



# **Annual Report of the Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology**

## **Calendar Year 2019**

*Submitted in Accordance with CGS § 61a, Sec. 4d-80(c)(8)*

*Hartford, Connecticut  
January 10, 2020*

## Contents

Progress and Vision .....	3
Introduction .....	6
Background and Membership.....	6
Leadership .....	7
Meetings .....	9
State Educational Technology Goals and Plan .....	11
Digital Learning .....	13
Infrastructure.....	15
Data and Privacy .....	18
Related Activities .....	22
Communications and Outreach .....	24
Connecticut State Library.....	28
Connecticut Education Network .....	32

## Progress and Vision

In 2019, the Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology continued efforts to ensure equitable access to technology for all learners, and to expand the uses and benefits of those resources. From helping schools and libraries pay for Internet connections and ensuring the privacy of student data to promoting the use of free digital learning materials, the Commission's leadership and advocacy have had a significant, positive impact on students and institutions this year. In the context of broader social, political, and market trends, this work has proven especially relevant and timely.

Learning and civic engagement depend more than ever on technology access and literacy. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) and personal data promises greater insights and efficiencies but also poses concerns about privacy and job security. The "gig economy" should provide skilled employees with greater flexibility to work anywhere, anytime; yet without access to digital learning resources, individuals face the threat of downsizing or under-employment through job automation. Technology does not drive change; its application by humans does. For this reason, citizens of all ages need digital literacy skills to discern fact from fiction; be good stewards of their personal, health, and financial data; take full advantage of the digital economy; and master new modalities in learning to gain sought-after skills that build job security.

In education, our state's schools and colleges leverage affordable software and cloud-based collaboration tools to make personalized learning possible at scale. They do this empowered by the State's flagship Connecticut Education Network (CEN) and local investments that have made devices available to most students. At the same time, educators and learners rightfully concern themselves with protecting personal data; wrestle with defining the proper amount of "screen time"; and look for creative ways to ensure that access — or lack thereof — to technology outside of school does not deepen the digital divide. Most recently, government and private-sector leaders have celebrated the promise of 5G networks in areas such as business, healthcare and entertainment. They must also consider and take steps to ensure that new technologies help level the playing field for learners, not tilt it toward the privileged.

Digital innovation will continue to disrupt all aspects of society, including education. This report reflects a vision that those innovations can and should benefit all learners and educational institutions. Harnessing technology as a means of empowering and providing opportunity for all students remains central to the Commission's work. Its members encourage all stakeholders in learning to engage in these efforts and share new ideas for how technology can deepen and broaden education across our great state.

## 72% Educators

The use of open education resources (OER) holds great promise to strengthen the quality and reduce the cost of textbooks and other learning materials. Of the hundreds of educators and leaders surveyed about their use of OER, 72 percent create their own learning materials, and 86 percent are ready to share them with colleagues.

→ See [Open Education Resources](#), pages 13 – 14

## 1,200+ Teachers

Through presentations statewide and at national conferences, live and recorded Webinars, and the provision of curriculum resources, the Commission equipped more than 1,200 educators and leaders with the resources they need to support student and teacher digital learning competencies.

→ See [Proficiency Standards](#), page 14

## 40,000 Students

The Commission's work continues to address the estimated 8 percent (40,000) of Connecticut K – 12 students without access to the Internet outside of school. More than 150 communities have used the [Digital Equity Toolkit](#), a playbook to provide 24 X 7 learning using existing free and low-cost solutions, including the promising [Eduroam system](#).

→ See [Digital Equity](#), page 15

## \$22M Opportunity

Through direct outreach to schools and libraries, the Commission has equipped leaders with the resources they need to take advantage of unused federal E-rate dollars to fund Internet connections and support wireless networks.

→ See [E-rate Maximization](#), pages 15 – 17

## Compliance Insights

With no additional resources, the Commission assumed new responsibilities in providing insights to the General Assembly and districts on the compliance of schools and companies with Connecticut's privacy statute.

→ See [Privacy Compliance](#), pages 18 – 19

## \$2M<sup>+</sup> Cost Avoidance

Since its 2017 launch, the Commission's Educational Software Hub has saved districts an estimated 20,000 hours in staff time — not even including external legal fees — to comply with Connecticut's data privacy law. The Hub helps schools leverage innovative technology solutions that support personalized learning while remaining compliant with state statute.

→ See [Educational Software Hub](#), pages 19 – 20

## \$39M Content Savings

The Connecticut State Library continues to deliver exceptional value through researchIT (formally iCONN), the digital library free to all Connecticut residents. This service delivered \$41M in digital content subscriptions at a cost to the state of \$1.5M.

→ See [researchIT CT](#), pages 28 – 29

## \$25M Network Savings

The Connecticut Education Network (CEN), launched in 2000 through the Commission, delivers Internet connections, federally mandated content filtering, and cyber protection services to schools, colleges, libraries, towns, and open access members at a cost that saves these institutions approximately \$25M this year alone.

→ See [Connecticut Education Network](#), page 32

## Introduction

The Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology (“the Commission” or “CET”) was established in 2000 by Public Act 00-187 to serve as the State’s principal educational technology policy advisor. This document summarizes the Commission’s progress in attaining its statewide technology goals during the past calendar year, in accordance with its governing statute ([CGS § 4d-80](#)). The report serves to inform and provide recommendations to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education, appropriations, and the budgets of state agencies; the State Board of Education; and the Board of Governors of Higher Education. Readers accessing this report online may use the embedded links to view minutes, watch recorded meetings, and review publications.

## Background and Membership

Name and Position	Representing or Appointed By
Mark Raymond, CIO, Chairman	Department of Administrative Services
Michael Mundrane, UCONN Vice Provost and CIO, Commission Vice-Chair	University of Connecticut
Doug Casey, Executive Director	Commission for Educational Technology
Colleen Bailie, Director, West Haven Public Library	CT Library Association
Nick Caruso, Senior Staff Associate	CT Association of Boards of Education
Charles Dumais, Executive Director, Cooperative Educational Services	Governor's Office
Tom Dillon, Principal, David A. Fields Group	Minority Leader of the House
John Elsesser, Town Manager, Town of Coventry	CT Council of Small Towns
Russell Feinmark, CT General Assembly	Speaker of the House
Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Performance Officer	Connecticut State Department of Education
Rich Mavrogeanes, President, Discover Video	President Pro Tem of the Senate
Andrew Minikowski, Staff Attorney, State Broadband Policy and Program Coordinator	Office of Consumer Counsel
Open Position	Minority Leader of the Senate
Maura Provencher, Vice President of Research and Administration	CT Conference of Independent Colleges
Bart Stanco, Vice President, Gartner	Governor's Office
Steve Stephanou, Deputy General Manager, Town of Manchester	CT Conference of Municipalities
John Vittner, Director of IT Policy	Office of Policy and Management
Ken Wiggin, State Librarian	Connecticut State Library
Scott Zak, Senior Director of Learning Technologies	CT Board of Regents for Higher Education

This past year included several changes to the Commission membership. In the late summer, State Broadband Coordinator Bill Vallee retired. The Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC) appointed Staff Attorney Andrew Minikowski to replace Mr. Vallee. In September, long-time member Scott Shanley stepped down from his position, with Steve Stephanou, Manchester's Deputy General Manager, appointed to fill that seat on behalf of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM). Shortly after the September meeting, Carl Fortuna of Old Saybrook stepped down from his seat. The Commission looks forward to the Minority Leader of the Senate's appointment of a chief elected official to replace Mr. Fortuna.

## Leadership

Mark Raymond, the Chief Information Officer for the State, continued his service as Chair of the Commission. Michael Mundrane, the University of Connecticut's Chief Information Officer and Vice Provost, serves as the Commission's Vice-Chair. Douglas Casey serves as the Commission's Executive Director, with responsibility for the CET's planning and activities as described on the Web sites of the Connecticut General Assembly ([Chapter 61a](#)) and Commission ([www.CT.gov/CTEdTech](http://www.CT.gov/CTEdTech)).

In addition to its members, the Commission benefits from the insights of Advisory Council members. Ten Commission members and alternates as well as nearly 40 subject matter experts from across the state serve on these Advisory Councils, representing a broad diversity of constituents to help guide the Commission's priorities and programs. The list of Advisory Council members follows:

### Digital Learning Advisory Council

- Nick Caruso (Chair) — Senior Staff Associate for Field Service, CABE\*
- Katie Bauer — Director of Library Research Services & Collections, Trinity College
- Kevin Corcoran — Executive Director of Digital Learning, Connecticut State Colleges and Universities
- Jonathan Costa — Assistant Executive Director, EdAdvance
- Larry Covino — Director, Bristol Adult Education
- Andy DePalma — Director of Technology, EASTCONN
- Sarah Edson — Dean of Academic Technology and Innovation, Ethel Walker School
- Josh Elliott — Director of Educational Technology, Fairfield University Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions
- John Elsesser\* — Town Manager, Town of Coventry
- Barbara Johnson — Library Media Specialist, Colchester Public Schools and President, Connecticut Educators Computer Association (CECA) and Connecticut Association of School Librarians (CASL)
- Karen Kaplan — Technology and Communications Director, Hamden Public Schools
- Dawn La Valle\* — Director, Division of Library Development, Connecticut State Library
- Shannon Marimón — Executive Director, ReadyCT (formerly Connecticut Council for Education Reform)
- Laura McCaffrey — Director of School Support and Academic Services, Hartford Archdiocese

\*Also serves as a Commission member or alternate.

- Greg Mcverry — Professor, Southern Connecticut State University
- James Mindek — Director of Technology & Operations, Connecticut Technical High School System
- Brandon Rush — Director of Technology, New Milford Public Schools
- Josh Smith — Superintendent, Region 15 Public Schools
- Karen Skudlarek — Educational Technologist, University of Connecticut
- Jim Spafford — Coordinator of Business Services and Partnerships, Manchester Adult Education
- Shelley Stedman — Past President, Connecticut Association of School Librarians
- Chinma Uche — Computer Science Teacher, CREC Academy of Aerospace and Engineering, and President, CT Computer Science Teachers Association
- Christopher Weiss — Principal, Riverside School (Greenwich)
- Jennifer Widness\* — President, CT Conference of Independent Colleges
- Scott Zak\* — Senior Director of Learning Technologies, CT State Colleges and Universities

#### **Infrastructure Advisory Council**

- Tom Dillon (Chair)\* — Principal, David A. Fields Group
- Colleen Bailie\* — Library Director, West Haven Public Library
- Joe Campbell — Educational Technology Consultant, Connecticut Technical High School System
- George Claffey — Interim Chief Information Officer, Central Connecticut State University
- Fred Kass — Director of Networking & Infrastructure Services, Trinity College
- Kerri Kearney — Supervisor of Instructional Technology, Manchester Public Schools
- Ryan Kocsondy — Director, Connecticut Education Network (CEN)
- Michael Mundrane\* — Vice Provost and CIO, University of Connecticut
- Brandon Rush — Director of Technology, New Milford Public Schools
- Susan Shellard\* — Chief Administrative Officer, Department of Economic and Community Development
- Sabina Sitaru — Interim Chief Operating Officer, CT Health Information Exchange
- Bill Vallee\* — CT Broadband Policy and Programs Coordinator, CT Office of Consumer Counsel
- Rick Widlansky — System Manager, Libraries Online (LION)
- Rob Wilson — Director of Technology and Information Services, Somers Public Schools








\*Also serves as a Commission member or alternate.



## Meetings

The dates and agendas of the Commission and Advisory Council meetings appear below, with meeting minutes and all related materials available from the Commission Web site, [www.CT.gov/CTEdTech](http://www.CT.gov/CTEdTech).

### Commission Meetings

Monday, March 4	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Digital Literacy Standards Campaign</li> <li>Social Media Monitoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commission Web Site Redesign</li> </ul>
<p> <a href="#">Meeting Minutes</a></p>	
Monday, June 3	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open Education Resources</li> <li>Data Privacy Recommendations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>E-rate Report and Recommendations</li> </ul>
<p> <a href="#">Meeting Minutes</a></p>	
Monday, September 9	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Role of 5G in Education</li> <li>Eduroam for Digital Equity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resolution on the Role of Libraries to Support Digital Equity</li> </ul>
<p> <a href="#">Meeting Minutes</a></p>	<p> <a href="#">Video Archive</a></p>
Wednesday, October 23 (Special Meeting)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommendations to Revise Commission Statute</li> <li>Intent to Reinstate Positions that Represent K – 12 Educators</li> </ul>	
<p> <a href="#">Meeting Minutes</a></p>	
Monday, December 2	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State OER Survey and Opportunities</li> <li>Advocacy and Impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statement on Role of New Technologies to Support Learning</li> </ul>
<p> <a href="#">Meeting Minutes</a></p>	<p> <a href="#">Video Archive</a></p>

## Advisory Council Meetings

### Digital Learning Advisory Council

Monday, February 4

- ISTE Standards Implementation
- Social Media Monitoring
- Data Privacy
- Statewide Technology Needs

 [Meeting Minutes](#)

Tuesday, April 30

- Open Education Resources
- 5G Implications and Guidance
- Learning Competencies
- Measuring Ed Tech Efficacy

 [Meeting Minutes](#)

Wednesday, August 14

- Open Education Resources
- Impact of 5G on Teaching and Learning
- Digital Equity Initiatives
- Technology Cost Savings

 [Meeting Minutes](#)

Tuesday, November 12

- 5G to Support Learning
- Technology Purchasing Efficiencies
- OER Report and Next Steps
- Student Data Privacy

 [Meeting Minutes](#)

### Infrastructure Advisory Council

Tuesday, February 5

- Strategic Planning Resources
- Measuring Statewide Technology Needs
- E-rate Report and Recommendation
- Digital Inclusion

 [Meeting Minutes](#)

Wednesday, August 7

- Cybersecurity Issues and Resources
- CEN Member Feedback
- Closing the Homework Gap

 [Meeting Minutes](#)

Wednesday, October 30

- 5G to Support Learning
- Volunteer Cyber Corps
- Closing the Homework Gap
- Network Management re. 1:1

 [Meeting Minutes](#)

## State Educational Technology Goals and Plan

In 2017, the Commission released its five-year [State Educational Technology Goals and Plan](#), with the following Vision Statement:

**THAT EVERY LEARNER AND EDUCATOR IN CONNECTICUT BENEFITS FROM THE FULL POTENTIAL OF TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT PERSONALIZED AND IMPACTFUL TEACHING, LEARNING, RESEARCH, AND ADVANCEMENT.**

To support that vision, the following Mission Statement defines the strategies and activities of the Commission:

**DESIGN, STEWARD, AND PROMOTE POLICY, PROGRAMS, INSIGHTS, AND RESOURCES THAT SUPPORT THE EFFECTIVE USE OF TECHNOLOGY FOR ALL LEARNERS AND EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN CONNECTICUT.**

In the past year, the Commission has faithfully stewarded, promoted, and enlisted assistance to deliver upon the initiatives defined in the Goals and Plan. That blueprint for educational technology in our state addresses eight broad initiatives falling under three focus areas: Digital Learning, Infrastructure, and Data and Privacy.

### *Digital Learning*

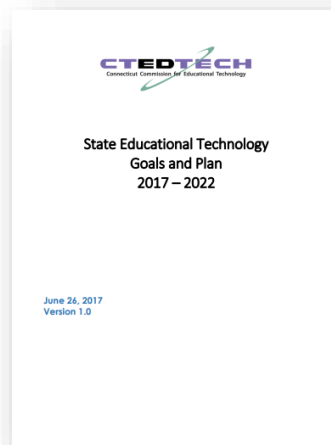
- Open Education Resources
- Student-Centered Learning
- Technology Proficiency Standards

### *Infrastructure*

- E-rate Maximization
- Digital Equity
- Educational Technology Standards and Best Practices

### *Data and Privacy*

- Privacy Compliance
- Privacy Best Practices



At all quarterly meetings, Director Casey provides members with an update on progress made against the Goals and Plan, reflecting the insights and efforts of the Commission members, Advisory Council members, and other subject-matter experts enlisted to support this work. The following page provides a high-level summary of these efforts.

## 2019 Goals and Plan Progress Updates

Objective	Status
<b>Digital Learning</b>	
Open Education Resources	
Obtain GoOpen Status	Completed (June 2017)
Promote OER Framework and Initiatives	In Progress and Ongoing
Engage in National OER Communities	In Progress and Ongoing
"Frontiers in Personalized Learning" Report	Completed (November 2017)
Student, Teacher, and Administrator Standards	
Commission Endorsement of Student Standards	Completed (September 2016)
Commission Endorsement of Teacher Standards	Completed (September 2017)
Curation of Educator and Leader PD Supports	In Progress and Ongoing
State Board Adoption of Student Standards	Completed (June 2018)
Adoption of Administrator Standards	Completed (December 2018)
<b>Infrastructure</b>	
E-rate Maximization	
Statewide Survey Design and Feedback	Completed (July 2018)
Statewide E-rate Report	Completed (April 2019)
Digital Equity	
Digital Equity Toolkit	Completed (December 2018)
Identification of "Beta" Communities to Use Toolkit	Completed (November 2018)
<b>Data and Privacy</b>	
Educational Software Hub Design and Launch	Completed (August 2017)
Promotion of Privacy and Security Best Practices	In Progress and Ongoing

The following sections provide details on each of the above initiatives, as well as other related activities of the Commission and its Advisory Councils to ensure the effective use of technology in Connecticut schools, libraries, and institutions of higher education.

## Digital Learning

### Open Education Resources

The creation, sharing, curation, and use of open education resources (OER) have delivered a wide range of benefits to educators and students alike: cost savings, flexibility, equity of access, and relevancy of materials. In 2019, the Commission made significant strides in raising awareness of OER, assessing needs around their use, and designing resources to make them available to all schools, colleges, and libraries. These efforts support the Commission's Educational Technology Goals and Plan and original charge, which includes "providing access for all public schools, public libraries, and libraries at institutions of higher education to a core set of online, full-text resources" [[CGS § 4d-80\(c\)\(2\)\(C\)](#)].

### Branding and Awareness

Following work in 2018 to identify the greatest needs around OER, Director Casey worked with a diverse team of volunteers to design and launch a statewide awareness and needs assessment campaign. During spring, he collaborated with a team of students under the leadership of Assistant Professor-in-Residence John Murphy of the University of Connecticut (UConn) [Digital Media and Design](#) program to develop a brand and video testimonials endorsing the use of OER. That work resulted in a logo for "GoOpen Connecticut" (see image inset). The UConn team also produced a series of videos by K – 12 and college students, educators, and leaders around



the

benefits of OER. In addition, OER subject-matter experts assembled a list of resources for teachers and administrators, which Director Casey posted with the launch of the [www.GoOpenCT.org](http://www.GoOpenCT.org) Web site. Through a social media campaign (@GoOpenCT), he shared highlights of the testimonials and directed followers to watch the full videos and take advantage of the curriculum, planning, and governance resources on the Web site. Since its launch in May, more than 2,000 people have visited the site to access its resources and video content.



### OER Use and Needs

In addition to raising awareness of OER's benefits, the Commission assessed educators' use and perceptions of open resources. The OER advisory group provided direction in the design of an online survey that served as the "call to action" for the awareness campaign. More than 300 teachers, professors, librarians, and district administrators completed the survey, helping to define opportunities, needs, and next steps for expanding the use of OER in Connecticut.

The report "[Open Education Resources: Survey Results and Opportunities for Connecticut Schools and Libraries](#)" includes quantitative and qualitative feedback from the educational community around OER. A total of 72 percent of respondents already create digital learning materials, of which 86 percent share that content with others. They



see cost savings (for schools at the K – 12 level, students in higher education) and relevancy as the two greatest benefits of OER. Respondents express a need for professional development, especially in copyright and publishing best practices. Addressing those demands while helping to expand the creation and sharing of open materials remains a focus of the Commission's work in 2020.

## Technology Proficiency Standards

Perhaps more than any other year, 2019 saw a need for digital literacy among all learners and the general citizenry. The Commission's efforts have positioned Connecticut as a leader in this area, last year making our state the first to adopt the benchmark digital learning standards for students, educators, and education leaders of the [International Society for Technology in Education \(ISTE\)](#). To provide guidance and resources on how to develop these competencies, the Commission continued its series of online presentations, highlighting the exemplary work of Connecticut's teachers and education leaders.

The January Webinar on the ISTE Educator standards featured members of the Digital Learning Advisory Council — Josh Elliott of Fairfield University and Laura McCaffrey of the Hartford Archdiocese (Hartford Catholic Schools) — as well as leaders of the 4,000+ member ISTE Teacher Education Network. In February, the Commission hosted a session on the ISTE Education Leader standards, those that guide the competencies that principals, superintendents, board members, and other school leaders should possess. Commission members Nick Caruso and Chip Dumais, as well as former Commission member and current Region 15 Superintendent Josh Smith, walked attendees through the standards and shared insights on how to build these leadership competencies. More than 150 people attended the Webinars, now available for streaming through the Commission's Digital Learning Competency Standards page ([www.CT.gov/ISTE](http://www.CT.gov/ISTE)).

The Commission's growing collection of resources to support best practices in digital learning continue to serve the state's educational community. In 2019, downloads surpassed 400 of the "ISTE Guide to Implementing Standards," which normally costs \$15 but that the Commission makes available at no charge through an agreement with ISTE. Teachers, library media specialists, administrators, and technology directors from nearly 250 schools have taken advantage of this one resource alone.

Recognizing that teachers play a critical role in building student learning competencies, the Commission and Digital Learning Advisory Council members have endorsed the ISTE Educator Certification program. Efforts this year helped launch certification programs through the Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs) and Fairfield University. The Commission will continue to support teacher competencies and certification, which in turn deepen their ability to model and foster digital learning skills in students.

The Commission's work continues to garner national recognition. In June, Director Casey accepted the ISTE "Making IT Happen" award, presented to just three recipients a year for innovation in educational technology. He also continues to serve on the ISTE Advocacy Advisory, which develops policy guidelines and best practices for schools, state education agencies, the U.S. Department of Education, Congress, and other education leaders.

## Infrastructure

### Digital Equity

Many gaps exist in equipping Connecticut learners of all ages with the devices, Internet access, skills, and support to make full use of digital learning and citizenry opportunities. While CEN connects all districts and public universities as well as most towns and libraries to virtually unlimited broadband circuits, learning takes place increasingly outside the four walls of these institutions. Districts have invested heavily in 1:1 laptop programs, with more than half of middle school and nearly three-quarters of high school students equipped with a personal computer. However, when they leave school, approximately 8 percent (about 40,000) of public school students do not have access to the Internet at home. In such cases, technology becomes a force that further divides the haves and have-nots. The Commission's Goals and Plan provide multiple avenues to address these disparities, many of which appear in last year's [Digital Equity Toolkit](#).

### Eduroam

Efforts over the past year have greatly expanded the prospect of community-based, wireless educational networks using Eduroam ([www.eduroam.org](http://www.eduroam.org)). This authentication framework allows students to log into wireless hotspots across the globe using the credentials (i.e., user name and password) issued by their local school or university. Eduroam has proven highly successful among institutions of higher education, allowing faculty and students to get online at any participating college or university worldwide. In 2019, the Commission supported the adoption of Eduroam in multiple Connecticut cities and towns as an effective platform through which anchor institutions can grant Internet access to students.

Under the unflagging leadership and enthusiasm of Infrastructure Advisory Council chair Tom Dillon, pilots are underway or in discussion in five Connecticut communities: Bridgeport, Hartford, Middletown, New Haven, and Stratford. This work represents strong collaboration among Advisory Council members including Colleen Bailie (Bridgeport), Fred Kass (Hartford), Ryan Kocsondy (all locations), and Sabina Sitaru (Hartford and New Haven), among others. The next year should see a continued expansion of Eduroam pilots and students served.

### E-Rate Maximization

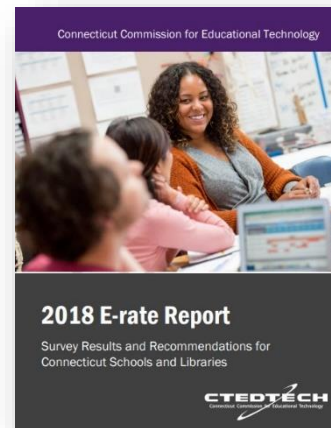
As defined in its statute ([CGS Sec. 4d-82](#)), the Commission continues to take steps that "maximize participation and grant attainment rates, and reduce overly burdensome administrative requirements which discourage local involvement" in the federal Universal Service Schools and Libraries Program. Known as "E-rate," the fund provides financial offsets to connect schools and libraries to the Internet and fund their internal wired and wireless networks. Based on usage data, Connecticut schools and libraries have not taken advantage of available funding. Our state's schools (not even counting libraries) were eligible for a total of \$49M over the previous four years to pay for internal network connections and hardware, and yet our districts have only filed for \$27M in funding.



In 2018, members of the Infrastructure Advisory Council designed a statewide survey of schools and libraries to identify barriers to using the E-rate program. Leaders from 130 districts and libraries submitted responses, which captured quantifiable and open-ended feedback on topics ranging from historical participation in E-rate, perceived benefits and challenges of the program, and use of external consultants.

In April 2019, the Commission formalized and published the report, "[E-rate in Connecticut: Survey Results and Opportunities for Schools and Libraries](#)." The report highlights a number of common themes:

- **Barriers:** Predominant challenges to leveraging E-rate include a lack of matching funds (schools) and reluctance to filter content (libraries)
- **Common Support Providers:** Nearly all schools use the same third-party E-rate consulting firm; most libraries leverage one State of Connecticut employee as their consultant
- **Value:** Both schools and libraries find strong value in the assistance provided by consultants who possess deep knowledge of the program
- **Return on Investment:** Schools using consultants find a high (2X) return on investment, even when accounting for consulting fees
- **Complexity and Inefficiency:** The technical and administrative complexities of fully leveraging E-rate drive dependence on external support, leading to inefficiencies in the form of direct and indirect costs for each participating district or library



Members of the Commission and its Infrastructure Advisory Council — as well as expert reviewers outside of Connecticut — identified several opportunities brought to light through the survey for schools and libraries to appreciate greater benefits from the E-rate program:

- **Request for Proposal (RFP) for Consulting Services:** Given that four out of five schools use the same E-rate consultant, exploring efficiencies in procuring these services affords opportunities for cost savings and transparency. Director Casey has enlisted the input of Connecticut schools and libraries as well as E-rate specialists in other states to gather requirements for such an RFP. Responses to these requests have taken longer than expected, but Director Casey expects to develop an RFP in 2020.
- **Hardware and Circuit Bid List:** Similar to the approach taken for E-rate consulting services, a common bid list of frequently purchased hardware and data circuits might prove helpful to districts and libraries. Input gathered from CEN members through an online survey currently collecting responses will help define common areas of need and specific product preferences, enabling targeted cooperative purchasing.



- **Consortium Pricing:** Libraries already benefit from the Connecticut Libraries Fiber Consortium by collectively bidding on data circuits and other E-rate services. Doing so for schools might also provide cost savings and transparency in pricing.
- **State-Level Matching Funds:** Other states such as California, Rhode Island, and Texas have a universal fee assessed through telecommunications providers to help offset school and library matching costs. Connecticut legislators could consider the same approach to provide an efficient means of covering the full cost of E-rate services, increasing program participation, and maximizing the allocation of available federal funds for schools and libraries.
- **Training and Information Resources:** Given the highly complex nature of the E-rate program, schools and libraries would benefit from the availability of training sessions and educational materials. These supports already exist through CEN's annual conference and events organized through its Engagement & Development Advisory Council.
- **Outreach and Awareness:** State and local leaders would appreciate the insights shared in this report. Since its publication, Director Casey has presented its findings and recommendations with the state's superintendents, members of boards of education, and town leaders. These talks have prompted subsequent discussions among school leaders as to why they may not fully leverage E-rate funds, whether simply from a lack of filing or unwillingness to commit matching funds, for example.

## Data and Privacy

### Privacy Compliance

The Commission expanded efforts to support schools, technology companies, and the Connecticut General Assembly (CGA) in helping to ensure access to educational software while protecting student data privacy. This work comes in the form of direct support to the CGA Education Committee, the expansion of free tools for districts and private companies, and assistance to providers to ensure their compliance.

### Data Privacy Task Force

The original student privacy law, [Public Act 16-189](#), called for the creation of a Task Force to study and make recommendations regarding the statute to the CGA. In 2018, Director Casey was appointed co-chair of the Task Force. In the absence of a second co-chair appointment, he convened the other appointees with the objective of drafting a report for the consideration of the General Law and Education Committees for the 2019 legislative session. [The Task Force](#) included Commission member Ajit Gopalakrishnan as well as state and national student privacy experts. The group convened several times to draft and deliver the [Report of the Student Data Privacy Task Force](#) on March 25. That document includes the following recommendations:

- **Reduce Inefficiencies While Ensuring Privacy:** Throughout the report, the Task Force acknowledges the importance of protecting student privacy in ways that also minimize impact on the limited resources of districts, especially small ones.
- **Strengthen Penalties:** Define and reference measures that compel vendors to comply with the law, pointing to existing state statute, when possible.
- **Leverage and Ensure Coherence Across Statutes:** Connecticut's data privacy law does not require additional definitions regarding requests for data deletion or public hearings, which federal statute, Connecticut law, and local board of education policies already address. Furthermore, new state education and general privacy statutes should align with the current and future versions of the Connecticut student data privacy law.
- **Training and Professional Development:** Developing high-quality training materials by the State would minimize the need for districts to do so individually. Such coordination would also likely strengthen the digital literacy competencies of all members of the educational community without placing additional resource burdens on districts.
- **Further Study:** A formal review of the qualitative and quantitative impacts of the law would help identify the collective direct and indirect costs on Connecticut's schools.

The report reflects a substantial investment of time and effort by members who possess deep subject matter expertise and oversee significant responsibilities outside of their role on the Task Force. Despite the insights shared in direct alignment with the mandates of the original statute and quick turnaround of the document, no revisions to the law took place during the 2019 Legislative Session.

## Exemption Reporting

The 2018 session brought changes to Connecticut's statute governing student data privacy ([CGS §§10-234aa-dd](#)). These updates, instituted in [Public Act 18-125](#), include an exemption to the law that schools may claim in support of individualized education plans (IEPs) and accommodations provided through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The revised statute requires that all districts report to the Commission on whether they used the exemption. Those who did must provide details including the software title, its provider, and assurances that the district made reasonable efforts to comply with all other aspects of state and federal privacy statute.

Early in 2019, Director Casey developed a set of secure data-capture tools for registering district exemption reporters and for collecting their annual reports. He then created and shared [detailed instructions](#) targeted at K – 12 student services directors, who manage IEP and 504 data. Outreach took place in partnership with Bryan Klimkiewicz, SDE Bureau Chief for Special Education; CONNCASE; CAPSS; CABE; and other educational groups. Director Casey provided significant assistance to dozens of school districts throughout the year to clarify questions on exemption reporting.

Results from the first year of reporting reflect a lack of response from districts and a low incidence of exemption use among reporting districts. On September 17, Director Casey shared the reporting data, available through the Connecticut Open Data portal (<https://data.ct.gov>), with the CGA Education Committee. In that communication, he included the following conclusions:

- Partial Response to Mandate: Only [57 percent](#) (104 local education agencies) submitted reports for the 2018 – 19 school year.
- Limited Use of the Exemption: Of [those districts that did report](#), only about 12 percent used the exemption one or more times. Of the 26 districts that did use the exemption, about half (14) used the exemption for just one software title. Only three districts used the exemption for more than 10 titles.
- Broad Distribution of Exempted Software: As a chart of [exemptions by title](#) illustrates, there were just a few software titles that multiple districts reported using through the exemption. In aggregate, the reports do not indicate that large numbers of districts are using the same software products under the exemption.
- Confusion Over Reporting Requirements: Many district reporters did not understand the requirements of the law, despite the outreach mentioned above.

By the fall of 2019, Director Casey had re-opened the district reporting forms and distributed instructions to the individuals responsible for submitting exemption data by the end of the 2019 – 2020 school year.

## Educational Software Hub

The Commission's innovative work in supporting student data privacy continues to garner national attention as reflected in [media coverage](#) and [speaking requests](#) (see

[Communications and Outreach](#)), especially regarding the efficiencies delivered through the Commission's [Educational Software Hub](#). Use of the Hub has significantly reduced the burden of compliance on districts and educational companies. The platform provides a single point of reference for software developers to learn about and pledge compliance to the State's data privacy law. In turn, educators can search the site for software developed by companies that have pledged to comply with Connecticut's statute.

Since its launch more than two years ago, the Hub has brought about significant direct and indirect cost reductions to the 1,800 registered users statewide who use the site to conduct compliance research. On the basis of survey results, the Hub saves staff across all districts approximately 10,000 hours annually from researching and negotiating privacy agreements with vendors. This translates into a conservative estimate of indirect cost avoidance in staff time of \$700,000 annually across all districts.



In the spring of 2019, the addition of new data-tracking features to the Hub provided deeper insights for educational leaders, at no additional cost. Through an extension that schools install on Chromebooks — by far the most widely used type of student computer in Connecticut — administrators have access to a dashboard and detailed reports on which software students and teachers are using. These tools provide greater insights for district administrators into how students are leveraging investments in educational software. School leaders can also identify the use of unauthorized, non-compliant software. State-level reporting across the 50 districts using the Chrome extension shows 3,361 products in use; however, only 275 products have pledged compliance with Connecticut's privacy law.

### **Vendor Relations**

The Commission continues to engage directly with educational software providers to help ensure their compliance with Connecticut statute. Coming from the State's educational technology leader, this guidance greatly assists companies and districts alike, providing a unified voice to clarify misunderstandings around the law.

In 2019, the Commission continued efforts to facilitate the compliance of educational technology products — including those by Apple, Google, Microsoft, and other major providers. This work comes through active collaboration with developers as well as education leaders representing a diverse set of constituents. In the spring and summer, Director Casey partnered with Department of Administrative Services counsel Michael Barrera to work with the Adobe education team to ensure compliance of its products with Connecticut statute. Nearly every district uses the company's design and coding apps to prepare students for college and careers.

Similar efforts helped schools continue their "eSports" programs, which allow students to compete in online gaming leagues. The Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) uses the Play VS product to organize district teams and track competitions. Director

Casey worked with senior leaders in CIAC and Play VS — including Digital Learning Advisory Council member Clint Kennedy — to review the company's data privacy agreement and provide direction to schools on how to use the platform. These efforts made it possible for the statewide eSports program to continue.

### Privacy and Security Best Practices

As the incidence and type of cyber-attacks and data breaches increase, the Commission continues to promote security and privacy best practices. These efforts take the form of presentations to educational groups, social media and electronic outreach, and influencing the work of state and national legislators and professional organizations.

Throughout the year, Director Casey has shared with leadership groups several frameworks that they should consider leveraging in order to establish a comprehensive privacy and security program for their institutions. These resources include the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) [Cybersecurity Framework](#), the [Center for Internet Security \(CIS\) Controls](#), the [Consortium for School Networking \(CoSN\) Trusted Learning Environment \(TLE\)](#) framework, and the Connecticut Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security [Counter Terrorism and Intelligence Center \(CTIC\)](#), among others. In March at the CoSN annual conference, CoSN Executive Director Keith Kruger presented Director Casey with a commendation for the Commission's work around privacy and security.



On a national level, the Commission continues to advocate for resources that help educational institutions establish and maintain effective privacy and cyber-security programs (see [Advocacy](#), next page). Public comments submitted on behalf of the Commission have argued for continued E-rate funding and for the program's expansion to include cyber-security hardware and services. Director Casey works to coordinate these efforts and heighten their impact through involvement in several organizations in which he serves as a member or on the board of directors (see [Professional and Advocacy Groups](#)).

## Related Activities

In addition to the above accomplishments aligned with the State Educational Technology Goals and Plan, the Commission has engaged in other activities that support its mission of promoting the effective use of technology for teaching and learning.

### *Advocacy*

The Commission continues to follow and respond to issues on a state and national level that impact digital learning. On July 29, the Commission filed [comments opposing](#) the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) [proposed rulemaking](#) to combine the E-rate and Rural Healthcare programs. Such a move would not have streamlined either program and would likely have pitted school and healthcare technology needs against each other. At the time of this writing, the FCC will not likely move forward with this change in rulemaking, which would have negatively impacted Connecticut's schools and libraries.

In August, the Commission submitted [comments](#) to the Public Utilities Regulatory Agency (PURA) opposing the eligibility of individuals to receive funds through the [Public, Educational and Governmental Programming and Educational Technology Investment Account \(PEGPETIA\) program](#). The [Authority's decision](#) posted on October 23 supports the views of the Commission and others that limiting PEGPETIA awards to educational entities would most efficiently fulfill the program's design of serving the educational needs of Connecticut's students and residents.

### *Framing the Evidence (State Educational Technology Directors Association)*

Best practices in digital learning call for well-designed pilots to determine the efficacy of products and solutions. However, most schools do not have access to or cannot afford such efficacy studies. In addition, many districts deploy and pay for dozens — if not hundreds — of unused educational software titles, resulting in wasted classroom time and inflated curriculum budgets. For example, the [2019 LearnPlatform EdTech Usage Report](#) presents school data showing that a mere 16 percent of all paid educational software meets instructional goals.

To make effective educational technology pilots available to districts across the country, regardless of their geographic location, Director Casey joined four other state leaders from the State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA) in designing the [Framing the Evidence](#) program. Over the past nine months, he and colleagues have designed different tiers of efficacy pilots, which SETDA staff will design and manage, to partner interested schools with SETDA's private sector partners. Each engagement would address a specific instructional need unique to the participating district and deliver free or low-cost software and professional development to that district. Private sector partners benefit from having access to deidentified student data to improve their products.

Director Casey has promoted the program to Connecticut schools, which can participate free of charge and with obligation to explore potential matches. More advanced efficacy pilots could also benefit researchers at Connecticut institutions of higher education, who might have interest in co-designing the studies and publishing the results in scholarly journals. For additional details, visit [www.setda.org/priorities/professional-learning](http://www.setda.org/priorities/professional-learning).

### *Libraries and the Digital Divide*

Connecticut libraries play a pivotal role in providing the connections, devices, digital literacy, and support services that citizens across the state need to participate fully in society. Over the past year, Vice-Chair Michael Mundrane and members Colleen Bailie and Ken Wiggin have refined a [Resolution on the Role of Libraries to Support Digital Equity](#). Adopted unanimously at the September 9 meeting, the statement proposes the development of a plan to bolster library resources to combat the digital divide. The Resolution calls for the Commission to work with the Connecticut State Library and the Connecticut Library Association to develop a comprehensive, statewide initiative to provide public libraries with equipment, software, and infrastructure to advance digital citizenship in communities throughout Connecticut.



## Communications and Outreach

To raise awareness of its work and gather feedback from its diverse constituents, the Commission leverages several online media channels, including the CET Web site, Twitter account, and e-mail listserv. Director Casey continues to present at state and national events, produce research and publications, submit news to educational media outlets, and participate actively in several [professional and advocacy groups](#). The following sections provide highlights of these communication and outreach efforts.

### Online Media

- Web:** In the spring of 2019, Director Casey migrated and expanded the Commission's Web site, [www.CT.gov/CTEdTech](http://www.CT.gov/CTEdTech), to the State's new content-management system. In the past year, the site provided 17,000 visitors with a wide array of research, resources, meeting minutes, and publications.
- Twitter:** The Commission's Twitter account, @CTEdTech, serves as a means of communicating important research and policy updates to 500 followers, up from 400 over the last year.
- Statewide Listserv:** In early 2016, the Commission launched a statewide e-mail listserv to share research, best practices, and announcements with the K – 12 educational technology community. Since that time, the list has grown to include approximately 350 members, including school technology leaders from nearly every Connecticut public school district. In the past year, contributors have submitted more than 2,300 posts that include event announcements, requests for recommendations on software and hardware solutions, and time-sensitive security alerts. Comments from district technology leaders indicate that the service provides an easy and powerful means of quickly communicating with and sharing best practices among members of the Connecticut educational technology community.





## Presentations

Director Casey and other Commission members shared the CET's work statewide and nationally in 2019. The following list summarizes these presentations.

Organizer – Audience	Topic(s)	Date
Commission	ISTE Standards for Educators <sup>1</sup>	Jan 15
Florida Educational Technology Conference	Building a Technology Ecosystem to Meet District Needs	Jan 30
Florida Educational Technology Conference	Ensuring Student Data Privacy and Security as EdTech Expands	Jan 30
Stamford Public Schools	Student Data Privacy Best Practices	Feb 4
Commission	ISTE Standards for Education Leaders <sup>2</sup>	Feb 13
Software and Information Industry Association	Doing Business in Connecticut: Privacy, District Needs, and State Expectations	Mar 6
Fairfield University	Educational Technology Collaboration Day	Mar 21
EdAdvance	Technology Council	Mar 22
Commission	LearnPlatform: Free Tools to Measure EdTech Usage and Compliance	Apr 24
C.E.S.	Technology and Library Councils	May 3
NYSCATE (New York)	Chief Technology Officer Clinic: Data Privacy	May 9
CEN	Annual Conference: OER and Data Privacy	May 10
Connecticut Town and City Management Association	CTCMA Annual Conference: Commission and CEN Resources	Jun 7
ISTE	School Transformation with the ISTE Standards	Jun 23
SETDA	K – 12 Cybersecurity	Jun 23
ISTE	Leadership Forum	Jun 25
Future of Privacy Forum	Connecticut Data Privacy Best Practices	Jul 27
ACES	State Technology Plan Updates	Sep 20
DAS – BEST	State IT Summit: Design Thinking	Sep 23
C.E.S.	State Technology Plan Updates	Sep 26
CT Department of Education	Performance Matters: Commission and CEN Overview <sup>3</sup>	Oct 17
SETDA	School Privacy and Ed Tech Efficacy	Nov 5
U.S. Senate	Senate Briefing on Broadband	Nov 6
CABE-CAPSS	Annual Conference: College and Career Readiness <sup>4</sup>	Nov 15
SETDA	Framing the Evidence: Member Overview	Nov 18
SETDA	Framing the Evidence: Partner Overview	Dec 3
CAPSS Board	Open Education Resources	Dec 6
SETDA	Framing the Evidence: District Overview	Dec 9

1. With Digital Learning Advisory Council members Josh Elliott and Laura McCaffrey.








2. With Commission members Nick Caruso and Chip Dumais and Digital Learning Advisory Council member Josh Smith.

3. With CEN Director Ryan Kocsondy.

4. With Digital Learning Advisory Council member Jonathan Costa.

## Media Coverage

Outreach campaigns and publishing opportunities promoted the work of the Commission and resulted in coverage across a number of media channels this year. The following table lists stories, interviews, and publications that highlight the Commission's efforts and impact.

Publisher	Title	Date
	<a href="#">Are State Student-Data-Privacy Laws Changing Companies' Behavior?</a>	Jan 2
	<a href="#">Using EdTech to Achieve Equity</a>	Jan 3
	<a href="#">Podcast Interview at Future of Educational Technology Conference (FETC)</a>	Jan 29
	<a href="#">How EdTech Can Promote SEL, Equity, and Engagement (FETC Insights Series)</a>	Jan 25
	<a href="#">Creating an Effective Edtech Ecosystem &amp; Making the Best Use of Tech Tools</a>	Jan 25
	<a href="#">E-rate: Is Your District Leaving Money at the Table?</a>	May 31
	<a href="#">Teachers, Schools Embrace Today's Technology</a>	Aug 17
	<a href="#">Commission Back-to-School Resources</a>	Aug 21
	<a href="#">Commission Back-to-School Resources</a>	Aug 21
	<a href="#">Cybersecurity Updates and Recommendations</a>	Aug 29
	<a href="#">Connecticut One of 20 States Leading the Charge on Creating Open Education Resources That Stretch From K-12 to College</a>	Sep 3
	<a href="#">CAS Conversations Podcast: Cybersecurity</a>	Oct 28
	<a href="#">Ed Tech Innovation: Norwalk Public Schools</a>	Nov 4
	<a href="#">Regulators, Schools Must Expand Connectivity Vision</a>	Nov 6
	<a href="#">State Officials Say Better Broadband Necessary for Pedagogy and Equity</a>	Nov 6
	<a href="#">Rethinking Pedagogy: Exploring the Potential of Technology in Achieving Quality Education</a>	Jan 11
	<a href="#">How K – 12 Vendors Are Adjusting to a Tough State Data-Privacy Law</a>	Dec 13

## Professional and Advocacy Groups

To garner support for Commission initiatives, deepen understanding of constituent needs, and identify funding opportunities, Director Casey actively participates in the following groups:

- Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) Technology Committee: Monthly Commission updates to state superintendents
- Connecticut Educational Technology Leaders (CTETL) Board: Partnership efforts to build awareness of best practices and assess district needs
- Connecticut State Department of Education (SDE) Computer Science Advisory Committee: Assistance in establishing curriculum frameworks, teacher certification standards, and talent pipeline initiatives
- Office of the Governor Computer Science Advisory: Direction on current educational and workforce needs as well as state legislation
- International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Policy Advisory: Input on digital learning policy at the national, state, and local levels, including the recently published [Guide to Implementing the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant](#), shared with Connecticut districts to support the effective use of federal technology funds (ESSA Title IV-A)
- National Advisory Council for K – 12 Cybersecurity (NACC) Board of Directors: Definition and promotion of best practices in K – 12 cybersecurity and privacy through presentations and publications
- **(NEW)** Schools, Health, and Libraries Broadband Coalition (SHLB) Board of Directors: Advocates for national policy and funding to connect community anchor institutions
- Skills21 Board: Support to Regional Education Service Center that provides technology-based curriculum and programming in STEM subjects
- **(NEW)** State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA) Board of Directors: Service through national affinity group, access to federal agencies and lawmakers, and platform to promote Connecticut's exemplary programs
- U.S. Department of Education and Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) State GoOpen Leaders: Monthly discussions sharing best practices on the design and governance of state-level OER programs

## Connecticut State Library

### researchIT CT

As part of the Connecticut Education Network and administered by the Connecticut State Library, researchIT CT (<https://researchitct.org/>) provides all Connecticut students, faculty, and residents with online access to essential



library and information resources, including secured access to licensed databases, and is available to every resident in Connecticut. These resources support the Division of Library Development's effort around the seven literacies: Digital Literacy, Health Literacy, Financial Literacy, Legal Literacy, Civic/Social Literacy, Basic Literacy, and Early Literacy. In addition, college students and faculty have access to specialized research information. The researchIT CT service also includes a collection of downloadable eAudios and eBooks for mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets.

Goals of researchIT CT are as follows:

- Ensure universal access to a core set of library and information resources for every Connecticut resident from home and through their public library, school, and college
- Provide necessary information resources to every school in Connecticut so that all students are prepared to function in an information society
- Provide information resources to the increasing number of students taking advantage of online courses at Connecticut's colleges and universities
- Support the information needs of all Connecticut residents

### Budget

In the spring of 2019, the Division of Library Development coordinated a Request for Proposal (RFP) process for the databases that comprise researchIT CT. After three years of stable pricing, the resulting proposals included some increases that extended maintenance costs beyond the existing budget. After carefully evaluating usage and costs, researchIT subscriptions to *HeritageQuest* and the *Business Market Research Collection* from ProQuest were canceled. Other ProQuest offerings remain the same. Access to EBSCO eBook collections (Public Library, High School, K – 8, and Cricket collections) were ended. The Connecticut State Library (CSL) negotiated access to the following three additional EBSCO resources: *Health Source: Consumer Edition*, *Magil IOn Literature Plus*, and the *Small Business Reference Center*. Other EBSCO offerings in researchIT remain the same.

## Annual Savings / Cost Avoidance (FY 2019)

The value of all subscriptions included in the researchIT CT databases this past year to local communities exceeds \$41 million, while the cost to provide those databases was just in excess of \$1.5 million. This represents a cost avoidance of more than \$39 million. For more details, see the following publication:

[Cost Benefit: What researchIT CT Saves the State's Libraries and Municipalities](#)

## Usage (FY 2019)

For researchIT CT's licensed, full-text databases, there were a total of 5,337,907 page views (a measure of when search results are actually viewed), with 445,795 or 8.4% from public library patrons; 951,814 or 17.8% from school library patrons; and 3,940,298 or 73.8% from academic library patrons. The total number of page views represents a 16.9% decrease compared to the previous fiscal year. In addition, public libraries viewed CSL Collections in Ancestry.com 15,265,904 times in FY 2019.

## findIT CT

findIT CT, Connecticut's statewide library catalog, went live in May 2016 and now contains the holdings of more than 314 libraries in Connecticut, with more libraries being added on an ongoing basis. As of July 2019, findIT contained 12 million records and 20 million items.



## requestIT CT

requestIT CT, the statewide interlibrary loan service in findIT CT, began in September 2017. As of July 2019, 131 libraries in Connecticut participated in the service. Librarians can easily place requests on behalf of patrons, update requests, and track the status of requests as they make their way through the interlibrary loan process. Participating libraries filled 14,236 interlibrary loan requests during FY 2019 using the system.



## Digital Collections

The Treasures of Connecticut Libraries digital collection remains available and had 7,186 item views in 2019. It contains 1,869 objects from 51 libraries and their partnering institutions. Readers can find more information about the Treasures project at:

<http://cslib.cdmhost.com/cdm/landingpage/collection/p128501coll0>

The State Library added the first issues of the Newspapers of Connecticut digital collection in 2011. This collection on Content DM includes 7,359 newspaper issues from more than 95 newspaper titles. The collection had 12,694 item views in FY 2019 and has been moved to the Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA, <https://ctdigitalarchive.org>) for preservation. During FY 2019, the State Library added four more newspapers to the CTDA, bringing the new total to 99 newspapers. In September 2018, the CTDA became a service hub for the Digital Public Library of America (<https://dp.la>), so the newspapers are now discoverable there as well. Readers can find more information about the project at:

<http://cslib.cdmhost.com/cdm/landingpage/collection/p15019coll9> and  
<https://collections.ctdigitalarchive.org/islandora/object/30002:newspapers>

## eGO

### SimplyE app

The eGO CT initiative acquires digital content such as eBooks and eAudios, making them available to users statewide primarily through the SimplyE app. This open source app is currently available for Android and iOS devices. Library users can download the app and use it to easily discover, check out, and read or listen to digital books and recordings. The app includes content that is available in the statewide collection from the Connecticut State Library and from users' local library collections.

The Division of Library Development began offering eGO information sessions at locations around the state starting in November 2019. Public library staff members can attend a session to become familiar with SimplyE as well as Library Simplified, the platform that allows staff members to customize how information appears to patrons in the SimplyE app. Public libraries should begin rolling out SimplyE to their users starting in January 2020.

When launched to the public starting in FY 2020, SimplyE will make it possible for Connecticut public library users to access eBook titles from their individual public library; a parent regional library system; the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) Open Bookshelf; the New York Public Library SimplyE Collection; and the CSL RBDigital collection, DPLA Content Exchange collection, and Axis 360 collection, all in one intuitive, easy-to-use mobile app for iOS or Android. The service will include downloadable eAudios as well as eBooks.

## Content

As of November 2019 and accessible to library users when SimplyE becomes available to the public in spring 2020, the statewide eAudio and eBook collection includes the following:

- Baker & Taylor Axis 360: 242 eAudios, 230 eBooks
- DPLA Exchange: 1,225 eBooks
- DPLA Open Bookshelf: 6,032 eBooks
- NYPL Instant Classics: 5,648 eBooks
- RBdigital: 2,496 eAudios, 265 eBooks (available now through RBdigital Web site and app)

## Usage (FY 2019)

Because the digital collections are available through a self-service model, State Library staff have no role in the circulation process and are responsible only for collection development and licensing. Usage statistics show that the statewide collection of downloadable books and audiobooks includes 4,110 titles that were checked out 37,863 times, a 249.2% increase over last fiscal year.



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## Connecticut Education Network