

SERC Program Report

Board of Directors Meeting

October 27, 2026

In collaboration with the CSDE Bureau of Special Education, SERC continues to design, coordinate, and implement all special education programming to support educators, leaders, youth, and families in the 2026-2027 year

- The partnership between SERC and the Bureau of Special Education (BSE) is grounded in a shared commitment to strengthening special education programming and supporting educators across the state. To further enhance the partnership, both teams collaborate closely, meeting regularly to exchange updates, review progress, and align their efforts in designing effective supports for schools. SERC and BSE are currently involved in a Process Mapping exercise where members of both teams supporting the Transition initiative work closely together to review processes, workflows, bottlenecks, to create a foundation for improvements and shared understanding.

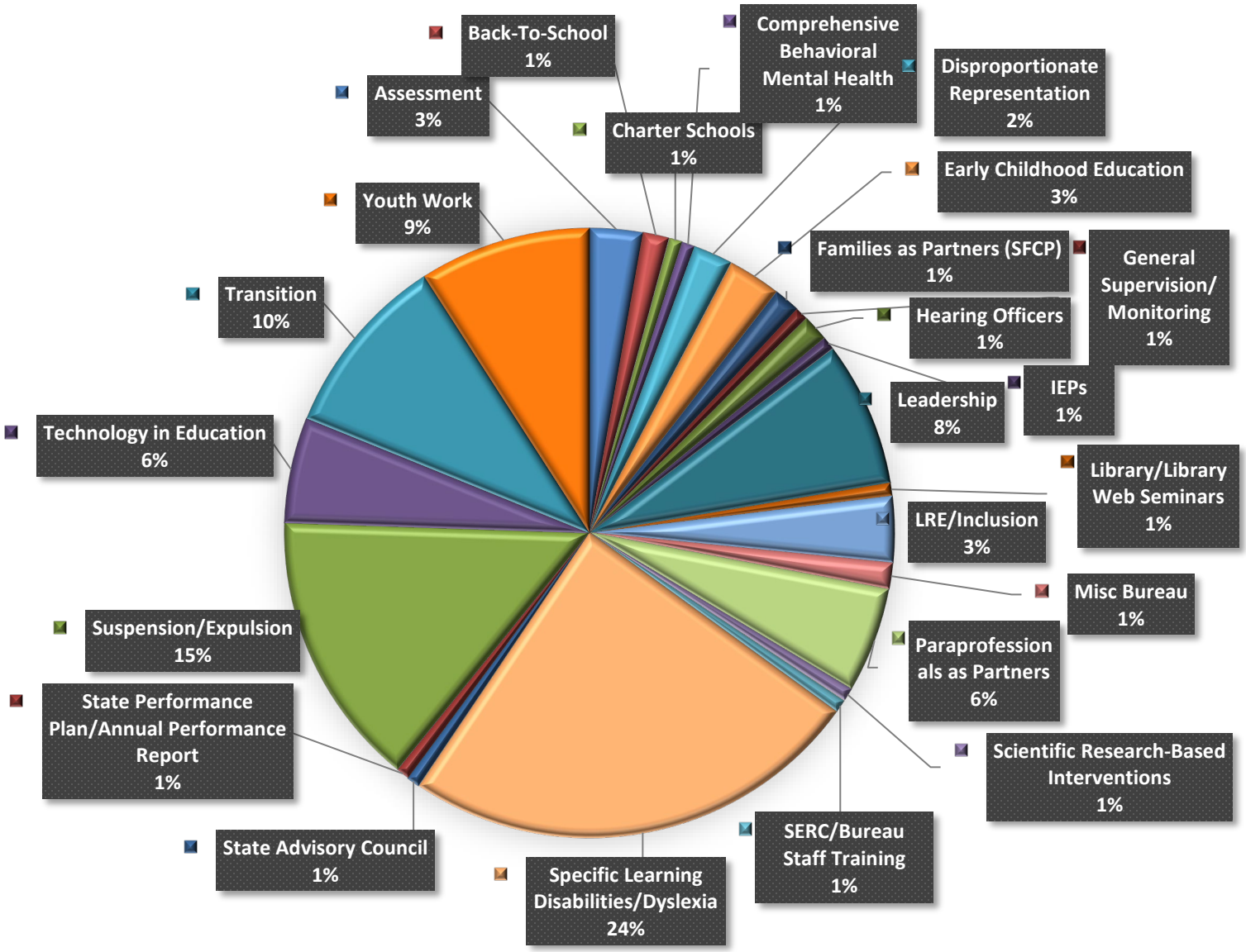
- The 2026-2027 listing of all Special Education training and technical assistance activities to support the work of the Bureau of Special Education will begin to be posted to the SERC Professional Development calendar and the CSDE Events calendar regularly for educators/families to register for: https://ctserc.org/events andhttps://nic.trumba.com/

- SERC continues to be responsive to support the CSDE with any specific requests for project coordination/facilitation/contract development or technical assistance to support their efforts on behalf of educators, students, and families.

- The special education assessments inventory in the SERC library is updated for educators to peruse and borrow, to support their work with special education students. More information can be found here https://ctserc.org/library. We continue to host sessions to display and demonstrate our Assistive Technology resources and equipment to support educators, families, and students.

SERC works collaboratively with the CSDE Bureau of Special Education (BSE) developing, coordinating, and facilitating professional learning activities for educators, students, families, leaders, and other professionals across Connecticut

Below is a snapshot of IDEA Activities by Project for 2026-2027

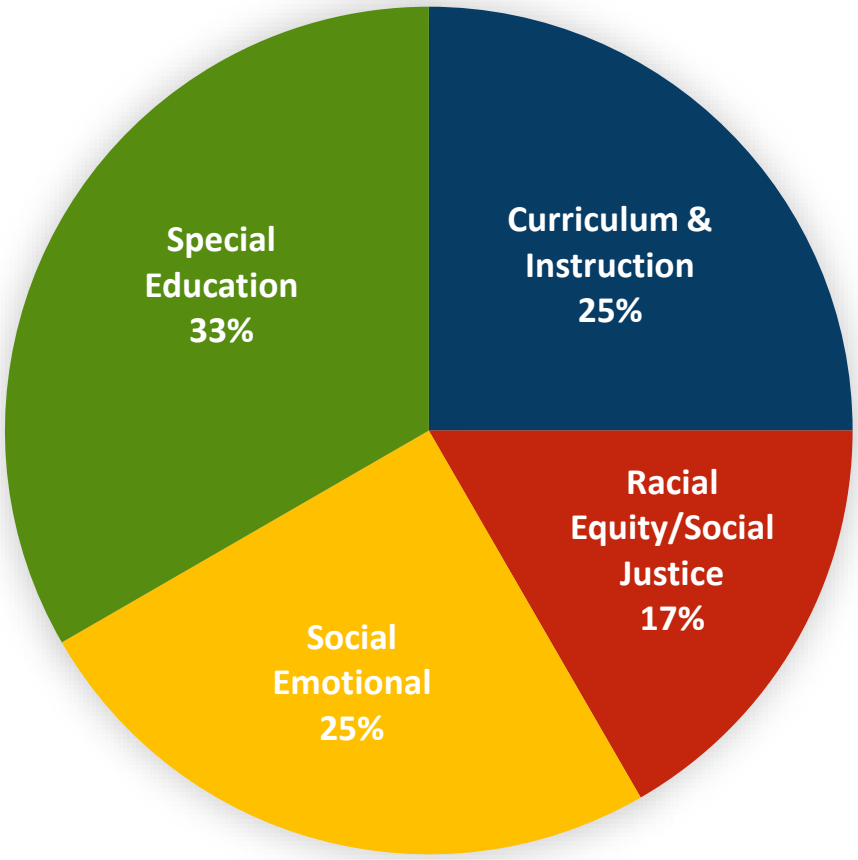


IDEA Activities by Project 2026-2027

Project Name	*Number of Activities by Project*
Assessment	4
Back-To-School	2
Charter School	1
Comprehensive Behavioral Mental Health	1
Disproportionate Representation	3
Early Childhood Education	4
Families as Partners (SFCP)	2
General Supervision/Monitoring	1
Hearing Officers	2
IEP's	1
Leadership	11
Library/Library Web Seminars	1
LRE/Inclusion	5
Misc. Bureau	2
Paraprofessionals	8
Scientific Research-Based Interventions	1
SERC/Bureau Staff Training	1
Specific Learning Disabilities/Dyslexia	35
State Advisory Council	1
State Performance Plan/ Annual Performance Report	1
Suspension/Expulsion	21
Technology in Education	8
Transition	14
Youth Work	13
Grand Total	**143**

SERC receives numerous requests from districts for customized contracts to address their specific professional learning needs related to school/district priorities, particularly in areas such as racial equity, special education, and curriculum and instruction.

Below is a snapshot of in-district contracts by topic for 2026-2027



In-District Contracts by Topics and Category July 1, 2026 to September 30, 2026	
Racial Equity/Social Justice	
Culturally Relevant Practice	1
Racial Equity	1
Racial Equity/Social Justice Total	**2**
Special Education	
Co-Teaching	1
Inclusive Service Delivery	1
Paraprofessionals	1
Parent Involvement	1
Special Education Total	**4**
Curriculum & Instruction	
SRBI Implementation	3
Curriculum & Instruction Total	**3**
Social-Emotional	
Challenging Behaviors	2
Restorative Practice	1
Social Emotional Total	**3**
Grand Total	**12**

Fully Executed LEA Contracts by District and Other Agencies/Organizations/Schools
July 1, 2026 to September 30, 2026

Districts/Agencies/Organizations/Schools

- **OPMAD (Organized Parents Make a Difference): After-School Program/Curriculum & Instruction**
- **Stratford After School Program/Curriculum and Instruction**
- **Meriden Public Schools/Special Education**
- **Newington Public Schools/Racial Equity & Social Justice**
- **Eastford Public Schools/Social Emotional**
- **Mansfield Public Schools/Social Emotional**
- **Brookfield Public Schools/Curriculum & Instruction**
- **CT Children's Alliance: Families as Partners in Equity/Special Education**
- **Coventry/Social Emotional**
- **Stamford/Special Education**
- **Bloomfield/Racial Equity & Social Justice**

Programming Updates September 2026
Family & Community Engagement through Connecticut Family School Partnerships

Led by the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC), the primary grantee, SERC is one of the partner agencies in the Connecticut Family School Partnerships (CFSP), established through a federal grant to create a Statewide Family Engagement Center for Connecticut. CFSP promotes shared leadership between schools and families, supports partnerships that ensure equal voice, and offers a comprehensive web-based hub for family engagement resources and information.

SERC's work under CFSP has focused on professional learning for schools and community agencies, along with direct services and training for families. FY27 programming includes:

- **Supporting Our Students: What Families Need to Know about Special Education**. This workshop is designed to give parents an overview of the special education process and how schools and families can collaborate to support students. Participants will learn how children are identified for services, what to expect during the IEP process, and what school-based supports may look like.
- **Supporting Learning at Home for Families:** This session is designed for families to feel confident to support their child's learning at home. By attending this session, families will increase their ability to support academic growth and establish positive learning environments at home. This will include creating productive homework and study routines, aligning home and school expectations, literacy and math strategies, technology tools to support learning and balancing screen time.
- **Raising Happy Children or Capable Adults?** This research-informed parent workshop series is designed to help families better understand screen-based parenting and rebalance screens, play, and emotional regulation at home. The sessions are grounded in developmental research and aligned with SEL, wellness, prevention, and equity priorities. The session supports parents by: Naming how childhood has shifted from play-based to screen-based; Exploring the emotional, behavioral, and developmental impact of that shift; Providing trauma-informed, practical tools for families already experiencing challenges with screens; Addressing equity considerations around access, safety, and screen saturation; and; Offering clear, compassionate strategies that protect relationships not just rules

DMHAS School-Based Center for Prevention, Education and Advocacy

School-Based Center for Prevention, Education and Advocacy

Did you know that the SERC has a centralized School-Based Center for Prevention, Education and Advocacy, developed for grades K-12, in collaboration with the CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS)?

The Center addresses gaps in community agency access to Connecticut's K-12 schools, which themselves have lacked a central access point to curricula, programs, practices, and interventions related to substance use. It is designed to help leverage resources and community supports to ensure schools can provide educators, students, families, organizations, and cities and towns with the most current substance use information and services.



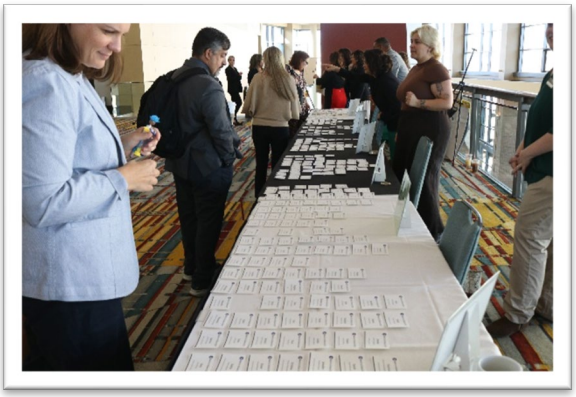
In August, SERC staff supporting the Prevention efforts partnered with the Wethersfield Early Childhood Collaborative to bring Screenwise Summer Circles, which is a free, community-based outdoor play and family engagement program, to Wethersfield families. The program is designed to promote the importance of play, reduce screen dependency, and connect families with community resources.

During the events, SERC staff provided prevention resources to participants, distributed books from the SERC Library Prevention Collection, and engaged in meaningful conversations with parents and children on substance use prevention.



Back to School News

The Bureau of Special Education's (BSE) 23rd annual "Back to School" meeting was held on September 14, 2026, welcoming over 500 educators, school staff, students and key partners from across the state.





Each year, SERC works closely with BSE in planning the Back-to-School meeting, which was held at the Connecticut Convention Center. The days agenda included welcome remarks from BSE Division Director Bryan Klimkiewicz, CSDE Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker, Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz and Governor Ned Lamont, with the keynote delivered by Dr. Brandi Simonson, who presented on a "Proactive Investment in a Framework that Improves Education". The morning also featured a student panel reflecting the power of youth voice.







Updates on New Programming

Disconnected Youth

During a prior legislative session, SERC was allocated funding under Public Act No. 25-168 to support Disconnected Youth Programming for fiscal years ending June 30, 2026, and June 30, 2027. The purpose of the program is to address the critical and often overlooked challenge of disconnected youth in Connecticut, as nearly 1 in 5 young people aged 14–26 in our state is either disconnected from or at serious risk of disconnection from school and employment.

The goals of the program include creating opportunities for students to form trustworthy adult relationships, receive mental health and trauma support, participate in real-world learning experiences, and have a chance to lead and matter in their community.

In the last fiscal year, as year 1, the focus was on research, design, and engagement, and included the youth-led listening tours, establishing the fellowship, analyzing racialized data, and building cross-sector coalitions. Now in year 2, the program will launch bold, equity-centered pilots such as organizing and hosting a Youth ReCONNection Summit, collaboration and partnership with CT mentoring organization, virtual professional development series for educators, and the continuation of the youth listening circles. This phased approach ensures that design is youth-driven and implementation is sustainable.

- **Listening Circles**

As part of this initiative, local education agencies are invited to partner in hosting student listening circles designed to elevate student voice and inform statewide and district strategies focused on engagement, persistence, and post-secondary readiness.



Listening sessions have been conducted with students from the Connecticut Technical Education And Career System (CTECS), as well as students attending the 100 Young Men of Color GEM Conference. The

purpose of these listening circles is to center student perspectives on engagement and belonging and identify system-level barriers and supports. Listening sessions are still underway and feedback received will be instrumental in supporting prevention and continuous improvement.

Professional Development

Legislation identified SERC to receive funding for professional development for certified employees and other school personnel in receiving districts under C.G.S. Section 10-266aa(k)(2), supporting the educational experiences of students enrolled in the Open Choice Program. The Connecticut Educator Professional Development Initiative provides a comprehensive framework that equips certified teachers with the knowledge, tools, and support needed to meet the evolving needs of today's learners. Centered on equity, innovation, wellness, and student-centered learning, the initiative helps educators create inclusive, responsive, and future-ready classrooms through workshops, coaching, summits, and collaborative learning communities.

Offerings are grounded in research-based practices and aligned with Connecticut's commitment to educational equity and excellence. Planning is still underway, with potential offerings to include:

- Reclaiming Justice: Confronting Disparities in School Discipline for Black Girls
- LGBTQIA+ Inclusive and Affirming Practices to Cultivate Belonging and Mattering: A Four-Part Professional Learning Series (see below for more information)
- Mental Health Support for Educators in Receiving Districts
- Understanding Latino History and Identity to Better Serve Connecticut Students

Hate Crimes/Bias Incidents Guidance Protocol

SERC has been asked by CSDE to co-develop and support implementation of Connecticut's Hate Crimes Guidance Protocol for Public Schools through a four-phase approach: stakeholder engagement and foundation building; development of school guidance; capacity building and field readiness; and implementation planning and sustainability. Through structured facilitation, training, and technical assistance, this initiative will promote statewide coherence while respecting local contexts and community needs.