



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Connecticut General Assembly
Commissioner Charlene M. Russell-Tucker
Appropriations Committee
Working Group Follow-Up

Question 1: Please explain historical funding by CSDE of TeachCT and the services they provide.

Answer:

CSDE Invested Funds 2023-2025:

In April 2023, the initial contract was executed with a value of \$1,200,000 (leveraging federal funds), with a duration through June 30, 2025, with the following deliverables:

- Providing financial incentives to CT subscribers, including fee reimbursements and scholarship opportunities
 - Scholarship Impact (2024-2025): awarded \$200,000 in shortage areas, \$2,000 to school-based personnel, \$3,000 in TEACH CT classic scholarships, and \$9,500 in fee reimbursements
- Providing and maintaining a TEACH CT digital platform (website) to promote the recruitment of new teachers into the teaching profession
- Collaborating with partner LEAs and EPPs in drafting, customizing, posting, and updating content specific to each LEA and EPP partner annually for the TEACH Connecticut platform
- Communicating monthly with LEAs and EPPs to provide updates, review changes to their profiles, and share indicators of progress
- Surveying students and uncertified staff in partner LEAs to determine interest in teaching and provide an analysis of results to individual LEAs and a summary of the results to the CSDE
- Analyzing and reporting annually to partner EPPs and the CSDE the data on new teacher candidates who applied and were accepted into EPPs
- Staffing, hosting, and supporting 1:1 advisory calls with potential candidates considering a career in teaching
- Providing 1:1 user support via email and LiveChat to answer questions about becoming a teacher in CT
- Providing guides to certification, testing, and resume writing

- Offering a checklist tool to assist applicants in completing their applications and sending reminders to assist applicants with meeting deadlines
- Communicating upcoming events, scholarship and job opportunities

In June 2024, the contract was amended to increase funding by \$447,000 (CSDE OE funds) for a total of \$1,647,000 and extend its duration to December 31, 2025, to add the following services:

- TEACH shall utilize its existing digital platform to develop a branding and marketing campaign focused on students and parents about the education profession and the benefits of choosing such profession. TEACH shall implement a four-phased approach as the foundation of this campaign, which shall be designed to yield increases in the number of students entering the education pathway, applying for Aspiring Educators Diversity Scholarships and increased numbers of students entering and graduating from Connecticut EPPs. The campaign shall include: 1. User research; 2. Modification of existing assets (those that are currently used); 3. Creation of new assets; and 4. Measurements of success.

Total CSDE Funding to TeachCT for all services listed above per contract and amendment are:

- FY23 \$400,000
- FY24 \$623,500
- FY25 \$623,500

Question 2: Please explain the status of the pilot program outlined in [HB 7157 Sec. 51 \(PA 25-97\)](#)?

“Sec. 51. (*Effective from passage*) (a) Not later than January 1, 2026, the Department of Education shall establish, **within available appropriations**, a mental and behavioral health awareness and treatment pilot program in priority school districts, as defined in section 10-266p of the general statutes.”

Answer: This pilot program did not receive an appropriation from the General Assembly.

Question 3: What is the total cost of funding the 5 charters that have received an initial certificate from the State Board of Education?

Answer:

The total anticipated cost to fund enrollment of the State Board of Education approved initial charters in FY 27 is \$9,988,940. This total reflects the estimated per pupil amount for year 1 enrollment numbers approved for the five schools (NOTE: Taino CoLab, New Haven received FY26 funds for planning, but not enrollment). The estimated weighted student counts used in the charter funding model are based upon each respective city’s demographic student population. The schools with initial charters that have not received funding for enrollment by the General Assembly include:

- OLAM, Stamford;
- Taino CoLab, New Haven (This school received funding in FY26 for planning only, not for enrollment.);
- Taino CoLab Waterbury (see note below)
- PROUD Academy, Ansonia;
- Capital Preparatory Middletown, Middletown; and
- Danbury Charter School, Danbury

There is one school with an initial charter approved by the State Board of Education that is approved to open in FY28 (school year 2027-28). This school's year 1 enrollment number is not included in the FY27 amount listed above.

- Taino CoLab Waterbury

Please note that charter schools funded in FY27 may seek additional funding each year thereafter to accommodate their planned increases in student enrollment as outlined in their initial charter.

Table 1

Schools	District	Date of Initial Charter	SBE Approved Maximum Enrollment	FY 27 Requested Enrollment (based upon year 1 of initial charter approved by SBE)	Estimated Phase-In FY27 Grant Amount
OLAM	Stamford	Jan-2025	510	136	\$1,750,320
Taino CoLab New Haven	New Haven	Jan-2025	400	100	\$1,355,100
Taino CoLab Waterbury	Waterbury	Jan-2025	400	0	\$-
PROUD Academy	Ansonia	Jan-2025	150	50	\$648,150
Capital Preparatory Middletown	Middletown	Mar-2023	910	380	\$4,784,580
Danbury Charter School	Danbury	Oct-2018	550	110	\$1,450,790
TOTAL					\$9,988,940

Question 4: Provide specific information regarding the loss of \$7.3M in special education grants.

- Answer: Chart and explanation provided on page 9 of initial work group package. The \$7.3 million dollar cut is to an appropriation of \$9.1 million dollars for special education, of which only \$1.8 million had a specific statutory or legislatively defined purpose. The \$7.3 million cut is the balance which would otherwise lapse, as it stands, next fiscal year.

Commented [PH1]: These figures need to be revised. The way the charter school formula works mathematically every school gets more than the \$11,525 per pupil. While we cannot say for sure what these schools will get, SDE needs to estimate this figure somehow (a statewide average, actual figures for geographically proximate existing schools, pick a methodology that seems most reliable). As is the estimate understates the cost and if the leg chooses to fund the schools, they will underfund them, leading to potential deficiencies next year.

Commented [LS2R1]: @Hewes, Charlie @Brunetti, Jessica - Can you work to revise these numbers per Peter's comment?

Commented [PH3]: See Prior Comment figures need revision

Commented [LS4R3]: @Hewes, Charlie @Brunetti, Jessica - Same as above

Align Appropriation for New Special Education Items with Legislative Direction		
Budget	9,164,000	
FY27 Initiatives		
	500,000	Competitive Grants for SpEd Educators & Paraeducators (PA 25-93)
	250,000	Quarterly trainings for instructional support partners (PA 25-93, section 29)
	500,000	Trauma & Behavioral Health Grants (PA 25-93, section 26)
	50,000	Data collection and reporting (PA 25-67)
	500,000	Disaggregate and report certain data from BoEs on CT-SEDS
Total FY27 Initiatives	1,800,000	
Funding Overage	7,364,000	Funding not tied to any specific special education initiatives

Question 5: Please explain the difference in funding of the Teacher Residency Apprenticeship Program (TRAP) and the Department’s estimate for funding the proposed stipend program for student teachers? Why are the costs so far apart?

Answer:

The difference in the projected costs between the proposed Student Teacher Investment and Professional Educator Network for Development (STIPEND) program and the Connecticut Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Program (T-RAP) is driven by scale, structure, and funding responsibility.

T-RAP, supported and included in the Governor’s Budget, is a **year-long** targeted, cohort-based Grow-Your-Own initiative administered jointly by the Department of Labor (DOL), Connecticut

State Department of Education (CSDE), and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in collaboration with the local teachers union. The Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Program is governed by the Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee (JATC), which is comprised of representatives from the CSDE, EPPs, unions, DOL, the Governor's Office, and student apprentices. The Teacher Registered Apprentice operates as a shared-investment model between the CSDE and LEAs in which the CSDE contributes \$22,500 per apprentice and the LEA contributes approximately \$15,000 per apprentice.

The cost share breakdown:

CSDE contribution per apprentice: \$22,500

- \$10,000 toward the apprentice's salary (starting at minimum wage \$16.94-\$19.98/hour)
- \$5,000 toward the mentor teacher's stipend
- \$7,500 paid directly to the Educator Preparation Program (EPP) for tuition, books, fees, testing, and fingerprinting

District contribution per apprentice: Approximately \$15,000

- Approximately \$14,000 towards the apprentice's salary
- \$1,000 towards the mentor's stipend

In addition, T-RAP provides a structured wage support tied to employment as a registered apprentice, with embedded mentoring, tuition, and fees assistance. Mentoring is year-long with targeted professional development and checkpoints to ensure that if deficiencies are noted, they are addressed immediately with the mentor and EPP. Upon successful completion as an apprentice, and with Superintendent endorsement, all testing is waived except the Foundations of Reading Test. Also, all apprentices to date that have completed the program have been hired by the CT districts in which they served as an apprentice, which is aligned directly with retention initiatives.

Based on the proposal that CSDE has seen in the raised bill, the STIPEND program would provide a \$16,000 (~\$28.57/hour) direct stipend to all eligible student teachers statewide for 16 weeks only. Based on approximately 1,300 student teachers annually, across 18 Educator Preparation Programs, this results in an estimated cost of approximately \$20.8 million per year.

Unlike T-RAP, the STIPEND program does not require a district cost share. The state would bear the full cost of the stipend payments with no district co-investment. The STIPEND program would apply broadly to all eligible student teachers rather than to a defined apprenticeship cohort. The STIPEND proposal also includes a three-year employment monitoring and potential recoupment requirement, creating additional administrative and fiscal infrastructure obligations for the CSDE.

The projected cost difference reflects significant differences in program structure and scale. T-RAP operates as a district-partnered apprenticeship model with shared investment, while the STIPEND proposal would provide state-funded stipends to approximately 1,300 eligible student teachers statewide each year. Second, T-RAP costs are shared between the state and districts, while the STIPEND program would be funded entirely by the state.

Question 6: What is the fiscal impact of the change in tuition structure for magnet schools operated by Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs) and college-affiliated operators on sending districts, families, and the state from House Bill 5033? How does the change in tuition structure intersect with the \$12M reduction in FY27?

Answer: The Governor’s proposed budget and Section 12 of HB 5033 eliminate the one-time \$12 million supplemental allocation from Public Act (PA) 25-174, Section 224 to RESCs and college-affiliated operators for FY27. This payment was a new, one-time supplemental funding allocation to be shared among the 7 eligible RESC and college-affiliated magnet operators based on enrollment in amounts ranging from approximately \$228,000 to \$7,587,000 (using 2026-27 projected enrollments). Local board of education magnet operators were expressly excluded from the distribution. The 7 RESC and college-affiliate operators which would be eligible for the supplemental distribution include:

- Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES)
- Cooperative Educational Services (CES)
- Capitol Region Education Council (CREC)
- EASTCONN
- EdAdvance
- Goodwin University Educational Services
- LEARN

Sections 1 and 2 of HB 5033 replace the one-time funding allocation with a sustainable framework for fiscal support through an inflationary adjustment to the magnet tuition amount charged by these operators in two-year increments, beginning FY28.

- Change in tuition structure for kindergarten through 12th grade student enrollments: As noted, House Bill 5033 adjusts the tuition charged to sending districts for students attending magnet schools operated by RESCs and college-affiliates by applying an inflation-based increase based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), excluding food and energy, beginning in FY28. The existing 58% cap on district tuition remains in place; however, the bill applies the inflationary adjustment to the prior year’s tuition amount within that structure. The adjusted rate remains in effect for FY29 and is recalculated in two-year increments thereafter. As an example, for a RESC-operated magnet school with a FY24 per-pupil tuition of \$6,500, the current statutory cap limits tuition to

approximately \$3,770 per student. Applying a two-year core CPI adjustment of roughly 6% would increase the allowable tuition in FY28 to approximately \$4,000 per student.

- Impact on sending districts: The sending district is responsible for payment of the tuition amount for students attending interdistrict magnet schools. Because such students continue to be included in their sending district's resident enrollment count, the sending districts retain the Education Cost Sharing funds provided by the state which help offset the tuition charged.
- Impact on the state: For the state, the adjustment to the tuition amount does not change the underlying operating grant formula under CGS §10-252a. The grant calculation in current law does not include tuition in the regular grant formula. However, because the bill changes the tuition charged to districts, it may affect magnet operators in the context of the hold harmless provision. If the combined tuition revenue and state calculation under the revised structure fall below the FY24 per-pupil amount, the state provides the difference to ensure operators receive at least the FY24 per-pupil funding level. Because an increase in tuition revenue, without a corresponding decrease in state revenue will increase overall revenue, the state is less likely to have to provide extra funding via the hold harmless.
- Change in tuition structure for prekindergarten student enrollments: House Bill 5033 also adjusts the tuition charged to families/the state for prekindergarten students attending magnet schools operated by RESCs and college-affiliates by applying the same inflation-based increase to the tuition based on CPI.
 - Impact on families: Under current law, families with income above 75% of the state median income are responsible for payment of the tuition amount for prekindergarten students attending interdistrict magnet schools operated by RESCs and college-affiliates based on a sliding scale.
 - Impact on the state: Under current law, the state is responsible for tuition payments for prekindergarten student enrollments on behalf of families who are not required to pay based on family income.

As helpful context, the first two tables below show actual RESC Magnet School Operating Grants in FY 24, before the new reformed formula and FY 25. Total state support increased by over \$30 Million, roughly 24%. RESC Magnet school enrollment declined slightly from FY 24 to FY 25, so on a per-pupil basis the increase is higher than 24%. Stress on Magnet School Budget's has been caused by the cap on tuition, which the Governor's proposes to lift. Any consideration for additional state support should be predicated on actual reported operating shortfalls.

RESC Magnet School Operating Grant	
SY 2023-24	
ACES	\$8,670,030.00
CES	\$ 4,842,108.00
LEARN	\$ 11,297,316.00
EASTCONN	\$ 2,514,096.00
CREC	\$ 98,928,392.00
Great Path Academy at MCC (HPS operated by contract)	\$3,227,556.00
Total	\$129,479,498.00

RESC Magnet School Operating Grant	
SY 2024-25	
ACES	\$ 13,556,227.00
CES	\$ 6,308,758.00
LEARN	\$ 13,572,565.00
EASTCONN	\$ 2,835,160.00
CREC	\$ 121,805,041.00
Great Path Academy at MCC (HPS operated by contract)	\$ 2,704,074.27
Total	\$ 160,781,825.27

School Meals Programs

March 5, 2026

Reminder: The Governor’s Budget proposes replacing the revenue from meal charges shouldered by families. Additional information is included below regarding the federal and state resources being provided to support school food service operations.

School Breakfast Program

- **How much will the state put in for school breakfasts under the Governor’s proposal?**

Answer: School Year 2026-27: **\$12,000,000** (Calculation: Total number of “Reduced-price” breakfasts served in school year 2023-24 multiplied by the family cost (\$.30 per meal) PLUS the number of “Paid” breakfasts served multiplied by the difference between the federal “Free” rate (\$2.46 per meal) and the federal reimbursement for “Paid” meals (\$.40 per meal) - (i.e., \$2.16 per meal).

- **How many more students are expected to participate in the school breakfast program under the Governor’s proposal?**

Answer: The Department projects the average number of breakfasts served to increase by **39,285** per day (**7,071,327** for the school year) based on school year 2023-24 participation. Approximately **151,569** will be *eligible* for breakfast on a daily basis under the Governor’s proposal.

- **How much does Connecticut get from the federal government for school breakfasts?**

Answer: School Year 2024-25: **\$52,151,228**

- **How much does the state put in to fund school breakfasts currently?**

Answer: Connecticut provides **\$2,158,900** in annual Severe Need School Breakfast funding (**\$2,789** per school).

Additional Information

- The resulting increase in annual federal revenue to Connecticut school districts from the increase in breakfast participation will be **\$7,176,454**, increasing from an estimated **\$52,151,228** to **\$59,327,682** in federal funding.
- The USDA provides approximately **\$21,586,001** in annual federal Food Distribution Program funds to Connecticut districts to purchase commodity foods in addition to the **\$159,467,818** for the National School Lunch Program.
- In addition to the Severe Need School Breakfast funding, Connecticut provides an additional **\$6,505,463** in annual funding to districts through the Child Nutrition State Match and the Healthy Foods Initiative to support school breakfast and lunch programs.
- Connecticut will be providing **\$3,430,000** in Local Foods for Schools Incentive Program funding in school year 2026-27 for school to purchase from local farmers and producers.
- **54 of 167** participating districts reported subsidizing their food service programs in school year 2024-25, from a low of **\$415** to a high of **\$1,997,023** (Average **\$46,038**).