid administration of the Connecticut Physical Fitness Assessment. Additionally, began to build systems for the individual student collection (not just an aggregate) of student results set to commence in 2022-23.
- Successfully administered the Connecticut SAT School Day in a computer-based format for the first time in Connecticut in Spring 2022 to students in grade 11.
- Supported Connecticut educators to participate in the assessment development process through the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and the NGSS collaborative.
- Began coordinating the peer review resubmission to the US Department of Education that is due for four of our state summative assessments.

Research and Analyses

- Published numerous analyses and reports to support decision-making across the CSDE including the Condition of Education, special education performance reports, and school discipline report.
- Created a new research collaborative in partnership with public and private universities across Connecticut to evaluate education projects funded with COVID relief funds.
- Procured and analyzed new datasets on the DESSA SEL screen and data for LEAP.
- Partnered with other agencies through P20WIN to gather critical information about employment and postsecondary outcomes of Connecticut high school graduates (e.g., remediation and credit attainment, employment outcomes of students with disabilities, validity of alternate assessment achievement levels).
- Refined the model to predict student readiness for advanced coursework based on middle school Smarter Balanced assessments; prepared and sent over 33,000 letters to students (and their parents) in grades 9 and 10.

- Developed and issued district guidance for developing an advanced course participation policy.
- Implemented a statewide Performance Matters Forum conference in December that was attended by over 400 people.

Accountability

- Conducted significant preparation to fully restart school and district accountability in Fall 2022 using data from 2021-22 and prior.
- Partnered with state public and private universities to receive dual enrollment data for inclusion in Indicator 6 (college-and-career readiness) of the Next Generation Accountability System.
- Identified schools for the National Blue Ribbon School award and processed their submissions with the U.S. Department of Education and the school/district leaders.
- Submitted accountability data for Perkins CTE program to the US Department of Education.
- Coordinated the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) activities including administration of additional federal data collections.

Talent Office

Bureau of Educator Standards & Certification (BESC)

- 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 10%. In fact, in May 2021, Governor Lamont announced the State Board of Education had met its five- year goal of having 10% of Connecticut educators be people of color. The percentage of administrators of color has also increased, over that same period, from 12.24% to 14.23%. The growth in the number of educators of color in the workforce is encouraging with LEAs hiring more than 1,900 new educators of color since 2016. Efforts to engage broad stakeholder groups to achieve collective impact are ongoing.
- Issued 30,000 educator certificates, responded to tens of thousands of emails corresponding with districts and applicants between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022. Issued over 1,000 temporary authorizations and permits to keep schools running with appropriately authorized educators in front of students.
- Continued to implement various actions to streamline certification processes and procedures designed to increase efficiency while maintaining high-quality service to Connecticut educators while continuing to work remotely.
- Engaged in the process of updating and modernizing the Bureau of Certification website and active chatbot. The chatbot assists the public with navigating the website and accessing important certification information.

- Implemented enhanced reciprocity with 13 states and territories to reduce application-processing time and to encourage interest in transferring certification to Connecticut. From April 28, 2022, to August 1, 2022, 277 educators have applied for reciprocity totaling 405 Connecticut certifications issued.

Bureau of Educator Effectiveness (BEE)

- The Talent Office continued the work of the 2018-20 CCSSO Teacher Table initiative to make ongoing recommendations for statutory changes to educator certification regulations. As such, the Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification proposed two legislative recommendations which were adopted by both the SBE and the Connecticut General Assembly. The first legislative recommendation creates opportunities to expand candidate and educator preparation program access to the use of Connecticut's current Resident Educator Certificate (10-145m). The second legislative recommendation expands pathways for educators to obtain bilingual certification in Connecticut, reducing barriers of entry for the endorsement and creating more flexible options for both educators and districts to meet the needs of Connecticut students.
- The CSDE Talent Office implemented a fourth 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. These 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 hosting a virtual convening to introduce a digital repository of the [tools and resources developed](#) re: 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 \$811,987.96 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. Successful induction and support is proven to lead to higher retention of early career educators. Connecticut's efforts around induction and support were validated in a [study conducted by the REL and IES](#).
- The CSDE Talent Office worked to update and extend flexibilities to support educator evaluation during the 2022-23 school year ([2021-22 Flexibilities](#)) as it continues to work with PEAC (Performance Evaluation and Support Council) as the [Educator Evaluation and Support \(EES\) 2022 Council](#) to develop updated Connecticut Guidelines for Educator Evaluation. This work brings together relevant stakeholders to examine, analyze and redefine education evaluation in Connecticut.

Increasing Educator Diversity Initiatives

- **Increasing Educator Diversity Toolkit:** The diversity gap between Connecticut’s teachers and students persists. Although gains are evident, the racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity of Connecticut’s educator workforce does not reflect the diversity of its students. Educator talent hiring and selection is impacted by how educator recruitment and hiring is conceived, and the language used to describe and message the intentional work to diversify and strengthen the educator workforce. The continuum of educator talent development encompasses how educators are recruited, prepared, selected, hired, developed, mentored, supported, and sustained. The conceptualization, language, and all of the points along the continuum require thoughtful intention and attention. Therefore, in partnership with the Region 2 Northeast Comprehensive Center and Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast and Islands, the Talent Office created [Creating an Action Plan and Sustaining Efforts to Increase Educator Diversity — A Toolkit for District and School Leaders](#) (Toolkit), which is available on the CSDE website. The Toolkit is a companion to and designed to complement the [Creating a District Plan to Increase the Racial, Ethnic, and Linguistic Diversity of Your Educator Workforce: A Guidebook for Hiring and Selection](#). The toolkit guidance is informed by lessons learned from a coaching pilot conducted with 12 districts between January 2020 and June 2021. Among other things, the guidance provided is intended to help district and school leaders develop an action plan that clearly defines and communicates data-informed goals, strategies, and indicators of progress; and details how the district should engage in cycles of continuous improvement to sustain efforts and achieve goals. The toolkit contains two fillable forms: (1) the Increasing Educator Diversity Plan Template; and (2) the Increasing Educator Diversity Plan Progress Monitoring and Self-Evaluation Tool. Advancing educator diversity and culturally responsive and relevant practice in schools can improve outcomes for all Connecticut students. With a focus on high-leverage strategies, the CSDE and its key partners in this important work continue to design and deliver resources across the educator continuum to provide school districts with research-based supports consistent with P.A. 18-34.
- **Increasing Educator Diversity Symposium:** On April 27, 2022, the CSDE and Quinnipiac University’s School of Education co-hosted an Increasing Educator Diversity Symposium. The no-cost, in-person event was held at Quinnipiac University’s Mount Carmel Campus. Approximately 150 high school students from eight Educators Rising Connecticut districts—East Hartford, Hamden, Naugatuck, New Britain, New Haven, Stamford, Waterbury, and Windsor—attended the student-centered. Diverse education professionals representing a variety of roles in, and paths to education provided remarks and were assembled for three panel discussions: The Education Profession needs YOU; Multiple Pathways to a Career in Education; and Student Open Mic. The symposium agenda was facilitated by students from [Naugatuck High School](#) and [New Britain High School](#). Quinnipiac students gave high school students and their chaperones a campus tour, and the University provided lunch for students, chaperones, panelists and invited guests. The event culminated in a call to action for the aspiring educators.

- **Educators Rising Connecticut (Ed Rising CT):** On March 10, 2022, the [Second Annual Educators Rising Connecticut State Competition and Conference](#) was hosted virtually by CSDE partner and conference sponsor, Central Connecticut State University. The conference program was facilitated by three Ed Rising CT students from New Britain High School. Ed Rising CT is the centerpiece of Connecticut’s “grow our own” initiative to attract, recruit, develop, support, and sustain a more racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse educator workforce to benefit all students. Ed Rising CT students from across the state competed in competition categories that included: Ethical Dilemma, Creative Lecture, Job Interview, Emerging Educational Issues, Digital Challenge and Rising Educator Moment. Conference sponsors included: AFT Connecticut, CAFE, CEA, Educational Testing Service - Praxis, and New Britain Federation of Teachers. ED Rising CT is a state affiliate of Phi Delta Kappa International’s Educators Rising Program, which includes curriculum, teacher training, “Beginning to Teach” micro-credentials for students, student scholarship opportunities, and teacher leader supports and training, and culminates with an annual national conference. In June 2022, students from three Connecticut school districts, Naugatuck, New Britain, and New Haven attended the [2022 Educators Rising National Conference](#) that hosted approximately 1,900 participants in Washington, DC. This year’s theme “Shaping the Future” gave students the opportunity to network, learn, and compete with peers from all 50 states. Connecticut students participated in seven of the nineteen competitions and proudly represented their schools and state. Naugatuck High School’s Jaida Taveras was a semifinalist in the Creative Lecture competition, and New Britain High School’s Jada “Juno” Lasky was a semifinalist in the Educators Rising Moment competition. Two New Britain High School graduating seniors, Sherrod Cuttino and Marcus Caccio, received academic scholarships for their 2022-23 freshman year at Central Connecticut State University.
- **Educators Rising – MEN (Male Educator Network):** To increase the numbers of males in Connecticut’s educator pipeline—particularly males of color and English Learners—the CSDE also launched Educators Rising – MEN at New Britain High School and East Hartford High School. This targeted initiative was made possible by a grant from the Buck Foundation. Through a partnership with Kevin Walton and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc., all 12 Ed Rising-MEN students were matched with male educators of color including district and school-level administrators.
- **Connecticut Grades 6-16 Educator Pathway:** The CT Grades 6-16 Educator Pathway was conceived and developed to address persistent educator pipeline challenges and leaks causing: (1) a lack of racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity; (2) lack of interest in education generally and teaching specifically as a career choice; (3) declining EPP enrollments; and (4) declining numbers of students completing EPP programs even after enrollment. The objective of the middle school strand (grades 6-8) is to cultivate a sense that educator work matters. Ed Rising CT Clubs will expose middle school students to the education profession in a way that provides meaningful participatory experiences with district and school processes and professionals while amplifying the value and importance of teaching and learning, community service, and cultivating positive relationships with all stakeholders including high school mentors. The high school strand

(grades 9-12) builds upon the grade 6-8 exposure by introducing students to subject matter content and coursework using Ed Rising curriculum for grades 9-10. In grades 11-12 take dual credit courses at public and private EPP partner institutions to give them the opportunity to earn at least 9 college credits transferrable to any two-year or four-year college or university. The final strand of the CT Grades 6-16 Educator Pathway is the 2- and 4-year higher education strand. Work has begun with leadership and staff at the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) system to articulate and align a system wide General Education Pathway course of study for seamless student transfer from a two-year college, or matriculation directly from high school to a four-year EPP. CSCU's efforts to support system wide acceptance of dual credits wherever earned towards an education major will provide the currently nonexistent articulated and aligned pathway from secondary to postsecondary education that can support a more diverse and robust educator pipeline.

- The CSDE and the RESC Alliance hosted a virtual Increasing Educator Diversity Recruitment Fair on May 5, 2022, 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 Connecticut educator preparation programs, Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic Serving Institutions on the east coast. The fair attracted 77 districts to create virtual booths and 87 job-seeking candidates. Over the course of the one-day event, more than 400 conversations took place via chat, audio, or video calls. Preliminary feedback was positive with suggestions to inform future events. A Pre-Recruitment Fair was held on April 28, 2022, with more than 135 registrants. The program featured panel discussion on equitable hiring practices, certification information and resources to support educators of color.
- The RESC MTR Alliance provided grant funding to districts to support increasing educator diversity initiatives. This competitive grant program offers districts the opportunity to apply for funding to help initiate or continue educator diversity recruitment and retention efforts. Project proposals were reviewed by RESC representatives with district names redacted. A total of 12 school districts received awards ranging from \$1,500 to \$5,000 for a total of \$54,000. Examples of project proposals include financial support for candidates of color to complete ARC programs and Teacher Residency Programs; cultural competency training for teachers; support for existing IED committee work and development of IED workforce hiring and retention plans and retention programs for educators of color. School districts receiving grants include Plainfield, Ridgefield, Simsbury, East Windsor, Norwalk, Bridgeport, Coventry, Canton, School District Region 15, Norwich, Stratford, and Groton.
- The CSDE and RESC Alliance set aside funds to provide direct financial relief to aspirant teachers to offset the cost of completing a Connecticut State Board of Education-approved educator preparation program. RESC representatives met to develop a mechanism for candidates of color to apply for tuition assistance grants and/or licensure assessment fee reimbursement. This was a noncompetitive scholarship and fee reimbursement opportunity. Of the 45 aspirant teachers who applied for funding, 35

received scholarships, fee reimbursement or both. A total of \$77,000 was awarded with each candidate receiving \$2,000 scholarship and a \$200 fee reimbursement.

- Since launching in 2018, TEACH Connecticut supported about 900 EPP applicants total, 500 applicants in 2020-21, with 41% who identify as candidates of color. In addition, 39% expressed interest in teaching in a subject shortage area. TCT has more than 10,000 active subscribers, an increase of 4,000 subscribers from last year. Visitors to the TCT website receive free resources on how to become a teacher, including information on educator preparation programs, financial aid, and one-on-one support. A new initiative this year includes resources for future teachers of color. Two-thirds of surveyed subscribers report an increased interest in teaching through TCT, and two-thirds of EPP-supported applicants surveyed share that they were unlikely to or unsure of how to apply to an EPP without TCT's support and resources. TCT this year doubled the total number of EPP applicants supported each academic year while maintaining a similar percentage of candidates of color supported and providing a cost-effective teacher recruitment strategy to address the state's teacher shortage. TEACH Connecticut is a partnership among CSDE, TEACH (a national non-profit organization), school districts, universities, and other educator preparation programs. Funding is currently provided by the PCLB Foundation and CSDE. The CSDE continues to seek future funding opportunities.
- In 2020-21, the CSDE Talent Office in partnership with several EPPs launched and expanded Next-Gen, a Teacher Fellowship Program is designed to create enhanced learning environments for both the CCSU Teacher Candidates, as well as K-12 students. Providing opportunities for our Teacher Candidates to work within school districts will enhance their own professional growth, as well as positively impact student learning and achievement of all students. The Teacher Fellowship Program is currently open to undergraduate teacher candidates within the School of Education and Professional Studies; however, priority will be given to teacher candidates from underrepresented groups and students enrolled in shortage areas. This initiative address today's most pressing needs, it can serve as an innovative teacher pipeline for well-qualified educators — now and into the future.
- In 2020-21, the CSDE Talent Office supported the Minority Teacher Recruitment Policy Oversight Council's initiatives to increase educator diversity statewide. The council meets quarterly to discuss legislative initiatives to increase the number of educators of color statewide. The council's legislative recommendations include: continuing to develop resources and tools to support school districts statewide to adopt plans to increase diversity in the workplace; to provide support for candidates and educators of color including financial resources, and resources for resume development, interviewing and presentation skills; continues examination of current educator certification regulations and expanded reciprocity; expansion of TEACH CT as a statewide resource and outreach campaign to recruit educators; and expansion of Educators Rising CT and other "grow your own" programs.

Legislative Initiatives

CHESLA Alliance District Teacher Loan Subsidy Program

- The CHESLA Alliance District Teacher Loan Subsidy Program signed into law by the Governor on August 19, 2021, is a partnership between the Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority (CHESLA) and CSDE. The program is designed to recruit and to retain teachers in traditionally underserved areas of the state. This program is subject to available funding and offers a 3% interest rate subsidy on Alliance District Teacher Refinance Loans (to refinance existing private student loan debt) to teachers employed by any of Connecticut's 36 Alliance District public schools. Teachers will continue to receive the 3% interest rate subsidy as long as they continue to teach in an Alliance District public school and maintain a current Connecticut Educator Certification. The subsidy can result in substantial savings for participating teachers.

Minority Teacher Candidate Scholarship

- As a result of the 2021-2022 legislative session, CSDE was authorized to administer an annual minority teacher candidate scholarship program for students who: (1) graduated from a priority school district in a priority school districts and; (2) are enrolled in a teacher preparation program at any four- year institution of higher education. The maximum grants are not to exceed \$20,000 per year. The department will develop a policy regarding administration of the scholarships and award the scholarships for fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, and each fiscal year thereafter.

Task Force to Diversify the Educator Workforce

- As a result of the 2021-2022 legislative session, the Minority Teacher Recruitment Task Force was renamed the Task Force to Diversify the Educator Workforce and directed to conduct a study to evaluate the implementation of and analyze the effectiveness of existing minority teacher recruitment and retention programs and efforts at the state and local levels. The Task Force will submit a report on its findings and recommendations not later than January 1, 2023, to the Joint Standing Committee on Education.

State Teacher Shortage and Retention Task Force

- As a result of the 2021-2022 legislative session, the State Teacher Shortage and Retention Task Force was established with one appointed member from the Minority Teacher Recruitment Policy Oversight Council who is a teacher.

Turnaround Office

The CSDE Turnaround Office oversees the work of Connecticut's 33 Alliance Districts, Commissioner's Network Program, Priority School Districts and Summer School, Title I Part A School Improvement Grants, and the Charter School Program.

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 10-262u, 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. Given the pause of reporting Accountability Data, the Turnaround Office team provided focused monitoring using reported attendance data, chronic absenteeism, and local assessment data to determine impact of strategies on student achievement.

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 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, Office of Student Supports, 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 2021-22, 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 2021-22 school year:

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

Cohort IX; joined the network in fall 2020:

- Derby Middle School, Derby
- Hartford Public High School, Hartford
- Pulaski Middle School, New Britain
- Slade Middle School, New Britain
- Chamberlain Elementary School, New Britain
- Michael F Wallace Middle School, Waterbury
- North End Middle School, Waterbury
- West Side Middle School, Waterbury

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

The Turnaround Office in partnership with the SBE Accountability and Support Sub Committee met with identified districts to showcase the implementation of best practices. The 2021-22 year highlighted the efforts of Vernon Public Schools, East Hartford Public Schools, and New London Public Schools.

The Turnaround Office in collaboration with the Office of Student Supports, SERC and Anne Henderson facilitated a High School Community of Practice (CoP) during the 2021-22 school year with several Commissioner's Network and Charter High Schools. This CoP was unique as it focused on partnering with students/families at the high school level. As a result, CSDE Education Consultants have been asked to present with Anne Henderson at the National Family Engagement Summit. The CSDE model has been recognized as a best practice in prioritizing

student attendance and engagement. Other state education agencies are planning to replicate the CSDE model.

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 2021-22 school year were Ansonia, Bridgeport, Danbury, 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 2021-22 charter school network included 21 schools statewide, located in 10 host districts, serving 10,910 students.

State charter schools in 2021-22 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 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 twenty-three SIG schools, which have received allocations for **comprehensive** support under ESSA. In 2021-22, these schools included:

- Bridgeport: Barnum School, Luis Munoz Marin School, Wilbur Cross School, Paul Laurence Dunbar School, Bassick High School, Warren Harding High School
- Hartford: SAND School, ML King, Jr Middle School, Burns Latino Studies Academy, Milner Middle School, Wish Museum School
- New Britain: Chamberlain Elementary School, Pulaski Middle School, Slade Middle School, Smalley Elementary School
- New Haven: Augusta Lewis Troup School, High School in the Community, Wexler/Grant Community School
- New London: Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School
- Waterbury: Michael F Wallace Middle School, North End Middle School, West Side Middle School, Wilby High School

In 2021-22, the Turnaround Office also managed and monitored ESSA-SIG awards to 11 schools for **targeted** support under ESSA:

- Bridgeport: Bridgeport Military Academy
- Derby: Derby Middle School
- Hartford: Weaver High School, Sport and Medical Sciences Academy
- New Britain: Northend Elementary School
- New Haven: James Hillhouse High School
- New London: New London High School
- Waterbury: Crosby High School, John F Kennedy High School
- Portland: Gildersleeve School
- Bristol: Edgewood School

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

- Alliance Districts participated in two symposiums. The 2021-22 school year was focused on providing targeted support in implementation science - Evidence Based Practice and Selection using the Hexagon Tool. The CSDE partnered with Dr. Caryn S. Ward, Director, and Sophia Farmer, M.T., Implementation Specialist with National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) at the University of North Carolina.
- 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. To ensure coherence from district to school, the focus was on providing targeted support in implementation science - Evidence Based Practice and Selection using the Hexagon Tool. The CSDE partnered with Dr. Caryn S. Ward, Director, and Sophia Farmer, M.T., Implementation Specialist with National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) at the University of North Carolina.
- Leadership teams from Commissioner's Network schools participated in the Commissioner's Network Leadership Institute which provides planned professional learning for leaders embarking on the school improvement efforts approved by the State Board of Education. Professional learning is also provided through the Principal Cohort Series, which consisted of 3 sessions centered on building knowledge around organizational design and change management and implementation science. Sessions focused on changing culture and habits across teams, leveraging learning habits, increasing psychological safety with meeting habits, managing change and building agility across projects. Roundtables were also held quarterly to provide topic-focused discussions for leaders to come together to share and gather ideas to meet the challenges of today's schools. Schools supported each other by sharing best practices during a difficult year.
- Provide formal monitoring sessions for Alliance Districts three times during the year, in addition to ongoing support.
- Provide technical assistance to Commissioner's Network Schools on a biweekly basis.
- Provide professional learning for Commissioner's Network, SIG and charter schools through Pop Up PDs and PD Playlists. These resources and professional learning opportunities were designed to meet the needs of the schools on topics including building community, effective instructional strategies, formative assessment practices for remote learning, boosting teacher morale, and self-care.
- Provide focused support using the CSDE Cycle for Continuous Improvement to highlight the cyclical nature of improvement. This research-based cycle is used to support the work within monitoring meetings, professional learning, and development of district improvement plans.
- Published webinar to support districts in leveraging student voice. Windsor Public Schools was highlighted as a model district.
- In conjunction with CAS and SERC, CSDE is providing professional learning and on-site technical assistance to identified comprehensive school improvement (CSI) and targeted school improvement (TSI) schools through the end of 2022.

- Communicated the published a Root Cause Analysis and Needs Assessment Toolkit to guide districts and schools in aligning strategic plans and interventions to the needs of their students and communities with focused webinars. Each step includes information, tools, and a video for more guidance on implementation of the toolkit.
- Developed a charter school enrollment request process. The procedure allows charter schools to submit enrollment increase requests to the CSDE by April 1 for consideration in the succeeding year. In determining whether to grant such requests the CSDE considers the financial feasibility of the proposal and an evaluation of the school performance, stewardship, governance and management, student population and legal compliance. Additionally, the school must have an established capacity for meeting student enrollment over time and have a comprehensive plan for accommodating and meeting the needs of the increase in total student enrollment. All enrollment increases are subject to fiscal review by Office of Policy and Management and legislative approval.
- Partnered again with the Bureau of Special Education and SERC to provide professional development opportunities for charter school staff focused on serving the needs of students with special needs. Trainings provided have included Universal Design for Learning: Strategies to Support All Students, Improving Outcomes for Students with Disabilities: Strengthening Family Engagement and PPT Facilitation, and Supporting the Use of Executive Skills in the Classroom to Meet Core Standards for All Students.

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 113 employees: 36 white males, 50 white females, zero black males, 10 black females, six Hispanic males, six Hispanic females, three AAIANHNPI (Asian, American Indian, Alaskan Native, Hawaiian Native, or Pacific Islander) males, and two AAIANHNPI females. Of the 113 hires, 53 individuals were goal candidates: one white male, 41 white females, zero black males, seven black females, one Hispanic male, zero Hispanic females, one AAIANHNPI male, and two AAIANHNPI females.