



Connecticut's Framework for **Accelerating Educational Opportunity and Access**



CONNECTICUT STATE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Introduction

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is proud of how the Connecticut preK-12 school communities continue to navigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and how students, families, and staff have adapted to the evolving approach to education during this time. District staff and their leadership have demonstrated persistence and flexibility to ensure all learners have access to learning, adults, and resources.

The CSDE acknowledges the substantial disruption in learning, profession, and life. It is easy to gravitate to a mindset that presumes learning "loss." Instead, now more than ever, it is critical to see this as an opportunity to shift our collective thinking from a deficit mindset to one that is strength-based and recognizes the assets that exist in districts and in our students while providing for general education recovery.

What does this mean for Connecticut? Disruption is a time to innovate, create, partner, and collaborate. This is the time to find our collective strengths and intentionally move forward to re-design education with a focus on equity. We are not going back to how it was before but rather redefining education progressively moving forward, combining traditional educational tools with the nontraditional parts of our learning and teaching in a pandemic that were most successful to renew these high impact practices in the spring, through summer and beyond.

Navigating and addressing these challenges require a focus on planning efforts and high impact strategies to accelerate learning for all students preK through grade 12.

These high impact practices and habits include:

- High quality instruction with integrated digital tools and resources
- Multi-tiered system of instructional and behavioral supports
- Formative assessment process and progress monitoring
- Multiple means of demonstrating and assessing learning
- Multiple means of accessing learning
- Developing student agency
- Cultivating strong and supportive relationships with students and families

Educators recognize how critical it is to strategically prepare students for success by evaluating student progress to diagnose unfinished learning, and then purposefully planning learning experiences to address the prerequisite skills and concepts missed in the context of current learning.

We believe that learning and teaching can be accelerated by careful review of evidence and data to understand student readiness, assets, and needs, and then purposeful selection of strategies and interventions. Systems of support around capacity building, resource allocation, and progress monitoring will need to be included in this comprehensive reimagining of education.

Why AccelerateCT

A bold redesigned educational response to learning will promote renewal, reduce opportunity gaps, accelerate learning, and advance equity to allow for the most effective response to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Connecticut State Department of Education is committed to learning from the nontraditional approaches that were successful during the pandemic, while also using established resources and practices to accelerate the learning post-COVID. This can be done by enhancing an inclusive and intentional ecosystem of layered supports and resources that guide the present, while also forecasting the needs and outcomes of the future. Though learning has been disrupted, despite the learning model, our talented educators made sure Connecticut students moved forward during the pandemic.

To support this thinking, the AccelerateCT framework provides a step-by-step process for preK-12 school system leaders to guide the local strategic analysis of work to create equitable inclusive environments. This process is an opportunity to align to the district strategic improvement or operating plan's identified short- and long-term goals. By doing so, districts will build coherence and confidence in the plan.

The AccelerateCT framework requires intentional implementation of high-quality instruction, engaging and rigorous curricula, and connections to social-emotional learning to support all learners. Strategic acceleration actions can empower students to build knowledge, skills, and behaviors that promote academic and social success.

It is imperative that special education teams are included in planning for the acceleration of learning within the school district to ensure that students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) have access to such opportunities and that IEPs continue to align with the curriculum and content standards being addressed. Planning and Placement Teams (PPTs) may need to consider whether the student requires additional accommodations and/or modifications to access and make progress in the acceleration programming. Additional information can be found in the [May 24 Special Education Recovery Memorandum](#).

How AccelerateCT

Connecticut has a plan for recommitting resources and accelerating learning and opportunities with a strength-based mindset. To accomplish our common goal, districts and schools will need to engage in gathering available evidence and data to develop a plan that identifies and responds to the strengths and needs of the school system, students, and families.

A strength-based needs assessment is a process. It involves determining the learning community's strengths and needs to set priorities. This in turn will allow districts to best allocate available resources, such as human, fiscal, and facilities, so that the system, structure, operations, and processes can be improved upon. The [CAPSS ESSER II Needs Assessment template](#) released with the ESSER II Application can be used to support district planning and resource allocation.

Examples of evidence and data that may point to focus areas include:

- Attendance
- Discipline
- Student Mobility
- Demonstration of Social-Emotional well-being and Intellectual Habits
- School climate
- Credits toward graduation
- Kindergarten Inventory
- Smarter Balanced for English Language Arts and Mathematics
- Early Literacy Assessments
- CT Alternate Assessment
- Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)
- Interim Assessment Blocks (IAB) including Focused IABs
- LAS Links
- Fall/winter/spring benchmark test scores
- Individualized Education Program (IEP) Progress Reports
- English Language Proficiency Reports
- Community level data (health, recreation program enrollment, employment, substance misuse, census, 211 calls, DCF involvement, childcare enrollment, etc.)

Intentional analysis of evidence and data can help the local team make visible the system in identifying trends, strategies, and actions to address opportunity gaps highlighted by the pandemic and unavoidable disruption to in-person schooling. These opportunity gaps are increased when students do not have reliable access to:

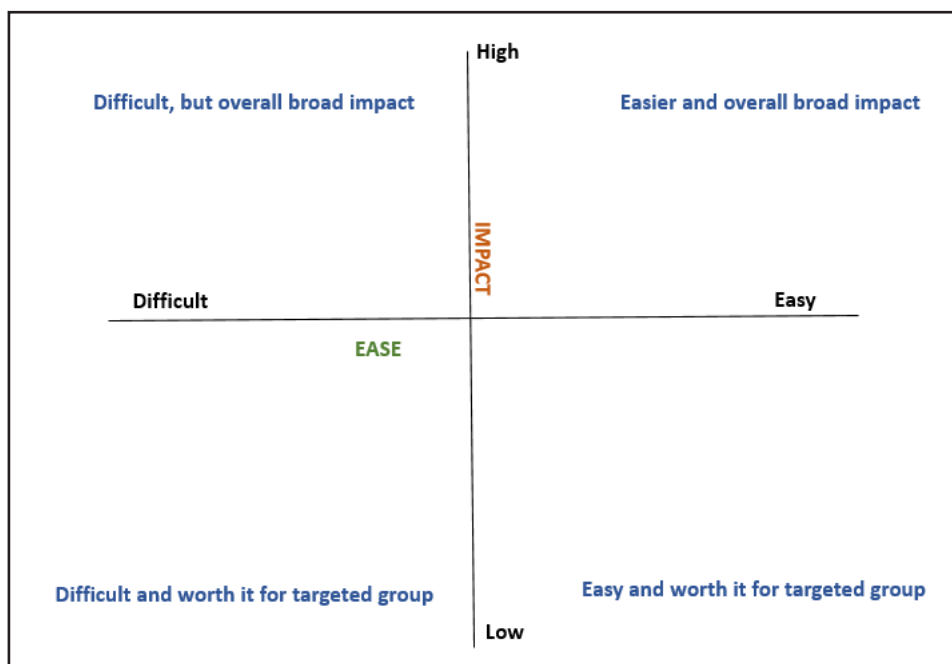
- High-quality instruction with integrated technology daily
- Caring adults
- Technology
- Healthy food and nutrition
- Stable housing
- Health and wellness resources (physical and mental)
- Transportation

Once a data overview has been created, the local team can conduct more thorough review and analysis by disaggregating data to reveal patterns that may be masked by larger, aggregate data. Looking specifically at learner groups can help make sure that resources are allocated for programs and students where they are most needed and will have the greatest impact. A consideration can be made for access to assessments for certain vulnerable populations during the pandemic, which is an added variable when reviewing data.

Disaggregate the data by demographics such as those listed below, and prioritize support for vulnerable populations:

- Race/ethnicity
- Gender
- English language ability
- Grade Level
- Course Level
- Free/reduce price lunch status
- Students with disabilities — IEPs/504 plans
- Homelessness

Local teams are encouraged to utilize an impact and effort matrix to analyze and plot strategies for prioritization. This matrix should result in evaluating the short- and long-term impacts, as well as the degree of effort for any proposed idea or innovation. Districts should pinpoint the strategies that align with those of the district strategic improvement or operating plan to accelerate educational opportunity and access, while considering available capacity or bandwidth. This will inform district decisions around implementation and funding. The squares of work in the below diagram are examples of what districts might consider in how they apply relief funds to change the trajectory of the school community.



Credit: Education Elements, 2021



What AccelerateCT

AccelerateCT is the next step in supporting the CSDE Statewide Priorities identified in April of 2020. Each priority is viewed as a separate area of focus with specific commitments and related action steps. It is important to not view these priorities as separate from the district strategic body of work, but rather as an opportunity to align priorities around improvement of the whole child.

Academic Renewal, Learning Acceleration and Student Enrichment

- Design learner networks that include multiple adult roles in school and out of school
- Provide equitable opportunity and access for students, with focused and deliberate attention to our most vulnerable students and our youngest learners
- Embed access to prerequisite skills and knowledge with grade-level content
- Create time and space for all teachers to network vertically to identify progression of essential learning outcomes
- Redesign learning spaces to provide just-in-time and extended support
- Align resources and strategic plan to deliver high quality grade-level instruction

Family and Community Connections

- Design family and community networks that promote engagement and support
- Design Family Academy programs to develop skills for supporting students at home
- Design partnerships with faith-based organizations, businesses, and social service providers as an extension of the family network
- Design just-in-time professional learning for families and guardians
- Develop a culture and climate of partners in the acceleration of educational opportunity and access

School Safety and the Social, Emotional, and Mental Health of the Students and of our School Staff

- Implement evidence-based strategies and programs that provide social-emotional support, including but not limited to school-based health centers
- Design systems to deliver behavioral and mental health services face-to-face and/or virtually on site or in remote locations
- Create time and space for all teachers to network and access professional learning in creating responsive classrooms

Strategic Use of Technology, Staff Development, and the Digital Divide

- Design a system that maintains or upgrades connectivity for the long term
- Design a responsive professional learning system for teachers, students, and families focused on digital tools and resources, online and offline learning, digital citizenship, and media literacy
- Design professional learning pathways for teachers in the integration of technology

Summer Learning Enrichment

- Redesign summer learning experiences with a focus on enrichment to meet both learning and social-emotional needs of our students
- Design community networks for opportunity and access to unique summer learning every day, everywhere
- Align targeted summer learning with students' strengths, passions, and curiosities
- Ensure summer opportunities are universally available but do not result in perceived punitive measures, and plan that some students may not participate

To support and enhance the trajectory of the school system and community, the CSDE recommends applying the **CSDE Acceleration Cycle** to the local context to prioritize the needs, identify powerful strategies, and maximize impact.

The **CSDE Acceleration Cycle** articulates a process by which school systems can engage into assess local needs and context to prioritize and plan the phases of work necessary to operationalize the strategies aligned with each statewide priority and the priorities within districts. These priorities should include the local strategic operating plan to provide coherence and connectedness.

School systems can engage in each step of the **CSDE Acceleration Cycle** as a structure for continuous improvement in academics, family and community connections, social-emotional well-being, professional learning, and summer learning enrichment.

The CSDE Acceleration Cycle



The **CSDE Acceleration Cycle** recommends:

1. Prioritizing strategic habits and actions to support strengths and needs in the short-term and long-term.
2. Planning implementation of equity-based habits and actions in partnership with teachers, students, parents, and community members.
3. Monitoring implementation of strategic habits and actions for adaptation of supports based on impact.
4. Providing timely communication of actionable feedback.
5. Evaluating to understand impact of strategic habits and actions to maintain a high level of commitment. Consider a plan for sustainability or expanding to scale in the next phase of the school, district, and community plan for acceleration.

How

Each step of the CSDE Acceleration Cycle is critical to developing, identifying, and implementing the necessary bold and innovative strategic habits to accelerate educational opportunity and access for all learners. The chart below outlines the universal steps of the CSDE Acceleration Cycle required for innovation, creation, aspirational thinking, and planning to achieve the short-term and long-term results within the local context.

Each step reminds users of the importance of intentional alignment to the strategic improvement or operating plan with the resources, services, and phases of work in the district or community. Assigning a timeline in phases will support the achievement of identified short-term and long-term goals.

The suggested strategic acceleration habits describe research-based accelerators for learning in a responsive organization prioritizing innovation over recovery.

● **Step 1: Prioritize**

Team Habits for realizing this step: Organize a centralized or individual school-based team with internal and external stakeholders having diverse perspectives and roles to assess needs and prioritize actions:

- Understand system, staff, student, family, and community needs by collecting and disaggregating evidence and data
- Analyze data and evidence to identify trends and needs. Select practices that meet the contextual needs and accelerate educational experiences
- Identify priority actions and power strategies based on impact and ease of implementation
- Establish short-term goals for quick wins
- Establish long-term goals for sustained impact
- Communicate Acceleration Plan
- Build and sustain systems of support to include professional learning for staff, families, and community members
- Determine individualized accommodations/modifications, as appropriate, for students with disabilities

● **Step 2: Plan and Partner**

Team Habits for realizing this step: Plan for the implementation of equity-based strategies with all partners

- Inventory resources and evaluate their impact on identified strengths and needs
- Plan to implement prioritized actions and power strategies based on impact and ease of implementation, clear rationale, and alignment to the school/district strategic improvement or operating plan

- Identify and work with partners for input
 - Internal staff
 - Students
 - Professional Learning Communities
 - District, Site-Based Councils (e.g., Governance Councils, PTAs, PTOs, SEPTOs)
 - External partners (e.g., parents, community organizations, child care)
- Plan equitable resource allocation (e.g., equitable practices with funding, people, learning materials)
- Outline implementation plan to support, meet, or address short-term and long-term goals
- Communicate plan with method for monitoring progress with centralized, school-based, parent, or student teams (e.g., Governance Councils, PTA, PTO, PPT, 504 Teams)
- Create new structures to lift student and parent voices and input

● **Step 3: Monitor and Adapt**

Team Habits for realizing this step: Monitor implementation to adapt systems of support

- Monitor fidelity of implementation of strategies by analyzing the appropriate evidence and data in a timed frequency (e.g., weeks, months)
- Analyze impact of scaffolds or supports in the implemented plan
- Adapt plans to modify or renew plans for teaching, learning, student wellness, family and community engagement, and connectivity. Eliminate strategies not working
- Monitor systems of support. Determine impact and sustainability

● **Step 4: Feedback to Engage**

Team Habits for realizing this step: Timely communication of actionable feedback that can engage all learners (adult and student) as partners

- Collect just-in-time evidence and data on tiered supports being provided
- Use gathered evidence to inform next steps and actions
- Engage in two-way, feedback-driven communication with staff, students, families, and community partners to involve them in each phase of the district acceleration plan

● **Step 5: Evaluate to Maintain**

Team Habits for realizing this step: Evaluate to understand what is working and what is not working; plan to sustain and maintain at a high level of commitment

Throughout this process, planning for sustainability is critical. Once items are fully mapped out in an action plan, the team must be committed to continuous evaluation, measuring implementation fidelity, adjusting along the way, and communicating with stakeholders.

- Evaluate for inequities
- Evaluate maintenance and sustainability
- Assess strategies followed by analysis and modifications
- Identify and implement additional systems of support and scaffolds
 - Professional supports
 - Student supports
 - Parent supports
 - Community supports
- Provide ongoing engagement opportunities for identified stakeholders to inform next steps
 - Design family and community networks that promote engagement and support

Funding: Considerations for Equitable Resource Allocation to Accelerate Learning

Recovery, renewal, and organizational acceleration require substantial investment of resources to help students and schools learn and teach during, and as we emerge from, the COVID pandemic. School districts may use funds for any activity authorized under the major federal grant categories including the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESSA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins), or the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act.

The CSDE urges districts to assess local strengths and needs to create an equitable resource allocation plan using the multiple funding sources in alignment with the statewide priorities and to support the implementation of AccelerateCT. To support sustainability school systems can use funds from their General Fund, Title I, II, IV, Alliance Funding, Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) CARES, ESSER I, ESSER II, and ARP ESSER.

One approach to decision making should include utilizing the [CAPSS ESSER II Needs Assessment](#) to identify strategic actions with prioritized funding.

In addition to the [state-level priorities](#), districts may use funds for any of the following:

- Addressing learning loss among students, including low-income students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care, of the local educational agency, including by: (A) Administering and using high-quality assessments that are valid and reliable, to accurately assess students' academic progress and assist educators in meeting students' academic needs, including through differentiating instruction; (B) Implementing evidence-based activities to meet the comprehensive needs of students; (C) Providing information and assistance to parents and families on how they can effectively support students, including in a distance learning environment; (D) Tracking student attendance and improving student engagement in distance education.
- Coordination of preparedness and response efforts of local educational agencies with State, local, Tribal, and territorial public health departments, and other relevant agencies, to improve coordinated responses among such entities to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.
- Providing principals and others school leaders with the resources necessary to address the needs of their individual schools.
- Activities to address the unique needs of low-income children or students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth, including how outreach and service delivery will meet the needs of each population.
- Developing and implementing procedures and systems to improve the preparedness and response efforts of local educational agencies.
- Training and professional development for staff of the local educational agency on sanitation and minimizing the spread of infectious diseases.
- Purchasing supplies to sanitize and clean the facilities of a local educational agency, including buildings operated by such agency.
- Planning for, coordinating, and implementing activities during long-term closures, including providing meals to eligible students, providing technology for online learning to all students, providing guidance for carrying out requirements under the IDEA and ensuring other educational services can continue to be provided consistent with all Federal, State, and local requirements.

- Purchasing educational technology (including hardware, software, and connectivity) for students who are served by the local educational agency that aids in regular and substantive educational interaction between students and their classroom instructors, including low-income students and children with disabilities, which may include assistive technology or adaptive equipment
- Providing mental health services and supports, including through the implementation of evidence-based full-service community schools.
- Planning and implementing activities related to summer learning and supplemental afterschool programs, including providing classroom instruction or online learning during the summer months and addressing the needs of low-income students, children with disabilities, English learners, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care.
- School facility repairs and improvements to enable operation of schools to reduce risk of virus transmission and exposure to environmental health hazards, and to support student health needs.
- Inspection, testing, maintenance, repair, replacement, and upgrade projects to improve the indoor air quality in school facilities, including mechanical and non-mechanical heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems; filtering, purification and other air cleaning; fans, control systems, and window and door repair and replacement.
- Developing strategies and implementing public health protocols including, to the greatest extent practicable, policies in line with guidance from the CDC for the reopening and operation of school facilities to effectively maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff.
- Other activities that are necessary to maintain the operation of and continuity of services in local educational agencies and continuing to employ existing staff of the local educational agency.

Appendixes

Appendix A: AccelerateCT Resources

The CSDE has created a companion [AccelerateCT webpage](#) with resources and strategy guides specific to each statewide priority:

- Academic Renewal, Learning Acceleration and Student Enrichment
- Guidance Regarding Special Education Recovery for Students with Individual Education Programs (IEPs) due to the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Family and Community Connections
- School Safety and the Social, Emotional, and Mental Health of the Students and of our School Staff
- Strategic Use of Technology, Staff Development, and the Digital Divide
- Summer Learning Enrichment

The CSDE plans to provide statewide access to resources for English language arts, math, science, social studies, world languages, and early childhood. These resources are designed to supplement the district core curricula scope, sequence, and learning outcomes. Combined, these resources support the commitment to learner empowerment and facilitate the acceleration of students' personal progress goals. In addition, the CSDE continues to renew and develop high-quality curricula as an ongoing commitment to providing all public school systems and educators with a model curriculum over the next three years in identified core academic areas.

CSDE resources provide educators with online and offline tools to give learners just-in-time core-plus-more support before, during, and after planned instruction in the curriculum. CSDE resources will provide educators with high-yield instructional practices and quality materials that will target unfinished learning while accelerating growth in connection with the on-grade-level instruction taught in the classroom.

Implementation of resources is determined by a combination of factors:

- Participation in professional development provided by CSDE
- Diagnosis of strength and need by grade, learner groups, and content
- Dedicated district or school team to lead the implementation of each or combined resources
- Commitment to continued communication

Additional resources will be released on a rolling basis throughout 2021 and 2022.

Apex Learning

The CSDE and Apex Learning have partnered to provide, at no cost to districts, all Connecticut students in grades 6-12 access to Apex's online course catalogue for credit accumulation (credit recovery, enrichment, and personal learning) grade-level advancement, and meeting high school graduation requirements. This comes with standards-aligned content for students that they, once enrolled, can learn at their own pace using embedded accessibility tools and resources.

The online content can support student need from foundational skills to advanced coursework and everything in between as identified by the district and teachers.

Defined Learning

CSDE and Defined Learning have partnered to provide access to their online curricula resource at no cost to districts for project and career-based learning for all Connecticut K-12 students. We believe that in order to renew and accelerate, students require access to supplemental learning to the local curricula that elevates the level of engagement in real-world inquiry projects, enrichment, and asynchronous and independent learning with a career focus. The embedded ePortfolio process empowers all learners to have a voice in what they want to share as demonstration of their knowledge. The shared ePortfolio provides an alternative method for formative assessment for teachers to understand student progress relative to identified standards and learning outcomes.

The Defined Learning Platform provides a project-based learning library of customizable resources for grades K-12 encompassing math, science, ELA, and social studies. This platform provides Performance Tasks that can be assigned to an individual student, groups of students or an entire classroom through an online portal. Each project puts the students in the role of a specific career and asks them to conduct an authentic performance task to apply their knowledge and skills to prove their understanding. The program provides engagement around various career opportunities and encourages students to be more proficient in these subjects, ultimately providing a pathway to a promising future.

CT Learning Hub

The [CT Learning Hub](#) provides universal access to resources that provide answers to the questions facing districts, teachers, and parents. Weekly updates to the CT Learning Hub provide a system of supports for instructional resources, engaging families and communities, and on-demand professional learning. All AccelerateCT resources will be made available through the CT Learning Hub.

CSDE Prioritized Standards for Essential Learning Outcomes Handbook

Aligning these CSDE resources with the assets available in district or schools will assist in addressing the needs identified for unfinished and accelerated learning. The [CSDE Priority Standards for Essential Learning Handbook](#) provides all Connecticut educators with a guide for determining which standards to combine, limit, incorporate, emphasize, and reduce for the 2020-2021 school year. This is intended to support an educator's ability to differentiate, personalize, and scaffold for intentional, high-impact planning and alignment to Smarter Balanced assessment targets.

CSDE Evidence-Based Practice Guides

The CSDE has identified the leading practices that research suggests will increase the likelihood of improved student outcomes. The CSDE Evidence-Based Practice Guides are intended to inform school and district decision-making regarding instructional and student support programming and to optimize the use of local, state, and federal school improvement funds.

- [Climate and Culture](#)
- [Early Learning](#)
- [English Language Proficiency](#)

- [Equity-Driven Leadership](#)
- [Mathematics](#)
- [On-Track Graduation](#)
- [Reading](#)
- [Science](#)
- [Student/Family/Community Engagement](#)

DESSA Social-Emotional Learning Assessment

The Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA) system provides an SEL screening tool, the DESSA-mini, supplemental assessments, and data management tools that enable school and district leaders to easily aggregate, disaggregate, and analyze data to better support students' SEL needs.

The DESSA-mini, which has both K-8 and high school versions, is given three times a year to track progress. These eight-question screeners take approximately one minute to administer to each student. Access to the DESSA System, including licenses, training, and use of the Aperture online data programs, will be provided free to districts. It is strongly advised that district staff have training and experience implementing SEL at the classroom prior to using the DESSA.

EdSight Secure

- Student Summary Report: This report provides historical and longitudinal information on every student who is currently enrolled in the district. Data provided comprise enrollment, attendance, assessment (including LAS Links), suspensions, mobility (both school and district moves), and course failures (for students in the upper grades).
- Early Indicator Tool (EIT) for Teachers: The EIT for Teachers is a specialized report created by CSDE to provide teachers with historical data for their incoming students early in the fall of 2020-21. District data coordinators can use their own school roster information and the linked EIT for Teachers spreadsheet to generate custom reports for any of a teacher's rosters of students. This report includes projected Smarter Balanced scores for the 2019-20 year.
- English Learner Status Report: This report is designed to help districts identify ELs who may have newly enrolled in the district.
- Active Endorsements Report: This report can support a district's talent management by providing the email contact information for all certified educators statewide.

EdSight Public

Provides public access to reports on students, educators, instruction, resources, and performance

Assessment Resources

- Interim assessment blocks (ELA, Math, and Science): The interim blocks are short assessments that focus on a subset of the grade-level standards. The tests are scored immediately; teachers can view the test questions, scoring rubrics, and student responses to obtain greater insight into student cognition and reasoning. The tests can be used in flexible, non-standard ways to support instruction
- Sensible Assessment Practices Guide (guidance and videos)

LRP Special Education Connections

The CSDE provides a subscription to Special Education Connections, a special education e-News and resources website, at no cost to school districts. To assist with the special education complexities due to the pandemic, CSDE is upgrading subscriptions to include access to LRP legal case law. LRP provides concise summaries of significant local and national case decisions, evolving

policy guidance, and regulatory changes directly to your email inbox every week. If you don't know your district's login information, or you would like to schedule a free online orientation to learn more about Special Ed Connection, contact the Special Ed Connection Hotline at specialconnection@lrp.com or dial 800-515-4577 x6303.

The Hexagon Tool

The [Hexagon Discussion and Analysis Tool](#), from the National Implementation Research Network, helps organizations evaluate new and existing programs and practices. This tool is designed to be used by a team to ensure diverse perspectives are represented in a discussion of the six contextual fit and feasibility factors.

NEAT Marketplace at Oak Hill

The CSDE is dedicated to supporting Connecticut's LEAs, families and students with their Assistive Technology needs. CSDE provides, at no cost to school districts, NEAT membership which includes AT Webinars, Lending Library, Professional Development and Capacity building.

Sparkler

The CSDE is pleased to announce a partnership with the Office of Early Childhood and Sparkler that will help all Connecticut children birth through age 5 get off to a strong start. Sparkler is a free app for families that can be used as a developmental screening tool, a source for activities to support child development, and as a way for parents to make connections with professionals. Sparkler engages families to promote healthy early childhood development.

Sparkler is an evidence-based mobile platform available in Spanish and English at no cost to the school district or family. Sparkler includes the Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ): ASQ (general development) and ASQ SE (social-emotional development). The Sparkler app also includes play-based learning activities to support child development. When a parent completes the ASQ(s) and the scores indicate that the child may require additional support our partners at 211 Child Development will reach out to them and facilitate, with parental permission, connections with the child's school district or early intervention if the child is younger than 3.

Districts can provide information to families on how to access the free Sparkler app and provide messaging to encourage parents to participate. Through the free Sparkler app parents can support their child's development as they enter preschool or kindergarten and are supported to make connections with their school district when a child may not be developing along a typical trajectory.

Districts can obtain an identifying code for their district so, with parent permission, they are able to receive screening results of children in their community.

Appendix B: AccelerateCT Supports

[AccelerateCT website](#)

Professional Learning and Training

On-demand professional learning and training will be provided at key release phases to provide an overview of the resources, updates to AccelerateCT, and implementation practices. Professional learning and training details will be provided in weekly Commissioner Communications and monthly AccelerateCT superintendent calls. All professional learning and training sessions and webinars will be recorded and posted to the AccelerateCT webpage and the CT Learning Hub.

Continuous improvement to professional learning and trainings are posted the [Turnaround Office Professional Learning Library](#).

Appendix C: Key Terms

The terms, and the concepts they represent as defined below, were used in the development of this framework.

- **Accelerated Learning** is an approach to diagnosing learning and planning to embed or integrate pre-requisite skills with on-grade-level content to promote equal expectations for all students and accelerate learning instead of grouping students by ability within the class. Students require consistent access to grade-level instruction and materials to accelerate their progress.
- **Credit Accumulation** means the process of earning credit upon completion of course in secondary education (middle and high school).
- **Credit Recovery** is an approach that gives at-risk students who have failed a class, the opportunity to complete missing coursework, revise coursework, or retake a course to earn academic credit. Credit recovery courses may be scheduled during normal school hours, after school, on vacation breaks, online, over the summer, or in alternate settings to meet the students' needs.
- **General Education Recovery** means supports and services to remediate skill or knowledge loss and/or lack of sufficient instructional time due to the pandemic and shift in the instructional delivery model since March 2020.
- **High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM)** are content-rich, easy-to-use resources that are closely aligned resources to rigorous standards. They are accessible, culturally relevant, and written with clear purpose, effective lesson structure, and pacing to provide flexibility for educators to meet the learning strengths, needs, curiosities and passions of all students.
- **Just-in-time** means providing access to the most immediate, directly connected grade-level content that students are learning in class.
- **Parent/s and family/ies** are used to represent any adult caretakers who have responsibility for the well-being of a child or children. This includes, for example, biological parents, foster care providers, grandparents, aunts and uncles, siblings, or fictive kin.
- **Remediation** refers to instruction intended to fill gaps in a student's core education
- **Unfinished Learning** means opportunities to solidify student understanding of a skill, topic, or idea expected in foundational standards due to unfinished instruction and/or emerging understanding.
- **Virtual Learning** means the provision of instruction by means of one or more internet-based software on a virtual platform or as part of an in person or remote learning.

References, Select Research, and Resources

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