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**Administrative  
Report to the Governor**

**Connecticut  
State Department of Education**

**2022-23**



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CONNECTICUT STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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# Contents

<b>At-a-Glance.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Mission.....	1
Statutory Responsibility.....	1
<b>Public Service .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Academic Office .....	3
Bureau of Special Education.....	4
Division of Legal and Governmental Affairs.....	4
Bureau of Investigations and Professional Practices (Bureau within the Division) .....	4
Finance and Internal Operations .....	5
Office of Internal Audit.....	5
Office of Strategic Planning and Partnerships .....	6
Office of Student Supports and Organizational Effectiveness (OSSOE) .....	7
Performance Office.....	8
Talent Office .....	8
Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification.....	9
Bureau of Educator Effectiveness.....	9
Office of Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities (ODRD).....	10
Turnaround Office.....	10
Internal Operations and Accountability .....	11
Charter Schools.....	11
<b>Improvements and Achievements.....</b>	<b>12</b>
Academic Office .....	12
Mathematics .....	12
Science .....	12
Early Literacy.....	12
Career Technical Education .....	12
Bureau of Special Education.....	13
General Monitoring and Supervision.....	13
Training and Support.....	14
Other Professional Development and Training Efforts.....	14
Grants Funding and Communications .....	15
Special Education Dispute Resolution.....	16
Division of Legal and Governmental Affairs.....	16
Bureau of Investigations and Professional Practices .....	17
Finance and Internal Operations .....	17
Bureau of Fiscal Services.....	17
Office of Internal Audit.....	18
Office of Strategic Planning and Partnerships .....	19
Office of Student Supports and Organizational Effectiveness (OSSOE) .....	21

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Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs .....	21
Performance Office .....	24
Data Collection .....	24
Student Assessment System .....	24
EdSight.....	25
Accountability .....	26
Research, Analyses, and Data Sharing.....	26
Strategic Initiatives .....	27
Talent Office .....	27
Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification.....	27
Bureau of Educator Effectiveness.....	28
Legislative Initiatives.....	29
Office of Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities (ODRD).....	29
Turnaround Office.....	30
Opportunity Districts .....	30
Commissioner’s Network .....	30
Priority School Districts.....	30
Title I Part A School Improvement Grants.....	30
Information Reported as Required by State Statute.....	32

## *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:** 207

**Recurring operating expenses:** \$3,003,571,424.23

**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, Social Services, Public Health, 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 on legislated educational mandates to assist local education agencies (LEAs) in preparing students to succeed in college, career, and civic life. The Academic Office supports LEAs and schools in effectively implementing rigorous standards, curriculum, and instruction that ensures equitable access and acceleration of learning. 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;
- implementation of digital tools and resources such as Defined Learning and Apex Learning to support flexible and personalized learning;
- building LEA internal capacity and structures pertaining to early literacy and numeracy success for all students;
- supporting expansion of access to humanities and science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) programming for all students;
- providing guidance and technical support to districts on implementing language instruction programs for English learners/multilingual learners (ELs/MLs) and ensuring access to grade level, content area instruction for ELs/MLs; 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); State Bilingual Grant; Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund grants, 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 (ARP), 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/English learner 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 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and its program requirements for each entity responsibility for educating children with disabilities.
- Supports continuous improvement (learning) activities, which 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 the end of the school year in which the student turns 22 or when they receive their regular high school diploma, whichever comes first.

## **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, including matters pertaining to remote instruction, the formation of a new regional school district, and the provision of sufficient emotional, behavioral, and mental-health services to students as an educational interest of the State under Connecticut General Statutes Sections 10-4a and 10-4b. The division also provides guidance and assistance to local school districts and educational organizations on 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 helps 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.

### **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 called for, 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. Per 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 on 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 managing and aligning financial resources to support CSDE's organizational structure in the successful implementation of key strategic priorities and managing the annual calculation and disbursement of almost \$3.1 billion to support state and local education initiatives, including the State Board of Education's Comprehensive 5 Year Plan for Education, adult education, general and special education, and choice programming. The Finance and Internal Operations Office handles the administration of \$1.8 billion in federal COVID-19 relief funds per 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; Electronic Grants Management System (eGMS); payroll 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 (CSDE) management in identifying, avoiding, and mitigating risks. In support of this mission, OIA reviews and analyzes all aspects of CSDE's and the Office of Early Childhood's (OEC) operations.

Key services provided by the Office of Internal Audit include reviewing and evaluating the soundness, adequacy, and application of accounting, financial, and operating controls and procedures, and the cost effectiveness of such controls and procedures; determining the extent of compliance with established statutes, regulations, policies, plans and procedures; auditing



accounts and financial transactions, including performing forensic analyses; and recommending improvement in the operations and the use of resources in the department.

## 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 handles leading agency efforts to meet the state's obligation pursuant to the *Sheff v. O'Neill* litigation and manages implementation of the most recent agreement and final resolution in that case. Consistent with state priorities, the office leads the agency's 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, across 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 postgraduate 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 per 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 per C.G.S. §10-74d to reduce racial and economic isolation and increase academic achievement statewide;
- 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 and transportation 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;
- collaborates cross-divisionally, across agencies, and with outside parties to develop clear and consistency policies, procedures, and resources for agency, school, and district leadership;
- conducts in-depth data analyses and research for a variety of important CSDE and legislatively mandated projects;
- conducts outreach to inform families about school choice opportunities, provide application assistance, and support informed decision-making;
- coordinates diversity, equity and inclusion programming for choice schools and districts to support district's efforts to create positive school climates and plan for meeting legislative mandates;
- Administers the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grants from agency set aside to promote extracurricular programming in choice schools to enhance the educational experience, support the social-emotional well-being of students, and promote community; and
- administers ARPA grants to towns in the *Sheff* region, New Britain, and New London for interdistrict Magnet School tuition costs for enrollment greater than 4% of their resident students.

## **Office of Student Support Services (OSSS)**

The [Office of Student Support Services](#) (OSSS) improves the educational success of each and every learner by providing comprehensive supports to students and families and ensuring 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 structure within the office provide additional services:

### **School Health, Nutrition, and Family Services**

- Promotes health, fitness, and wellness, as well as supporting food and nutrition 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 through after school programs; assistance to students experiencing homelessness and involved with the juvenile justice system; prevention efforts targeting chronic absenteeism and overuse of exclusionary discipline.

## Performance Office

The [Performance Office](#) supports the improvement of student engagement and outcomes through the use of data. The key goals/initiatives of the office are to:

- [collect accurate data](#) in a highly efficient, secure, and timely manner;
- implement a high-quality [student assessment system](#) that provide a full suite of summative and interim block assessments that are aligned to state academic standards, efficient, reliable, and enable valid interpretations of student achievement and growth;
- aggregate data and deliver interactive reports through a comprehensive data portal [EdSight](#) for use by schools, districts, the CSDE, parents, legislators, researchers, and other interest groups;
- design and implement a [district and school accountability model](#) that is inclusive, collaborative, transparent, and reflective and enables a suite of differentiated supports and interventions for schools and districts;
- study the effectiveness of state initiatives through [rigorous research](#), analyses, interagency data, and [reports](#) sharing to gain insights that inform policy decisions; and
- design and implement strategic initiatives to address state-level priorities like [FAFSA completion](#), [dual credit expansion](#), and [automatic admissions to higher education](#).

## 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 now houses three Bureaus: the Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification (BESC), the Bureau of Educator Effectiveness (BEE), and the newly created Bureau of Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities. Collectively, the three bureaus work 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 (RESC) 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); 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 (i.e., CT Educators Rising, Next-Gen, etc.); (2) ensure equitable access to educator preparation information, support career changers in pursuit of their educator credentials, identify employment opportunities and funding supports (e.g., [TEACH Connecticut](#) and [CHESLA Alliance District Teacher Loan Subsidy Program](#)); (3) support the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability and Reform (CEEDAR) Center and the Council for Chief State School Officer’s (CCSSO’s) Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership initiative; build stronger partnerships between educator preparation programs and school districts focusing on inclusive education; and (4) support early career educator induction through the Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) program; focus on growth and development; Re-Imagined Educator Evaluation statewide with full implementation in fall 2024; and continuously improve practice through high-quality professional learning, support systems and annual recognition programs such as Paraeducator of the Year, Teacher of the Year, and the prestigious Milken Family Foundation award.

Since 2016 to present, 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**

- 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.
- Pursues 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*).
- Implements changes to the certification system to streamline internal processes for the purpose of enhancing the experience for educators, higher education institutions and districts, and to address reduced staffing capacity.
- Focuses on providing flexibility to districts with temporary authorizations to fill critical positions amid a continually shrinking workforce.
- 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 districts, higher education, and professional organizations to increase pathways to certification to address persistent shortage areas.

**Bureau of Educator Effectiveness**

- Participates in initiatives with the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability and Reform (CEEDAR) Center and the Council for Chief State School Officer’s (CCSSO) Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership initiative. Our team engages with state and national partners to promote effective and inclusive education

practices to ensure success for all students, with a specific focus on students with disabilities, struggling learners, and multilingual learners.

- Supports administrator preparation programs to improve clinical internship opportunities for aspiring administrators so they will better understand how to support and address the needs of students with disabilities, struggling learners, and multilingual learners.
- Participates on the Connecticut Advisory Council for Teacher Professional Standards and the Connecticut Advisory Council for Administrator Professional Standards.
- Participates on the Connecticut School Paraeducator Advisory Council to advise the Commissioner quarterly about the needs for the training of paraprofessionals and the effectiveness of the content and the delivery of existing training.
- Facilitated the Educator Evaluation and Support (EES) 2022 Council, including key educational stakeholders, during the past 24 months to develop new Connecticut Guidelines for Educator and Leader Evaluation and Support 2023 (Connecticut Guidelines 2023).
- Oversees all aspects of statewide implementation of CT's Teacher Educator and Mentor (TEAM) program (training, allocation of funding, mentor training, etc.).
- Continues to collaborate with Teach.org, with funding support from the Buck Foundation, to maintain and support TeachCT, a comprehensive recruitment campaign.
- Continues to coordinate statewide efforts to provide pathways to teaching for veterans through an initial grant awarded to the CSDE by the Department of Defense.

### **Office of Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities (ODRD)**

The Office of Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities (ODRD) was established by the Connecticut General Assembly in 2021 with the passage of [PA 21-168](#). The ODRD collaborates with families and stakeholders in education to advance initiatives designed to ensure that all Connecticut students with dyslexia and other reading-related learning disabilities become skilled readers and writers, able to reach their personal and career goals, and become involved, productive, confident, and satisfied members of society.

### **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. During the 2022-23 school year, the Turnaround Office engaged districts in a Resource Allocation Review process to ensure equitable allocation of resources across all district schools.

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 other strategies. This and the CSDE EdSight Data Portal provide data and evidence to support school and district improvement process.

Other services provided by the Turnaround Office include school and district support through the state's Alliance District, Opportunity District and Priority School District programs, as well as supporting school turnaround through the Commissioner's Network and Title I School Improvement Grants (SIG).

### **Internal Operations and Accountability**

- 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 districts in tracking their grant investments to student outcomes using the Resource Allocation Review report in EdSight.
- 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.
- Support the development of Corrective Action Plans.
- Promote reduction of racial, ethnic, and economic isolation, and serve high-need student population groups.
- Support new schools in underserved geographic locations.
- Completion of New State Charter School Request for Proposals (RFP).

## **Improvements and Achievements**

### **Academic Office**

This year the CSDE Academic Office continued to design and develop K-8 Model Curricula Project as Open Education Resources (OER) through GoOpenCT: [GoOpenCT](#) as legislated through PA-19-12 and PA21-2.

#### **Mathematics**

- Completion and release of grades 3-5 model curricula, including financial literacy connections and embedded tasks for project-based learning.
- Update 6-8 model curricula with aligned resources and supports for English learners/multilingual learners (ELs/MLs).

#### **Science**

- Completion and release of grades 6-8 OpenSciEd model curricula through GoOpenCT Platform.
- Completion of grades 3-5 model curricula with aligned resources and supports for ELs/MLs.

#### **Early Literacy**

- Deployed over \$10 million in CSDE's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to local and regional boards of education during fiscal year (FY) 2023 for the purpose of supporting scientifically based, evidence-based literacy teaching and learning in grades kindergarten through third (K-3).
- Provided technical assistance, professional learning, and coaching support to assist local and regional boards of education in building systems and structures aligned to the scientifically based, evidence-based literacy teaching and learning in K-3 (e.g., Connecticut Literacy Model with UConn, Hill for Literacy, and Literacy How; Science of Reading Masterclass with CAPSS; Networked Improvement Community with WestEd).
- Updated Governor's Summer Reading in partnership with the Connecticut State Library and Connecticut Association of School Librarians (CASL)
- Revised the Approved Menu of Research-Based Grades K-3 Universal Screening Reading Assessments to aid local and regional boards of education in the identification of K-3 students below proficiency in reading, and to help in identifying, in whole or in part, students at risk for dyslexia.

#### **Career Technical Education**

- Connecticut Career Pathways Skill Institute Initiative (Year 4) Cohort 3 and Cohort 4 (Coaching) supporting 19 districts and 21 high schools with in-person and virtual professional learning to establish, expand, and integrate career pathways leading to high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand careers.

- Career Ecosystem's in Business, Finance, Marketing, and Personal Finance conference for 80 teachers, curriculum specialists, and administrators.
- Collegial Conversations for Health Science Educators.

## **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 2023 annual determination. This determination is based on the state’s performance during 2021-22, 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, and validity and reliability of data.
- Participated in national Results Based Accountability Collaborative and hired a durational project manager to improve our current Differentiated Monitoring System moving from a Special Education Compliance to Compliance and Results based system (improved outcomes for students with disabilities).
- Submitted our State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) (six-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.
- Updated State Systemic Improvement Plan (theory of action and resources: Data Based Interventions) to improve reading achievement that is assessed by using the accountability data derived from the state assessment testing results for third-grade students with IEPs.
- Hosted informational sessions 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). Contacts with identified LEAs highlighted areas of concern and correspondence demonstrated proper procedural fiscal practices related to the use of IDEA Part B funds.
- Differentiated Monitoring Team continues to review data and other information to assess potential noncompliance in the state’s LEAs and ensure the appropriate implementation of the IDEA throughout the state.
- Coordinated with CSDE IT to design and implement a paperless process using designated, confidential Microsoft Teams channels to enable programs to submit their approved private special education approval applications and supporting documents electronically (instead of submitting hard copy application binders).



- Conducted 14 CSDE approved private special education program reapprovals and eight program changes during the 2022-23 approval cycle.
- Ongoing collaboration with the Office of Early Childhood to update the APR data collection through the Early Childhood Outcome (ECO) data system.
- Ongoing collaboration with the Office of Early Childhood to support the APR data on the transition from Birth to Three (Part C) to Preschool Special Education (Part B).

### **Training and Support**

- After five years of planning and design, the CSDE implemented a new individualized education program (IEP) that was used for all new annual reviews and initial referrals during the 2022-23 school year.
- The CSDE updated/revised the Connecticut IEP Manual and trained over 6,200 Educators and parents in high quality IEP development.
- 2022-23 IEP Quality Training delivered virtual and in-person
- After two years of planning and preparation, the CSDE designed and launched a comprehensive CT special education data system (CT-SEDS), which will improve efficiencies in required data collections, ensure consistency and calibration of data entry and result in higher quality individualized education programs and Section 504 Plans. As of July 1, 2022, CT-SEDS is live (operational) 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.
- CT-SEDS User Training 2022-23
- Partnered with the RESC Alliance to establish a CT-SEDS help desk to provide additional support to schools and programs.
- Developed a variety of resources and flowcharts to support users with CT-SEDS usage and implementation, including the launch of CT-SEDS Search, a Google-like search engine, to help users in finding resources and information to assist users with navigating the new system.
- Provided consistent professional learning and technical assistance support through regularly scheduled live CT-SEDS Office Hours, working sessions, online training sessions, regional in person working sessions, in-person topic-based training sessions (topics selected by district), recorded videos, and webinars.
- Continued to support and add to Connecticut's 14 special education teacher and related services communities of practice.
- Continued support provided to established secondary transition structures; Regional Transition Networks (RTNs) and Connecticut Transition Community of Practice for Secondary Transition personnel.

### **Other Professional Development and Training Efforts**

- 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 8th 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 specific learning disabilities/Dyslexia online modules to the public, including educator preparation programs.
- 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 Community of Practice.
- Expanded assistive technology (AT) for all local education agencies (LEAs) with both subscriptions (through a cohort model) and membership to New England Assistive Technology (NEAT).
- Fostered capacity building for LEAs in the needed areas of assistive technology (AT) and augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) through sponsoring NEAT in the AT Champions Program.

### **Grants Funding and Communications**

- Established a CT-SEDS implementation stipend to support educators and administrators in implementing the new system. Over \$3 million was allocated to schools and districts to support local efforts for capacity building and training.
- 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).
- Electronic grants management system and supported IDEA Part B 611 (ages 3 through 21) (\$138,966,755) and 619 (ages 3-5) (\$4,431,981) grant applications for local education agencies.
- Represented the CSDE/BSE with technical assistance through a podcast describing the process the Department engages in with the LEA to ensure funds are spent in a timely and accurate way.
- Technical assistance related to the additional ARP IDEA funds for Sections 611 and 619 remained to address \$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.

## Special Education Dispute Resolution

- Established a Bureau of Special Education Call Center to enhance responsiveness to parent/community inquiries, to share resources, and help parents/students in understanding their IDEA rights.
- Supervised hearing officers and mediators to support the remote implementation of the dispute resolution system.
- Reviewed 161 special education complaints resulting in 76 investigation reports.
- Processed 298 requests for mediation.
- Processed 218 due process hearing requests (eight 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 994 students in foster care.
- Adjusted and revised Planning and Placement Team Institute Initiative content to reflect the new IEP and system. Two new cohorts are set to launch in fall 2023.

## 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.
- Acted as liaison to the Office of the Attorney General on 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.
- 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 helping 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 effectively communicated to the legislative branch. Provided technical assistance to the Education Committee and others on 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.
- Represented the State of Connecticut on the Interstate Compact for Educational Opportunities for Military Children and managed the State's activities pursuant to the Compact, codified at Section 10-15f of the Connecticut General Statutes.
- Provided legal advice and took part 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.
- Advised the BSE on annual school district special education compliance determinations. Corresponded with school districts as appropriate.

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

- Processed 460 referrals from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) for investigations of school employees.
- Investigated 71 applications of educators who have a criminal history record.
- Investigated 24 applications of educators who have been dismissed for cause.
- Investigated 11 educators whose professional license or certificate was revoked, denied, or suspended in Connecticut or other states.
- Investigated 25 educators with a record of unsuccessful service/employment for a school district and/or nonpublic school.
- Investigated nine cases of revocation, suspension, or probation action against an active certificate holder.
- Seven cases are pending DCF's appeal process; there are four cases in which certification action is requested by a school district/interested party; and 22 cases in which the Department of Education initiated 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 25,000 vouchers for payment, including over 23,100 grant payments in excess of \$4.1 billion.
- Processed over 3,500 purchase orders.
- Processed and managed over 100 contracts, including personal service agreements, MOUs, MOAs and RESC Agreements.
- Managed budgets for over \$4.2 billion of expenditures.
- 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 and verifications.
- Processed over 3,000 individual grant budgets for approximately 550 subrecipients.
- Continued expansion of the eGrants system, including new reporting functionality.
- Managed budgets for over \$1.8 billion of federal COVID-19 relief programs per the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act; the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act; and the American Rescue Plan Act.
- Continued to provide training and fiscal/payroll support to Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS) staff to ensure a successful transition of the CTECS as an independent agency.

## **Office of Internal Audit**

- Advised grantees receiving federal awards of their responsibilities to have audits performed following 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 decide whether questioned costs were allowable and if necessary. When applicable, notified the Bureau of Fiscal Services (BFS) of the need to recover funds.
- 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.
- Worked with the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) on issues found 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.
- 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.

- Conducted a review of payroll and employee termination procedures and processes, related to the termination of a former Vinal Technical High School (Vinal Tech) employee.
- Conducted a review of a state charter school's Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st Century) grant for fiscal years 2021-22 and 2022-23. Additionally, we reviewed the school's use of the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) After School Enhancement grant for fiscal year 2022-23, which enhances and supports the 21st Century program.

## **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, helping 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.
- Implemented key terms of the Comprehensive School Choice Plan following the required schedule as part of the state's long-term desegregation plan per the final resolution of the historic *Sheff v. O'Neill* case.
- 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.
- Conducted complex data analyses to support implementation of key terms of the Comprehensive School Choice Plan and the 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 user-friendly application and placement platform in the *Sheff* region to facilitate informed decision-making by prospective families on school choice opportunities.
- Administered a new transportation RFP to serve over 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 36,520 students at 88 schools in 17 districts/RESCs at a cost of \$257,259,944.
- Distributed \$3,659,552 to RESC operators in PK tuition costs to support early education engagement of prekindergarten age students enrolled in an interdistrict magnet school.

- Distributed \$21,874,691 in magnet supplemental transportation costs to RESC operators that transported students in the Greater Hartford region.
- Distributed \$11,000,000 of ARPA funds to towns in the *Sheff* region, New Britain, and New London for interdistrict magnet school tuition costs for enrollment greater than 4% of their resident students.
- Provided extracurricular and athletic grant opportunities to 42 Greater Hartford region magnet schools totaling \$1,624,096.
- Managed the Open Choice programs statewide, which serves 2,935 students at 224 schools in 46 school districts at a cost of \$20,714,000 in enrollment tuition; 23 districts in the *Sheff* region served 224 students in Prek-K at a cost of \$1,456,000 in enrollment tuition; and transportation cost of \$18,894,275, including summer programs and supplemental transportation costs.
- Provided grant opportunities to 28 Open Choice districts in the *Sheff* region with funds equaling \$300,000 as part of the Comprehensive School Choice Plan to increase acceptance rates and enhance educational opportunities.
- Distributed \$2,119,776 to the RESCs in administrative costs to run the Open Choice program statewide, including start-up for Norwalk Open Choice pilot program.
- Distributed \$860,000 in funding to magnet operators in order to increase acceptance rates in furtherance of *Sheff* and related goals of the school choice plan.
- Managed the Interdistrict Cooperative Grant program, which had 5,519 students participate in 13 programs statewide and issued \$2,009,380 in grants funds to provide opportunities to reduce racial, ethnic, 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 upper grades.
- Distributed \$3,175,000 to 28 districts and one RESC in the *Sheff* region to promote academic and social success of participating Open Choice students.
- Distributed \$315,000 to 11 Open Choice districts as a bonus for cohorts of five students enrolled in entry grades.
- Distributed an enrollment bonus to districts that increased their Open Choice enrollment by 20% over the previous year.
- Implemented a process for reformulation of magnet schools in the Greater Hartford region to foster compliance with *Sheff* goals and enhance students' educational experience.
- Administered a contract for diversity, equity, and inclusion professional learning programming for choice schools to promote positive school climates and support district planning to meet legislative mandates.
- Collaborated with the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference to increase athletic opportunities for students enrolled in choice schools and programs.
- Implemented grants for extracurricular and athletic programming at choice schools to enhance the educational experience and promote community.

- Collaborated with UConn to implement an analysis of the school choice transportation system to increase efficiency and respond to family decision-making.
- Increased outreach events and activities to inform families about their school choice options, provide application assistance, and promote informed decision-making.

## **Office of Student Support Services (OSSS)**

### **Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs**

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) nationwide waivers that gave participating school districts the choice 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 expired on June 30, 2022. The Connecticut General Assembly appropriated \$30 million in ARPA funds to support “free meals for students” and provide household food assistance through school meals at no cost to students enrolled in schools participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Programs (SBP) at the beginning of the school year. Coined the School Meals Assistance Revenue for Transition (SMART) funds, In school year 2022-23, 172 participating schools served 76,197,639 meals to students through the NSLP and SBP
- Connecticut’s Child and Adult Care Food Program’s At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program (Supper program) provides nutritious evening meals to children through structured after-school 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. During the 2022-23 school year, Connecticut schools provided 945,793 Supper meals and 222,036 snacks at 196 sites.
- During summer 2022, the CSDE Summer Meals Programs served 1,872,506 meals from 607 meals sites. More than 560 summer meals sites are approved to operate in summer 2023.
- In partnership with DSS, the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) benefits have brought over \$593.8 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 buy food at retail establishments to support food security in families when in-person school was interrupted due to COVID-19.
- The CSDE distributed \$787,840 to schools participating in the National School Lunch Program to reimburse schools for administrative costs associated with the P-EBT benefits.
- The CSDE distributed more than \$13 million in Supply Chain Assistance Funds to schools for buying domestic products for their school meal services.
- The CSDE continued to monitor and provide guidance to school districts on all federal funding under Connecticut’s American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief—Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY) program and McKinney Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program.

The OSSS also did the following:



- **Family Resource Centers:** The CSDE continued monitor and provide guidance to Connecticut’s network of Family Resource Centers (FRCs) on ESSER II funding to enable FRCs across the state to help 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.
- **The School-Based Diversion Initiative (SBDI):** SBDI is a multiagency collaboration directed toward reducing exclusionary school discipline and school-based arrests and increasing LEA ability to address emotional, developmental, and behavioral needs among students in collaborating schools. To date, SBDI has served 73 schools across 26 districts. During the 2022-23 school year, 15 schools in seven 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. Of the 15 schools, 27% had zero court referrals, and 40% had two or fewer, with an overall increase in court referrals of 20% compared to the previous school year (SY 2021-22). Mobile Crisis referrals remained steady overall with 73% of schools reporting nine or more Mobile Crisis referrals over the school year and many schools consistently referring directly to other behavioral health services. Schools reported a projected 22% decrease in out-of-school suspensions, compared to SY21-22, pending final data expected in the fall.
- **Parent Trust Fund:** CSDE collaborated with the Department of Economic Development to increase funding for the Parent Trust Fund grant program in a shared effort to support parent leadership in civic engagement. The collaboration added \$200,000 to CSDE’s state allocation of \$267,193. 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. In addition, CSDE recruited and trained parent leaders to review and score Parent Trust Fund grant proposals and developed a collaboration with the federally funded Statewide Parent Engagement Center to provide stipends to parent leaders.
- **Friday CAFÉ:** CSDE convenes a peer-to-peer learning network for professionals involved in family engagement called Friday CAFÉ (Community and Family Engagement). In 2022-23 Friday CAFÉ hosted over 500 participants in in-person and virtual sessions. Over 70% of the participants are from urban communities and school districts. Evaluations show that 93% of participants report they learn new information that will help them build partnerships between families and schools and 98% say they would recommend Friday CAFÉ to someone else. Friday CAFÉ’s approach to building professional capacity was featured in a publication by the National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement.
- **District Contacts for Family Engagement:** CSDE created a new list of district-level Family Engagement Contacts in the EdSight Contacts Manager. This contact list is for staff who oversee district family engagement programs and support schools to build strong partnerships with families for student success.
- **Commissioner’s Roundtable for Family and Community Engagement in Education** was recognized in a national publication for its work in co-creating Connecticut’s

statewide definition and framework for family engagement with families, educators, and community members. The roundtable was also recognized by a national policy institute as a state model for using parent and family voices for change.

- **ARPA School Mental Health Grants 2023-26:** The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) created three competitive grant programs to tackle the mental health crisis affecting students in our schools and communities. In 2022, the Connecticut General Assembly dedicated \$28 million in ARPA funding for schools and summer camp programs. The CSDE distributed a total of 140 grants throughout the state, ranging from \$30,000 to \$324,000 over a three-year period.
- **ARPA School Mental Health Workers Grant:** The purpose of this grant is to help Connecticut local and regional school districts in hiring and retaining more school social workers, school psychologists, school counselors, school nurses, and licensed marriage and family therapists.
- **ARPA School Mental Health Specialist Grant:** The purpose of this grant is to help Connecticut local and regional school districts in hiring and retaining more school social workers, school psychologists, trauma specialists, behavior technicians, board certified behavior analysts, school counselors, licensed professional counselors, and licensed marriage and family therapists.
- **ARPA Summer Mental Health Supports Grant:** The purpose of this grant is to support the delivery of mental health services for students when school is not in session through Connecticut local and regional school districts, operators of youth camps and other summer programs.
- **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 14 selected districts and designed to help K-12 students and their families with high levels of absenteeism resulting from COVID-19 pandemic. From July 1, 2022, through April 2023, over 12,000 students across the 14 LEAP districts received more than 25,000 contacts from home visitor staff to encourage and support increased student attendance in school. Quantitative results showed that one month after the initial home visit, participating students showed a 4-percentage point increase in attendance. Six months after the visit showed a 10-percentage point increase in attendance among pre-K to grade 5. Six months after the visit showed a 20-percentage point increase in attendance among grades 6-12.
- **Behavioral Health Pilot:** Recognizing the urgent need to enhance behavioral and mental health support in Connecticut's K-12 education systems, the State Department of Education is using \$2.3 million in federal grant funding to start a pilot program involving seven identified districts. These districts have been carefully selected to represent a diverse range of demographics, school types, and communities. After the seven districts underwent the assessment, they identified their areas of strength and areas that require growth.
- **ARP ESSER Supports for Pregnant and Parenting Teens (SPPT):** The CSDE granted \$2.4 million of ARP ESSER funding to support school and community-based programs for teen parents. Goals include improve the health, social, and educational outcomes for

expectant and parenting teens; educating teen parents about the services available to support their education (graduation), health, and parenting needs; and to promote healthy child development for the children of expectant and parenting teens.

- **ARP ESSER Innovation Grant:** The Connecticut State Department of Education 2022-24 ARP Innovation After School Grant Program awarded \$5 million in CSDE's [federal COVID relief](#) funding to 23 grantees delivering high-quality innovative and accessible after school opportunities to children across Connecticut during school year 2023 and 2024.
- **ARP ESSER Expansion and Enhancement Grant:** Over \$8.7 million has been awarded through Expansion and Enhancement grants to fund 45 after-school programs across Connecticut. Expansion grants have opened new free or affordable after-school program locations. Enhancement grants have allowed existing programs to better meet the increased needs of students and to improve program quality.

## 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.
- 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.
- Collected student-level data from summer enrichments camps to support program evaluation efforts.
- Collected and analyzed home visitation data for the ongoing evaluation and support of the Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP).
- Collected and reported monthly attendance data to provide transparency and inform support initiatives.
- Worked with colleges statewide to collect information on Dual Enrollment programs offered to high school students.
- Provided extensive support for the first year of the statewide special education data system (CT-SEDS) that allows for improved communication and information sharing between schools, districts, and parents/families. Discontinued legacy data collections to reduce district burden.
- Collected student addresses to support agency initiatives, including dissemination of nutrition benefits.

### Student Assessment System

- Successfully administered the state summative English language arts, mathematics, and science summative assessments.
- Successfully administered the state English Language Proficiency assessment for students identified as English learners/Multilingual learners.

- Successfully administered alternate summative assessments in English language arts, mathematics, and science for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- Successfully partnered with the Consortium for the Alternate Assessment of English language proficiency (CAAELP) to administer an alternate assessment for students who are English learners/multilingual learners.
- Successfully implemented and administered the Connecticut SAT School Day to students in Grade 11.
- Successfully implemented and administered the Kindergarten Entrance Inventory.
- Continued to expand training and support to districts in the use of optional interim assessment blocks that are aligned to state academic standards and designed to inform classroom instruction.
- Successfully built and implemented a new system to collect individual student results for the Connecticut Physical Fitness Assessment.
- Supported Connecticut educators to participate in the assessment development process through the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and the NGSS collaborative.
- Resubmitted peer review documents to the United States Department of Education for four of our state summative assessments.

## EdSight

Enhanced the [EdSight public](#) and secure data portals with many new dashboards, and interactive reports, and publications.

- [Next Generation Accountability Dashboard \(ct.gov\)](#)
- [Computer Science Dashboard \(ct.gov\)](#)
- [Arts Access \(ct.gov\)](#)
- [On-track to High School Graduation \(ct.gov\)](#)
- [Pandemic Recovery \(ct.gov\)](#)
- [Postsecondary Readiness \(ct.gov\)](#)
- [Students Experiencing Homelessness Dashboard \(ct.gov\)](#)

Updated all existing reports, including some of the following:

- [Connecticut Report Cards](#)
- [Chronic Absenteeism \(ct.gov\)](#)
- [Suspension Rates \(ct.gov\)](#) and [District Tiers Based on Suspension/Expulsion Data](#)
- [Resident Town Dashboard \(ct.gov\)](#)
- [Sheff Magnet Schools Dashboard \(ct.gov\)](#)
- [Four-Year Graduation Rates \(ct.gov\)](#)
- [Enrollment Dashboard \(ct.gov\)](#)
- [Educator Diversity Dashboard \(ct.gov\)](#)
- [Course Enrollments by Subject](#)
- [Smarter Balanced Achievement/Participation \(ct.gov\)](#) and [Smarter Balanced Growth Model \(ct.gov\)](#)
- [Connecticut SAT School Day](#)

- [Next Generation Science Standards \(NGSS\) Assessment \(ct.gov\)](#)
- [FAFSA Completion](#)
- [College Enrollment, Persistence, and Graduation Dashboard \(ct.gov\)](#)

Additionally, the Performance Office:

- Published important summary reports, including the [Profile and Performance Reports \(ct.gov\)](#) and [Special Education Annual Performance Reports \(ct.gov\)](#).
- Used the data warehouse to respond to several data requests from researchers, districts, and CSDE personnel, providing suppressed data according to CSDE suppression guidelines.
- 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.
- Provided the US Department of Education with all required data on a timely basis through the EdFacts system.

### **Accountability**

- Restarted the [school and district accountability system](#), included dual credit data from Connecticut's public and private universities in Indicator 6, and identified a new set of Turnaround and Focus schools for state support and identified.
- 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 U.S. Department of Education
- Coordinated the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) activities, including administration of other federal data collections.

### **Research, Analyses, and Data Sharing**

- Established a ground-breaking research collaborative of public and private universities called the [Center for Connecticut Education Research Collaboration](#) to conduct rigorous evaluation studies of state-level investments. Reports include [LEAP Executive Summary](#), [Remote Learning Study Executive Summary](#), and [Summer Enrichment Executive Summary](#). Nine other projects are currently underway, including a Behavioral Health Pilot, Identifying Effective and Equitable Socio-Emotional Supports for Students and Educators, Equity in Academic Recovery, and Advanced Course Taking Patterns in Connecticut high schools.
- Conducted research/analyses and published reports on [adjusted cohort graduation rates](#), [Condition of Education](#), [Encouraging Participation in Rigorous Courses: Rationale, Methods And Results](#), [2021-22 Report on Student Discipline in Connecticut Public Schools](#), [Staffing Shortages](#), and [Restraint and Seclusion](#).
- Continued obtaining federal funds and participating actively in research project to support P20WIN (Workforce Information Network) that enables secure data sharing

between state agencies, higher education institutions, and nonprofits to inform sound policy and practice on how individuals can successfully navigate supportive services and education pathways into the workforce.

### **Strategic Initiatives**

- Designed and implemented a [FAFSA completion](#) challenge that resulted in significant improvements in Connecticut's FAFSA completion rate, especially for students from low-income backgrounds.
- Fostered partnerships between K-12 and public/private higher education institutions and established a grant program to support the expansion of [dual credit](#) opportunities for students across the state so that students graduate high school with college credits under their belt.
- Disseminated over 30,000 letters from the Commissioner to students in Grades 9 and 10 (who were identified based on [research](#)), encouraging them to participate in rigorous courses in high school.
- Partnered closely with CSCU, Office of the Governor, and Connecticut school counselors to support implementation of the [Connecticut Automatic Admissions Program](#).

### **Talent Office**

#### **Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification**

- 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 11.45%. The percentage of administrators of color has also increased, over that same period, from 12.24% to 13.36%. The growth in the number of educators of color in the workforce is encouraging with LEAs hiring more than [3,905](#) new educators of color since 2016. Efforts to engage broad stakeholder groups to achieve collective impact are ongoing.
- Issued nearly 30,000 educator certificates, responded to tens of thousands of emails corresponding with districts and applicants between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023. Issued over 1,600 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 partially work remotely.
- Engaged in updating and modernizing the Bureau of Certification website and chatbot. The chatbot helps the public navigate the website and access 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 June 30, 2023, 1,100 educators have applied for enhanced reciprocity totaling 1,613 Connecticut certification endorsements issued.

## Bureau of Educator Effectiveness

- During the 2022-23 school year, beginning and experienced educators were successful in the TEAM (Teacher Education and Mentoring) Program: 1,717 beginning teachers successfully completed the TEAM Program; 1,002 experienced teachers successfully completed Initial Support Training for Mentors; and 2,962 experienced teachers updated their mentor eligibility. In addition, 203 experienced educators completed Initial Reviewer Training (to review TEAM Module Reflection Papers) and 207 experienced educators updated their TEAM Reviewer eligibility.
- The CSDE Talent Office collaborated with RESC Alliance leadership, district TEAM 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 \$807,866.40 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. Connecticut’s efforts around induction and support were validated in a [study conducted by the US Department of Education](#).
- The State Board of Education approved the recommendation from the [Educator Evaluation and Support \(EES\) Council](#), codified in state law as the Performance Evaluation and Advisory Council (PEAC) to adopt the new Connecticut Guidelines 2023 on June 14, 2023. LEAs will have the 2023-24 school year to plan for implementation of the Connecticut Guidelines 2023 beginning in the 2024-25 school year. The new model focuses on cyclical processes of continuous improvement, professional learning and action research, and reflective practice, feedback, and support.
- Recognized the 2023 Connecticut Teacher of the Year, the 2023 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year, and the 2023 Milken Award Educator.
- Partnered with the RESC Alliance to hold three CSDE-RESC Alliance Recruitment Fairs. The first, a Virtual Recruitment Fair, was held on March 21 and two in person recruitment fairs: May 4, 2023, at Central Connecticut State University and May 11, 2023, at Central Connecticut State University, New Britain.
- Partnered with the RESC Alliance to train local district staff on “Creating a District Plan to Increase the Racial, Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity of Your Educator Workforce: A Guidebook for Hiring and Selection.” The trainers provided direct support and guidance to districts in schools across Connecticut to increase the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of their educator workforce. Almost 30 districts took part in the training.
- The Minority Teacher Recruitment Policy Oversight Council held four quarterly meetings in 2022-23 to strategize on ways to increase the diversity of Connecticut’s educator workforce by attracting middle and high school students, encouraging students of color at higher education institutions to enroll in EPPs, and recruiting educators from other states to teach in Connecticut, and more.
- Partnered with local education preparation programs to expand the NextGen Educators program, which provides undergraduate educator candidates the opportunity to work in



school districts to gain valuable experience and provide districts with immediate access to new talent to ease pressures on current educators and address staffing shortages. NextGen Educators has grown to include programs at all Connecticut State University programs. More than 100 candidates worked as substitute teachers during the 2022-23 school year.

- Partnered with Educators Rising Program and local school districts to expand the program, launched statewide in 2020, that introduces middle and high school students to careers in education. Currently, the program has 491 students enrolled in clubs and courses across 22 schools in 19 districts and funding is available to school districts in 2023-24 to implement or expand current programs.
- Implemented the G4EPP (Grants for Educator Preparation Programs) to 18 EPPs, which provided \$1 million in funding to offset licensure fees for students currently enrolled.

### **Legislative Initiatives**

- Received legislative support for the State Department of Education to establish a registered Connecticut Teacher Apprenticeship program that enables students enrolled in an educator preparation program, residency program or alternate route to certification program to gain classroom teaching experience while working toward becoming full-time, certified teachers upon successful completion of such programs under the educator apprenticeship initiative.
- Received legislative support to implement the aspiring educators diversity scholarship program to allow high school students graduating from a priority school district the opportunity to apply for a scholarship under the program while enrolled in high school and prior to graduation if such student will be enrolled in a teacher preparation program during the following fall semester at a four-year institution of higher education. The grants are a maximum of \$10,000 per year.
- Received legislative approval to issue an adjunct professor permit to any person who is a nontenured and part-time instructor employed by a public or independent institution of higher education in the state to teach in a local district high school beginning July 1, 2023.
- Received legislative approval to change the name of the Minority Teacher Recruitment Council to the Increasing Educator Diversity Council.
- Received legislative support to implement the Alliance District Increasing Educator Diversity 10% set aside funding to support teacher residency programs for hiring and retaining educators of color.

### **Office of Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities (ODRD)**

#### *Collaborating with Internal Stakeholders*

- Collaborated with Academic Office on revision to be made to Approved Menu of K-3 Screeners.
- Provided feedback on Academic Office's Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success documents: K-3 Literacy Strategy; Center Strategic Goals.



- Collaborated with the Bureau of Special Education to develop a transition plan for select dyslexia and structured-literacy-specific activities transferring over to the ODRD.

#### *Introductory Engagement with External Stakeholders*

- Held an introductory meeting with the State Education Resource Center to better understand current dyslexia and structured-literacy related projects and activities undertaken in partnership with the State Department of Education.
- Met with NCTQ to discuss the 2023 Teacher Prep Review report.
- Participate in the monthly state education agency literacy leader meeting hosted by the Reading League.

#### *Training and Support*

- Presented an introductory overview of the ODRD to deans and certification directors of Connecticut's Approved Educator Preparation Programs.
- Represented the Bureau of Special Education at the ConnCASE Legal Forum: co-presented on the use of a homegrown pattern of strengths and weaknesses approach to the identification of dyslexia and other reading disability subtypes.

## **Turnaround Office**

### **Opportunity Districts**

Opportunity Districts include Bridgeport, Hartford, Manchester, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Norwich, Thompson, Waterbury, and Windham.

### **Commissioner's Network**

The following schools joined the Commissioner's Network in fall 2022 school year as Cohort XI: Hamden Middle School, Hamden; McDonough Middle School, Hartford.

### **Priority School Districts**

The Priority School Districts for the 2022-23 school year were Ansonia, Bridgeport, Danbury, Derby, East Hartford, Hartford, Manchester, Meriden, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Norwalk, Norwich, Stamford, Waterbury, and Windham.

### **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 23 SIG schools, which have received allocations for comprehensive support under ESSA.

In 2022-23, the Turnaround Office also managed and monitored ESSA-SIG awards to 11 schools for targeted support under ESSA.

Other improvements and achievements:

- Alliance Districts participated in two symposiums.

- Leadership teams from Commissioner’s Network schools participated in professional learning sessions (NetStat) three times a year to share best practices, network, and problem solve with colleagues from other schools..
- Leadership teams from Commissioner’s Network Planning Year schools participated in the Commissioner’s Network Leadership Institute, which provides planned professional learning for leaders embarking on the school improvement process and developing an application to be approved by the State Board of Education. Discussions 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.

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

The State Department of Education (SDE) is an affirmative action employer and is committed to the policies and procedures that promote equal employment opportunity. Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity have been established as immediate and necessary agency objectives. The ultimate purposes of SDE's Affirmative Action Program are to ensure equal opportunity at SDE; avoid discrimination—either intentional or inadvertent; develop a workforce that is representative of all segments of the state's population; and improve the operation of SDE's services. SDE strictly prohibits discrimination, including sexual harassment and harassment based on all of the following legally protected classes: race; color; religious creed; age; sex; pregnancy; sexual orientation; gender identity or expression; marital status; national origin; ancestry; intellectual disability; genetic information; learning disability; physical disability (including, but not limited to, blindness); mental disability (past/present history thereof); status as a victim of domestic violence; military or veteran status; or criminal record.

In addition, the DAS Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Unit helps ensure that the agency complies with federal, state, and local affirmative action and equal opportunity laws, including serving as the Americans with Disabilities Act coordinator. The EEO Unit also ensures compliance with the agency's non-discrimination and anti-harassment policies, which are available on the Department's website, as well as compiles the agency's affirmative action plan.

SDE's 2023 Affirmative Action Plan is currently under review and has not been formally approved yet. The Affirmative Action Plan also now follows a biennial basis, not yearly as previously done.

Additionally, SDE did not have hiring or promotional goals during the last reporting period due to the agency's legislatively required separation from CTECS. Hiring goals have been established in the new plan and will be formally implemented once approved.