



Who We Are: The Connecticut Council for Education Reform (CCER) advocates for Pre-K-12 education policies and practices that will narrow the achievement gap so that all of Connecticut's students are able to access and thrive within a 21st-century education system. We do so by collaborating with educators, employers, and community members from across the state.

Where We've Been: Since 2010, CCER has advanced several critical policies, aligned with recommendations of the [2010 Commission on Educational Achievement report](#). Our advocacy successes include supporting: the establishment of the Office of Early Childhood; adoption of the Connecticut Core Standards; redefinition of high-quality professional learning for educators; approval for new alternate routes to educator certification (ARC); improvements to the educator evaluation and support process; reform of educator preparation; and advancement of Turnaround School efforts. These changes have contributed in numerous ways, such as: an increase in public school graduation rates to 87.4% across the state; 23 schools in Alliance Districts earning distinction for high performance and high growth; a growing number of low-income students and students of color enrolling in AP courses; and progress in closing the achievement gap.

What Guides Us: In reviewing the 2019 priorities on the next page, please consider our four guiding principles:

- **Focus on Talent (Students and Educators):** We believe schools must prepare all students to become thriving citizens and professionals, and we are committed to recruiting, preparing, and supporting educators to deliver on that promise.
- **Emphasize Coherence:** The following priorities should be viewed as interconnected and complementary. We should consider how the enactment of one set of policies/actions makes the realization of other policies/actions more possible and meaningful.
- **Scale Best Practices:** The priorities begin from an assumption that examples of positive growth and outcomes exist in some schools and districts, and that it is the state's role to understand where and why certain schools and districts working with historically underserved students are able to make progress toward closing the achievement gap while others are not. We are attempting to study, learn from, optimize, and most importantly, scale, what's already been tried and proven to have impact.
- **Respect CT's Fiscal Reality:** In 2019, we will continue to face serious fiscal constraints as a state. Our recommendations will focus on optimizing present resources rather than seeking out new sources of funding.

Our **students** must have access to an excellent education that prepares them to thrive in and contribute to our future economy and society. To that end, CCER will advocate for:

***Correlation between Funding and Outcomes.**

We propose a public-facing, tiered statewide system that annually:

- Reviews, ranks, and differentiates support and distribution of state/federal funding for all districts and schools based on their demonstrated progress in narrowing the achievement gap; and
- Audits funding and student outcomes in the Commissioner’s Network schools and Alliance Districts.

***Emphasis on Public-Private Partnerships.**

We promote policy that requires secondary and post-secondary schools to partner with employers in developing career pathway programs, inclusive of apprenticeship programs, that effectively prepare students for careers in local industries.

***Commitment to Students’ Career Readiness.**

We propose the inclusion of a quality indicator in [CT’s Next Generation Accountability System](#) that assesses district/ school performance on the “career readiness” of their students.

Expansion of Wraparound Services and Extended Learning Time.

We expect that schools will leverage community resources to address a wider range of student needs and provide programming and adult supervision to allow for extended learning time.

Assessment of and Access to Quality Early Childhood Programs.

We expect that the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) expedites the timeline for fully implementing a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). We will also look for ways to expand access to high-quality Pre-K.

Our **educators** must be diverse, well-prepared, and consistently equipped to deliver on the promise of an excellent education for all students. To that end, CCER will advocate for:

***Widespread Principal Leadership Development.**

We seek to elevate a statewide focus on principal recruitment, preparation, and elevation of great leadership practices that:

- Expands district homegrown pipelines that accelerate exceptional candidates’ transition into school leadership;
- Holds preparation programs accountable to graduates’ school results on student growth and achievement; and
- Designates “distinguished” principals, and incorporates their practices into broader leadership development efforts.

High-Quality Development for Turnaround Teachers.

We ask that the CSDE require that Alliance Districts use Title I and II dollars to improve instructional quality, by:

- Adopting research-based, CT Core Standards-aligned Math and Literacy curricula; and
- Scheduling regular professional development opportunities for Elementary and Secondary teachers to collaboratively plan across grade levels.

Promotion of New Pathways to Teacher Shortage Areas.

We promote expansion of ARC programs that will expedite the preparation and placement of mid-career professionals into PK-12 shortage areas within our highest-need schools/districts. We emphasize ARCs that appeal to STEM industry professionals and focus on recruiting educators of color. We continue to work towards increased reciprocity for out-of-state teachers.

***Commitment to a Diverse Educator Workforce.**

We propose the inclusion of a quality indicator in [CT’s Next Generation Accountability System](#) that assesses district/school progress toward recruitment and retention goals for a diverse educator workforce, with emphasis on the Alliance Districts.