

Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) Programs Aligned to the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee Education Workgroup Goals

5.27.25

Key Goals

1. **Reduce chronic absenteeism and truancy** through early identification, intervention, and improved data systems.
 2. **Reduce exclusionary discipline** and promote restorative practices across schools.
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1. Addressing Chronic Absenteeism

Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP)

- Launched in 2021, LEAP is a statewide, research-based program using relational home visits to increase student attendance.
- Impact (as of Jan 2025):
 - 71,000+ home visits for 42,000 students across 25 districts.
 - Independent evaluation conducted by the Connecticut Center for Education Research Collaboration (CCERC) shows strong outcomes for LEAP, especially when implemented early and consistently.
 - 92% of LEAP districts saw reduced absenteeism.
 - State chronic absence dropped from 23.7% (2021–22) to 17.7% (2023–24), resulting in 30,000 more students attending school regularly.

Talk Tuesdays

- Bi-weekly virtual sessions fostering professional learning and peer exchange on attendance and engagement strategies.
- Participants: School leaders, home visitors, bilingual staff, etc.
- Features real-time sharing of tools, strategies, and success stories.

Statewide Attendance & Engagement Advisory Team

- Cross-sector group guiding CSDE's attendance efforts and ensures they reflect the needs of Connecticut's schools and communities.
- Informs Talk Tuesdays' content and data-driven decision-making.

EdSight Attendance Dashboard

- Interactive data platform to track chronic absence by district, grade, and student group.
- Supports accountability, transparency, and resource allocation.

Additional Supports

- Governor's Prevention Partnership Mentoring Initiative: Expanded school-based mentoring with training in the "Everyday Mentoring" curriculum.
- Partnership with national experts Attendance Works: Includes needs assessment, professional learning, and best practices research.

2. Positive School Discipline and Systems

Discipline Disproportionality Protocol

- Multi-step protocol for addressing suspension/expulsion disparities:
 - Beliefs & Philosophy
 - Disaggregated Data Analysis
 - Resource Mapping
 - Policy Review
 - System and Structure Audits
 - Evidence-Based Practices

Tools & Systems

- Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI): Evaluates Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) implementation at all levels.
- Hexagon Analysis Tool: Assesses program fit and feasibility.
- CT-SEDS MTSS: Data-driven system targeting Tiers II and III for academic and social/emotional/behavioral (SEB) supports.
- High-Leverage Practices: Ten classroom strategies to manage behavior and support student engagement.

Strengthening Mental & Behavioral Health Supports

DESSA (Devereux Student Strengths Assessment)

- Observational tool to assess student social-emotional development and resilience.
- Supports personalized interventions and builds student confidence.

Social, Emotional and Intellectual Habits Framework K-12

- CSDE-developed a blueprint for promoting emotional intelligence and academic success.
- Toolkit in development to support school leaders.

Behavioral Health Pilot

- Targets coordinated care and support across seven diverse school districts.
- Based on insights from a 2021 needs survey and focus groups.

Alternative Education Support

Technical Assistance and On-site Support

- Direct CSDE engagement with alternative education programs including site visits.
- Emphasis on LEAP integration and alignment with state guidelines.
- Community of Practice (CoP) to facilitate sharing best practices, updates on policy, school climate, and mental health.

School-Based Diversion Initiative (SBDI)

- Aims to reduce juvenile justice involvement and support students in behavioral crises.
- Outcomes (2023–24):
 - 22% ↓ in out-of-school suspensions
 - 23% ↓ in court referrals
 - 3% ↓ in mobile crisis use

UPLIFT – Trauma-Informed Care Training

- RESC Alliance-led initiative funded by CSDE.

- FY25 Highlights:
 - 65 trainings; 2,288 participants
 - 3 statewide Train-the-Trainer sessions
 - 99% of participants found training materials effective
- Building sustainability through asynchronous modules and online resources.