
**Administrative
Report to the Governor**

**Connecticut
State Department of Education**

2024-25



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At-a-Glance

Commissioner: Charlene Russell-Tucker

Deputy Commissioners: Dr. Charles E. Hewes, Sinthia Sone-Moyano

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: 224

Recurring operating expenses: \$3,329,585,152.53

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), 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 mission of the Academic Office is to provide guidance and leadership on educational initiatives that assist Connecticut schools and districts in preparing all students to succeed in college, career, and civic life.

Key services provided by the Academic Office include:

- Providing equitable access and opportunity to standards-aligned, model high-quality curricular resources through the CSDE open-access GoOpen CT digital resource platform.
- Strategic resource management with state and federal funding maximization—Title I, II, III, State Bilingual grants, State Adult Education, Federal Basic Adult Education, and Perkins (Career and Technical Education) grants.
- Emerging technology integration and innovation with blended learning platforms (Defined Learning, Edmentum/Apex), artificial intelligence (AI) pilot programs in 7-12 classrooms, and computational thinking through the Lt. Governor’s Computing Challenge.
- Professional learning and educator support to design and implement high-quality instruction, materials, and programs (K-12 and Adult Education).

Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success (Center)

Under the leadership of the Academics Office, the mission of the Center is to lead statewide change and increase the effectiveness of literacy teaching and learning through advocacy, research, and education so that all Connecticut students are reading at or above grade level independently and proficiently by the end of third grade.

Bureau of Special Education

The Bureau of Special Education (BSE) plays a critical role in ensuring that students with disabilities receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). To improve services for our students—the chief beneficiaries of our work—the bureau employs the following strategies:

- Provide clear, consistent leadership and guidance to schools, districts, and other educational entities. This includes issuing policy memoranda, model procedures, and technical assistance documents aligned with IDEA requirements.
- Offer individualized technical support based on district needs and performance data to ensure appropriate educational services and compliance with federal and state mandates.

- Facilitate ongoing professional development for educators, administrators, and support staff on best practices in special education, instructional strategies, legal compliance, and inclusive practices.
- Provide parent training opportunities and resources to strengthen home-school collaboration and empower families in the special education process.
- Implement a robust system of general supervision, which includes data collection, desk reviews, onsite monitoring, and corrective action planning to ensure that all entities are fulfilling their responsibilities under IDEA.
- Enforcement activities paired with technical support to ensure sustainable improvement rather than just compliance.
- In collaboration with internal CSDE divisions, lead and support statewide initiatives focused on improving educational and functional outcomes (e.g., literacy, graduation rates, postsecondary readiness, and independent living skills) for students with disabilities.
- Analyze longitudinal and outcome data to identify trends, target resources, and support evidence-based practices.
- Recognizing that students with disabilities often require coordinated support, the bureau actively collaborates with other state agencies to align services and ensure smooth transitions across educational and life stages—from early childhood to adulthood.

Division of Legal and Governmental Affairs

The Division of Legal and Governmental Affairs provides legal counsel to the State Board of Education, the Commissioner, and Department offices on a wide range of issues related to education and school operations, including:

- Guidance on topics such as remote instruction, the formation of regional school districts, and ensuring students have access to needed emotional, behavioral, and mental health services.
- Provide guidance and assistance to local school districts and educational organizations by interpreting education laws and regulations.
- Management of responsibilities such as teacher and administrator contract negotiations, monitoring racial imbalance, handling certification cases involving educator misconduct, reviewing school accommodations appeals, responding to Freedom of Information Act requests, and overseeing regional school district governance.
- Works closely with the Office of the Attorney General in litigation involving the State Board and the Department, and regularly fields calls from the public to provide practical suggestions and guidance.

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. 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 Conn. Gen. Statutes Sec. 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 oversees the delivery of financial services that support the Department's priorities and ensure compliance with state and federal requirements. The office manages and aligns resources to carry out CSDE's strategic goals, including the calculation and disbursement of nearly \$4.3 billion each year to support state and local education initiatives. These funds provide critical support for adult education, general and special education, school choice programming, and the State Board of Education's Comprehensive Five-Year Plan for Education. The office also administers almost \$1.8 billion in federal COVID-19 relief funds under the CARES Act, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, and the American Rescue Plan, ensuring that districts and schools receive the resources needed to serve students effectively.

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 the 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.
- Recommending improvements 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 expand programming and increase access to school choice and postsecondary opportunities for all of Connecticut's students. Additionally, the office provides the following key services:

- Conducts outreach to inform families about school choice opportunities, provides application assistance, and supports informed decision-making.
- Coordinates programming for choice schools and districts to support districts' efforts to create positive school climates and plan for meeting legislative mandates.
- Administers legislative proposal grants that support magnet enrollment and tuition reimbursement.
- Conducts college and career readiness initiatives 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.

Office of Student Support Services (OSSS)

The Office of Student Support Services 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 grants, programs, and services.

These key services support the implementation of the State Board of Education Comprehensive Plan for Education 2023-28 so that all Connecticut learners are provided a safe learning environment.

The following structures within the Office provide additional services:

Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs & Health and Family Services Unit

- 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 those involved with the juvenile justice system; prevention efforts targeting chronic absenteeism and the 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 provides a full suite of summative and interim block assessments that are aligned to state academic standards, efficient, reliable, and that 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 shared reports to gain insights that inform policy decisions.

Talent Office

The CSDE Talent Office ensures all students have access to high-quality, racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse educators. Through the work of three integrated bureaus—Educator Standards and Certification (BESC), Educator Effectiveness (BEE), and the Office of Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities (ODRD)—the Talent Office collaborates with districts, educator preparation programs (EPPs), and other stakeholders to build a strong educator workforce. Through these efforts, the Talent Office advances educator diversity, professional growth, and student success across Connecticut.

Turnaround Office

The mission of the Turnaround Office is to improve student outcomes in Connecticut's lowest-performing schools and districts through monitoring, technical assistance, direct intervention, and creating 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, and through the Title I, Part A, School Improvement Grants.
- Providing public school choice options to students and families through the management and support of Connecticut's state and local charter schools.
- Fostering collaboration across schools and districts, and strengthening school leaders to engage in high-quality, continuous improvement processes to improve outcomes for students.

Improvements and Achievements

Academic Office

The Connecticut State Department of Education Academic Office is proud to highlight recent accomplishments in providing high-quality instructional materials and support, implementing innovative education practices, and planning for the future to benefit school districts statewide.

High-Quality Instructional Materials and Support

- **Comprehensive Curriculum Development:** The Academic Office successfully developed and released model curricula for K-12 Digital Citizenship to support the development of foundational and advancing skills to engage with emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and algebra I to support access to high-quality advanced mathematics for secondary learners.
- **Professional Learning Opportunities: Empowering Educators as Catalysts of Excellence:** The state has launched two additional cohorts—the fourth and fifth iterations—of the prestigious Science of Reading Masterclass, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to evidence-based literacy instruction. This systematic approach ensures that educational leaders across Connecticut develop profound expertise in research-validated reading practices, creating a multiplier effect as these leaders return to their districts equipped to elevate literacy instruction for all students.

Innovative Education Practices

- **Intentional Integration of Artificial Intelligence in Schools: Pioneering the Future of Learning:** The CSDE launched a groundbreaking pilot program that positions the state at the forefront of educational innovation through the strategic integration of artificial intelligence in K-12 learning environments. This forward-thinking initiative represents a carefully orchestrated exploration of how AI can fundamentally enhance the teaching and learning experience while preparing students for an increasingly digital world. The pilot engaged grades 7-12 classrooms through strategic partnerships with cutting-edge AI technology vendors, deploying sophisticated tools, including intelligent tutoring systems, automated feedback platforms, and adaptive learning software.
- **Open Education Resources:** The CSDE remains committed to providing Open Educational Resources (OER) for all learners. This initiative is a significant step toward ensuring that all students have access to high-quality educational materials. OER offers numerous benefits, including cost savings for students and families, the ability to customize and adapt materials to meet diverse learning needs, and the promotion of collaborative teaching and learning practices. By embracing OER, our state is not only reducing the financial burden on school districts, educators, students, and their families, but also fostering a more inclusive and adaptable educational environment, and giving time back to educators to plan high quality instruction.

- **Educational Convenings: Catalyzing Innovation Through Collaborative Learning:** The CSDE orchestrated three pivotal statewide convenings designed to harness the collective expertise of Connecticut's educational community and accelerate innovative programming across the state. These strategic gatherings—the English Learner/Multilingual Learner (EL/ML) Education Summit, the Career and Technical Education Summit, and the CSDE Day of AI Summit—served as dynamic platforms for educational transformation. These convenings represented strategic investments in Connecticut's educational future.

Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success

- Supported 58 schools across six Alliance Districts in the implementation of a districtwide, K–3 Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) reading improvement model aimed at accelerating student literacy achievement through the continuation of the Partnership for Literacy Success, a statewide initiative that brings together the CSDE, the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut, the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus of the Connecticut General Assembly, and regional literacy organizations such as HILL for Literacy and Literacy How.
- Provided no-cost technical assistance, professional learning, and coaching to support districts and charter schools in accomplishing full implementation of the [Connecticut Approved K-3 Reading Curriculum Models or Programs](#) by July 1, 2025.
- Partnered with the Regional Educational Service Centers (RES-C) Alliance to offer 237 educators from 74 districts and charter schools across the state the opportunity to join the RES-C Alliance's Science of Reading Affinity Groups to help participants navigate the digital platforms and materials of their literacy programs, understand how their programs align with components of evidence-aligned literacy instruction, and collaboratively address any implementation challenges.
- Partnered with TNTP to provide 11 districts with individualized support in selecting and/or implementing from the [Connecticut Approved K-3 Reading Curriculum Models or Programs](#).
- Launched the **Read, Talk, and Play Everyday** initiative to work with families and schools to promote simple, daily interactions that have a powerful impact on a child's early literacy development. This included working with the State Education Resource Center, Connecticut Association of School Librarians, and Literacy How to provide training, books, and learning tools to families and schools.

Bureau of Special Education

Monitoring, Supervision, and IDEA Compliance

Connecticut earned the highest federal designation of “Meets Requirements” from the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) for its 2025 annual determination, the fifth consecutive such achievement. This reflects strong performance across state assessments, graduation/dropout data, fiscal accountability, and the implementation of IDEA.

Our Differentiated Monitoring System (DMS) continues to evolve from compliance-focused oversight to a combined compliance and results-based approach, prioritizing improved outcomes for students with disabilities. Input from our Federal Technical Assistance Centers, Local Education Agencies (LEA) Advisory Committee, State Advisory Council, policymakers, and other interested collaborators helps shape and guide our monitoring protocols.

In addition to our Special Education Performance Plan, which includes data collections for 18 special education indicators for every education agency in the state, the Bureau of Special Education (BSE) engaged in the following key monitoring actions:

- 30 School District Desk Audits, which include Individualized Education Program (IEP) and Prior Written Notices (PWNs) reviews.
- Annual Review/Three-Year Reevaluation Timeline Reviews.
- Onsite Monitoring Reviews at 11 school districts.
- 15 private program approvals and 24 program changes.
- Four charter school reviews in collaboration with the CSDE Turnaround Office’s renewal process.
- Developed standards for Public Transition Programs and accompanying metrics for ongoing site visits. Four pilot site visits were conducted.

The BSE advanced the State Systemic Improvement Plan, focusing on early literacy for students with IEPs using state assessment data. Fiscal risk assessments helped identify LEAs in need of additional support for IDEA Part B fund management.

In early childhood, the BSE partnered with the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) and the RESC Alliance, developing and providing professional development for LEAs on the expanded CT DOTS assessment tool that will be used in the future to collect Early Childhood Outcomes data. A field test was conducted during the 2024-25 school year, using the new expanded CT DOTS assessment tool. We also co-led a “Lunch and Learn” transition series for Birth to Three and Preschool providers.

Training, Technical Assistance, and Statewide Systems

The BSE expanded statewide professional development and technical assistance through the fourth year of IEP Quality Training. Over 576 related services specialists participated in goal development sessions. Additional training targeted Durational Shortage Area Permit (DSAP) holders, student teachers, general educators, and administrators.

CT-SEDS, now in its third year, supported statewide IEP implementation, resulting in enhanced quality of IEPs and increased compliance. Additional supports include:

- A fully operational Help Desk to resolve and troubleshoot issues.
- Office Hours and Focused Trainings held across regions and virtually.
- Educator Prep Programs gained access to CT-SEDS training sites to help prepare future educators.

The BSE supported 14 professional communities of practice, including specialists such as school psychologists, speech-language pathologists, and social workers.

For secondary transition, the BSE maintained:

- Regional Transition Networks (RTNs) and the Connecticut Transition Community of Practice.
- Updated Transition Bill of Rights.

Newly developed trainings included:

- Secondary Transition Coordinator Training and Certified Educator Training.
- Online resources for decision-making options at age 18.

Leadership Development and Stakeholder Engagement

The BSE partnered with UConn and SERC to launch the Aspiring Special Education Leaders Initiative, supporting 24 future directors and mentoring current leaders. The BSE expanded and collaborated with the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) to mentor 51 special education administrators.

Additional efforts:

- Provided the Planning and Placement Team Leadership Institute (PPTLI) for Connecticut’s special education and general education leaders over eight full-day and four half-day sessions, and designed a newly formed PPTLI Community of Practice (CoP).
- Expanded the Youth Advisory Board (ages 16–26) and the Special Education Youth Advisory Council (grades 6–12) to elevate student voice.
- Provided training on Structured Literacy, Dyslexia, Assistive Technology (AT), and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) via EasierWithAT.org.

Grants, Funding, and Fiscal Training

In 2024–25, the BSE supported:

- \$138.8M in IDEA Part B (611) and \$4.4M in Part B (619) subgrants to school districts through eGMS.
- A four-part IDEA Grant Fiscal Series webinar for school districts.
- Targeted training on FY26 IDEA subgrantee applications.

To support new legislation:

- \$1.9M Transition Support stipends under PA 23-137.
- \$1.86M paraeducator stipends supporting professional development under PA 23-159.

The State Personnel Development Grant (\$5.9M) entered its second year, yielding improvements in math outcomes for students with disabilities. Grant activities also enhanced teacher preparation programs and early childhood transition processes.

Dispute Resolution and Family Engagement

- The Special Education Call Center continued to serve as a key family support mechanism, promoting early resolution of concerns and reducing formal disputes. In collaboration with CPAC, the call center also identified credible allegations that led to general supervision referrals.
- The BSE strengthened the due process system by hiring five new hearing officers; publishing a new Hearing Officer Procedures Manual; and offering in-person, virtual, or hybrid hearing options.
- Dispute resolution activity included 268 complaints processed, 364 mediation requests, and 289 due process hearing requests.
- The CSDE continues to manage the Surrogate Parent Program, which resulted in special education decision-making support for over 1,000 students in foster care, supported by 46 trained Surrogate Parents.
- The BSE also supported the State Advisory Council for Special Education, a 37-member group (50% parents) advising CSDE and legislators on the unmet needs of students with disabilities.

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 the interpretation of statutes and regulations and advising about the duties and responsibilities of Department staff.

- Responded to inquiries from the public, including parents and school districts, about their rights and responsibilities under the law.
- Acted as liaison to the Office of the Attorney General with regard to pending litigation, including *Sheff v. O'Neill* (racial and economic isolation case).
- 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 the 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 implemented 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 Conn. Gen. Statutes Sec. 10-4b.
- 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 Conn. Gen. Statutes Sec. 10-15f.
- 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 Conn. Gen. Statutes Sec. 10-66aa(6) and coordinated with the Office of the Attorney General as to approval as to form.
- Advised the BSE regarding annual school district special education compliance determinations and corresponded with school districts as appropriate.

Finance and Internal Operations

The 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 as it:

- Processed over 24,921 vouchers for payment in excess of \$4.3 billion.
- Processed 485 purchase orders.
- Processed and managed over 130 contracts, including personal service agreements, Memorandum of Understandings (MOU), Memorandum of Agreements (MOA), and RESC Agreements.
- Managed budgets for over \$4.3 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 and verifications.
- Processed 2,450 individual grant budgets for approximately 317 subrecipients.
- Continued enhancements of the eGrants system.

- 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.

Office of Internal Audit

- 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 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 questioned costs were allowable and, if necessary, notify 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 & 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 in site visits for charter school renewals, evaluating the financial and management controls related to fiscal operations and recommending improvements for each charter school.
- Coordinated work with external certified public accountant (CPA) firms and the Auditors of Public Accounts (APA) to provide assurance to the Board, departmental managers, and state and federal regulators that resources are being used efficiently, effectively, and in compliance with applicable statutes, regulations, policies, and procedures. This included engaging an external CPA firm to perform a performance audit of the CSDE Bureau of Fiscal Services Grants Unit for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. The audit services focused on the grant calculations and the authorizing statutory language and could include financial, compliance, operational, investigative, or other performance audits.
- Led the Magnet School Assessment of the Connecticut State Department of Education's actions concerning Hartford Public Schools' fiscal operations. This work was an in-depth analysis of the use of interdistrict magnet school funds by Hartford Public Schools pursuant to the court-ordered Comprehensive School Choice Plan approved by the Connecticut General Assembly on March 17, 2022.

Office of Strategic Planning and Partnerships

- Distributed a total of \$379,942,930 in state funds to interdistrict magnet school operators, Regional Educational Service Centers, Open Choice districts, the State Education Resource Center, and other educational partners to support school choice.
- Awarded approximately \$9 million to expand dual enrollment. Connecticut students completed nearly 36,000 dual-credit courses.
- Led the Connecticut State Department of Education’s actions concerning Hartford Public Schools’ fiscal operations that were initiated in June 2024. This effort was a three-pronged approach, including the Magnet School Assessment, Special Education Services Assessment and Enhancement, and Improvement of Financial Systems.
- Collaborated to improve education, training, pathways, and opportunities across state borders to benefit Career and Technical Education programs in solar installation, energy efficiency, and sustainable building materials.
- Partnered with the CT Commission of Fire Prevention and Control to create guidance and pathways in public safety for students to earn college credit and certifications in areas such as Emergency Medical Responder (EMR), Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), and Firefighter One (FF1).
- Created an intra-agency work group to deepen cooperation and synchronize postsecondary project plans.
- Supported workforce development boards’ initiatives on workforce and career readiness in manufacturing, computer science and technology, health sciences, and new initiatives.
- Collaborated with stakeholders to identify industry-recognized credentials to support schools in creating robust pathways for students.
- Provided free, high-quality summer programming for over 1,600 Sheff Region Open Choice and interdistrict magnet school students.
- CSDE has contracted with NACEP (National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships) to provide training and technical assistance to build program quality and a path to NACEP accreditation for dual-credit programs.

Office of Student Support Services (OSSS)

State After School Grant Program

- In 2024–25, CSDE funded 39 grants serving 68 after-school sites, providing nearly 10,000 hours of programming to over 11,000 students, with each attending an average of 25 days. Monthly attendance increased for the second consecutive year.
- More than 90 percent of sites engaged external experts to offer enrichment opportunities aligned with school goals.

Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP)

- Launched by Governor Lamont in 2021, LEAP is a statewide home-visiting initiative that reduces chronic absenteeism by addressing non-academic barriers to consistent attendance.
- Currently in 25 districts—and eight alternative education programs—LEAP staff made 29,455 contacts, impacting 14,967 students between July 2024 and March 2025.
- Outcomes include attendance gains of up to 20 points, stronger family-school ties, and increased student belonging. Its success led to a \$7 million appropriation in the FY27 budget.

School and Summer Mental Health Grants

With \$28 million in ARPA funds, CSDE launched four competitive grant programs to increase access to school-based and summer mental health supports:

- School Mental Health Workers: \$5M funded 20 grants and 20 new positions.
- School Mental Health Specialists: \$15M funded 72 grants and over 70 new positions.
- 3-Year Summer Mental Health: \$5M funded 48 programs with staffing and community partnerships.
- 2-Year Summer Mental Health: \$2.2M funded 36 programs with staffing and community partnerships.

Suicide Prevention

- The CSDE hosted seven statewide virtual events on suicide prevention, reaching over 500 staff. Five regional follow-up sessions connected schools to local crisis and advisory teams.
- Statewide guidance shared resources and opportunities to partner with local providers to support youth mental health and link families to supports, including the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

School-Based Diversion Initiative (SBDI)

SBDI supports alternatives to exclusionary discipline and reduces school-based arrests. Now in 82 schools across 29 districts, 2024–25 outcomes include:

- 53% reduction in juvenile court referrals.
- 7% decrease in out-of-school suspensions.
- 5% increase in Mobile Crisis use.
- 45% increase in broader behavioral health referrals.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) with the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA)

- Implemented in 89 districts, this initiative has trained over 11,000 educators and produced 650,000 student assessments.

- More than 180,000 students participated, with significant positive growth, especially among middle school students.
- District leaders (80–88%) report improvements in school culture, instructional focus, and student connection.

Behavioral Health Pilot (BHP)

- Piloted in 48 school buildings serving over 23,000 students, the CSDE BHP assessed mental health system gaps and implemented evidence-based supports.
- Staff training improved awareness and collaboration across educators, providers, and communities.

Personal Technology and Social Media Use

Following the August 2024 adoption of “Personal Technology Use in Connecticut Schools” by the State Board of Education, the CSDE surveyed districts and found:

- 89% have student technology policies; 47% were updated within the last year.
- 66% say policies have improved student engagement; 45% reported fewer classroom behavior issues.

Parent Trust Fund & Family Engagement

- The CSDE expanded Parent Trust Fund grants with an additional \$330,000 in federal funding, growing access to parent leadership programs statewide.

Friday Community and Family Engagement (CAFÉ)

- This monthly learning network for family engagement professionals hosted in-person and virtual sessions in 2024–25 with over 500 participants to support partnerships and relationships between schools and families. In evaluations, all respondents said they would recommend the program to colleagues.

Commissioner’s Roundtable for Family and Community Engagement

- Codified in 2023, the Commissioner’s Roundtable for Family and Community Engagement amplifies parent and community voice.
- In 2024–25, it prioritized mental health and educator workforce diversity—aligning with CSDE’s strategic goals for safe and equitable learning environments.

Crisis Response

- In partnership with the Department of Children and Families (DCF), the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), Youth and Adult Mobile Crisis, and the Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparation, the CSDE continues to provide critical support to schools experiencing loss or tragedy, including untimely student deaths, through the provision of mental health resources and coordination with state agency and community partners.

Child Nutrition

- During the summer of 2024, the CSDE Summer Meal Programs served 1,655,591 meals at no cost to families from 581 meal sites.
- During school year 2024-25, Connecticut’s Child and Adult Care Food Program’s (CACFP) At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program provided 909,849 supper meals and 214,242 snacks at 194 sites.

Performance Office

Data Collection

- Collected accurate data about students, educators, districts/schools, and assessments in a timely manner.
- Delivered professional development, trimmed data collections, added new validations, and provided documentation to support districts and reduce the burden.
- Collected student-level data from summer camps to support program evaluation.
- Collected and analyzed home-visitation data for ongoing evaluation of the Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP).
- Began development of an electronic system for cohort graduation verification.
- Provided extensive support for the statewide special education data system (CT-SEDS).

Student Assessment

- Successfully administered the English language arts, mathematics, and science summative assessments, i.e., Smarter Balanced, CT SAT School Day, and alternate assessments for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- Successfully administered the English Language Proficiency (ELP) LAS Links assessment for English learners/Multilingual learners (EL/ML), including an alternate assessment for EL/MLs with significant cognitive disabilities.
- Offered Sensible Assessment Practices sessions to promote no-cost interim assessment blocks to inform classroom instruction and reduce standardized testing.
- Supported Connecticut educators in participating in assessment development through the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and the NGSS collaborative.
- Submitted peer-review documents to the United States Department of Education (USED) for ELP assessments.
- Facilitated external review and finalized the menu for CSDE-approved K-3 assessments, and worked extensively with approved vendors to receive consistent data from these assessments starting in 2025-26.
- Successfully collected data for the Kindergarten Entrance Inventory and the Connecticut Physical Fitness Assessment.
- Conducted data collection and initial analysis for the legislatively required assessment audit to reduce testing in schools.

EdSight

Enhanced [EdSight Public](#) and Secure portals with several new/updated dashboards and publications:

- [Educator Attrition](#) – new report on turnover data.
- Updated [Mental Health Staff Ratios](#) with additional non-certified staff roles.
- Updated [Revenue Sources report](#) to include local, state, and federal expenditure amounts.
- [Educator vacancies](#) – new dashboard of vacant, budgeted positions that districts are actively working to fill.
- [Nonpublic School Enrollment and Staff Counts](#)
- New/updated Secure reports include:
 - Student Leaving Public School – new report released after analysis entitled “[Tracking Student Exits from Public School.](#)”
 - Seal of Biliteracy Graduates – new report.
 - Updated Student Summary report with course history and monthly attendance.

Updated all existing reports, including some of the following:

- [Connecticut Report Cards](#)
- [Resident Town](#)
- [Sheff Magnet Schools](#)
- [Attendance](#)
- [Educator Preparation Provider \(EPP\)](#)
- [Suspension Rates](#) and [District Tiers](#)
- [Enrollment](#)
- [Educator Diversity](#)
- [Course Enrollments by Subject](#)
- [Smarter Balanced Achievement](#) and [Growth](#)
- [Connecticut SAT School Day](#)
- [Next Generation Science Standards \(NGSS\)](#)
- [Four-Year Graduation](#)
- [FAFSA Completion](#)
- [College Enrollment, Persistence, and Graduation](#)

Additionally, the Performance Office:

- Published summary reports such as the [Profile and Performance Reports](#) and [Special Education Annual Performance Reports](#).
- Responded to nearly 100 data and FOI requests from researchers, districts, CSDE personnel, and the public.
- Continued sharing historical student data securely with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and Court Support Services Division.
- Provided summaries for students involved with the juvenile justice system to the DCF Education Unit
- Submitted approximately 180 data files to USED on a timely basis through the EdFacts system.
- Implemented the [Next Generation Accountability System](#), and identified Turnaround and Focus schools for state support.
- Nominated schools for the National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

- Submitted accountability data for Perkins to USED.
- Coordinated the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and international assessments.

Research, Analyses, and Data Sharing

- Continued the [Center for Connecticut Education Research Collaboration](#) to conduct rigorous evaluation of state-level investments. Several new reports were released, including:
 - [Special Education Outplacement Rate Setting](#);
 - [LEAP and High Dosage Tutoring](#) brief;
 - [Virtual Reality in Connecticut Public High Schools](#); and
 - [Summer Enrichment Program Evaluation](#).
- Published several reports, including:
 - [Condition of Education](#);
 - [Student Discipline](#);
 - [Restraint and Seclusion](#); and
 - [Relation between Smarter Balanced interim and summative performance 2023-24](#).
- Provided data for numerous data requests through DataLinkCT (formerly P20WIN) to support evaluations.
- Collaborated with DSS and CSDE Nutrition to provide all data for the successful implementation of Summer EBT.
- 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.
- Implemented a [FAFSA completion](#) challenge to improve FAFSA completion rates.

Talent Office

Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification (BESC)

BESC remains focused on diversifying the educator workforce and reducing persistent shortage areas. From 2015–16 to 2024–25, educators of color increased from 8.3% to 12.1%, and administrators of color from 12.2% to 16.8%. Since 2016, districts have hired 4,883 new educators of color.

Between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025, BESC issued 31,828 certificates and 1,857 temporary authorizations. Staff also responded to tens of thousands of inquiries from educators, districts, and EPPs. Efforts to streamline services continued, including enhanced remote operations, chatbot improvements, and updates to the certification website.

Through the Enhanced Reciprocity Agreement with 23 states and territories, BESC issued 3,834 Connecticut endorsements and placed 1,476 new educators across 196 districts and special education programs since 2022.

Emergency authorizations issued in 2024–25:

- Temporary Emergency Authorizations: 189 (805 since 2020).

- Durational Shortage Area Permits (DSAP): 1,064 (5,959 since 2016).
- Long-Term Substitute Authorizations: 534 (3,690 since 2016).
- Resident Educator Certifications: 70 (626 since 2016).

Bureau of Educator Effectiveness (BEE)

TEAM Program

- TEAM continues to support early-career teachers, with 1,274 completers in 2024–25 and a 92.8% one-year retention rate. Since 2010, 25,220 teachers have completed TEAM, with 74.4% still employed in Connecticut schools. A redesign is underway to strengthen mentoring, reflective practice, and alignment with the Common Core of Teaching.

Evaluation and Support

- BEE reviewed 182 district and 65 private program evaluation plans for compliance with the 2023 Connecticut Educator Evaluation and Support Guidelines (EES). Support includes RESC-led trainings, EES Council meetings, and planning for a statewide conference (September 2025) and learning institute (Spring 2026).

TEACH Connecticut

- Outreach expanded through targeted digital campaigns and a new interest survey tool. A July 2025 webinar, *From Service to Classroom*, engaged veterans entering the profession.

Recognition & Expansion of the Educator Workforce

- Milken Educator Award: Jessica Chapman, Norwich Free Academy
- Paraeducator of the Year: Keysha Evans, 2025 Anne Marie Murphy Award
- Teacher of the Year: Julia Miller, New Haven Public Schools

Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Program (T-RAP)

- Four candidates completed T-RAP in 2024–25: one in Waterbury and three in New Britain, reflecting continued program expansion.

Office of Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities (ODRD)

- ODRD led a Dyslexia Awareness Campaign in October 2024, featuring five webinars, six training modules, assistive technology demos, and author events. Library displays and StoryCorps storytelling helped elevate community voices.
- Over 130 consultation requests were received and answered, supporting families and districts in identifying and addressing dyslexia through evidence-based structured literacy.
- The State Board of Education approved the Connecticut Educator Competencies for Structured Literacy and Dyslexia in May 2025. These competencies guide preparation

programs for elementary, special education, and reading/language arts educators. ODRD and SERC are leading the implementation.

- ODRD collected data from 17 EPPs on instruction and practicum hours related to dyslexia and structured literacy to support resource development. Tools and materials were created to help EPPs align coursework with the new competencies.
- A Professional Learning Needs Assessment was conducted statewide in collaboration with the RESC Alliance. The survey collected data on educators’ role-specific needs and preferences to shape future training.
- ODRD finalized and published its 2023–28 Strategic Plan, outlining core initiatives and supports. The Office updated public resources on its website, including the competencies, strategic plan, and the “Voices of Dyslexia” stories.
- Outreach and technical assistance were provided at:
 - RESC Literacy Council meetings.
 - ConnCASE special education directors’ meetings.
 - CPAC Parent Roundtables.
 - Connecticut’s Family Support Network (CTFSN).
 - Local school district events.
 - The 2024 Special Education Back-to-School Conference.
 - LEARN’s 2024-25 disAbility Summit.

The Talent Office, through BESC, BEE, and ODRD, continues to build an effective, diverse, and responsive educator workforce. By streamlining certification, supporting early-career educators, promoting literacy equity, and expanding talent pipelines, CSDE ensures all Connecticut students have access to high-quality, well-prepared educators.

Turnaround Office

Innovations that occurred in the Turnaround Office during 2024-25 include the following:

Improvements to Cycles of Continuous Improvement

- The office developed a tracker to monitor the implementation of district and school improvement efforts. The tracker allows CSDE and district staff to discuss the impact of interventions aimed at improving student outcomes. Additionally, the CSDE utilized the resource allocation tool to identify district inequities in funding. This tool led to improved district decision-making when allocating financial resources in support of school improvement.

Commissioner's Network Schools

- A significant achievement was exiting eight Commissioner’s Network (CN) schools, with the addition of four new schools to the Network, bringing the statewide total to 13 schools. Most CN schools serve student populations where 60 percent or more are high needs. Through partnerships with CN schools and their districts, the Turnaround Office

prepares students "for learning, life, and work beyond the classroom" using the continuous improvement cycle.

Alliance District Symposium

- The Turnaround Office worked alongside the Academic Office to design and develop the Alliance District Symposium, held in April 2025, that focused on equitable mathematics instruction for middle and high school students.

Opportunity District Support

- In alignment with the Connecticut Every Student Succeeds Plan, the Turnaround Office provided intensive support for Opportunity Districts, which represent the 10 lowest performing districts in the state. The Turnaround Office also supported the CSDE's intervention aimed at improving fiscal processes and procedures and staffing needs related to special education for the Opportunity Districts of Bridgeport and Hartford.

Charter School Program

- The Charter School Office launched a request for proposals (RFP) for new state and local charter schools. The RFP resulted in the State Board of Education (SBE) approval of five initial charters. Two of the five newly approved charters have been allocated funds by the legislature.

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 follows 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.

During the last reporting period, the Department hired 22 employees: 16 were females, five were males, and one was undisclosed. Of those hires, one was Asian, three were Black or African American, four were Not Disclosed, one was Two or More Races, and 13 were White.