

SERC

STATE EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTER

ANNUAL REPORT

2009-2010

EQUITY. EXCELLENCE. EDUCATION.



SERC, created by statute and funded in part by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), was established in 1969 as the Special Education Resource Center. In 2005, SERC became the State Education Resource Center, reflecting our belief that schools are most effective when general education and special education function as one system. To this end, SERC offers a broad array of services and programs in areas important to both general and special education.

SERC's Mission...

We provide resources, professional development, and a centralized library to educators, families, and community members in collaboration with the Connecticut State Department of Education and other public and private partners.

SERC's Vision...

EQUITY. Excellence. Education.

SERC believes that all students have the right to access opportunities and experiences that reflect and respect their differences and abilities. We are concerned that in Connecticut, educational outcomes for students of color, students who are English Language Learners, and students with disabilities continue to lag behind outcomes for other students. To help eliminate these achievement gaps, SERC addresses institutionalized racism in schools and districts and both models and facilitates equity in education.

Equity. **EXCELLENCE.** Education.

Our professional development and information dissemination are built around best practices that educators apply to their work, highlighting the 21st-century learning skills students need to achieve their life and career goals. To maintain and enhance our own knowledge base, SERC conducts ongoing staff professional development on topics at the forefront of education.

Equity. Excellence. **EDUCATION.**

We want ALL of Connecticut's children and youth to achieve positive personal and professional life outcomes through their educational experience. Since that experience extends far beyond the classroom, we help facilitate strong relationships among schools, agencies, community organizations and businesses, and families—and promote family engagement as a critical component of a child's education.

SERC

**EQUITY.
EXCELLENCE.
EDUCATION.**



SERC has long provided services on behalf of children and youth whose schools are struggling to meet their educational needs. Today, as leaders from the General Assembly to business and industry to professional and family advocacy organizations have called critical attention to Connecticut's academic achievement gaps, SERC helps link policy with application in the classroom.

We have successfully galvanized action on the individual school and district levels for reforms that improve outcomes for the student population. The Connecticut Parent Information and Resource Center (CT PIRC), which operates under SERC, is recognized as a statewide leader in leveraging efforts to foster parental involvement—universally recognized as one of the key factors for predicting a student's success in school.

Our aspiration that all Connecticut students succeed is rooted in our far-reaching technical assistance and other professional development for schools and school districts. SERC's comprehensive approach to training goes beyond the traditional professional development model of taking theory to practice; we include theory combined with demonstration, combined with practice, combined with feedback, and combined with coaching. Through this combination, educators not only gain knowledge and skills but also transfer their training to the school and classroom, thereby improving student achievement.¹

¹See:

Joyce, B. R. & Showers, B. Student achievement through staff development (3rd ed.). (2002). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
Learning Forward. Standards for professional development (draft). (2011). <http://www.learningforward.org/standards/draftstandards2011.pdf>.

Professional DEVELOPMENT

**“This is the best conference
I have been to in my
eight years of teaching.”**

- Participant in SERC literacy session

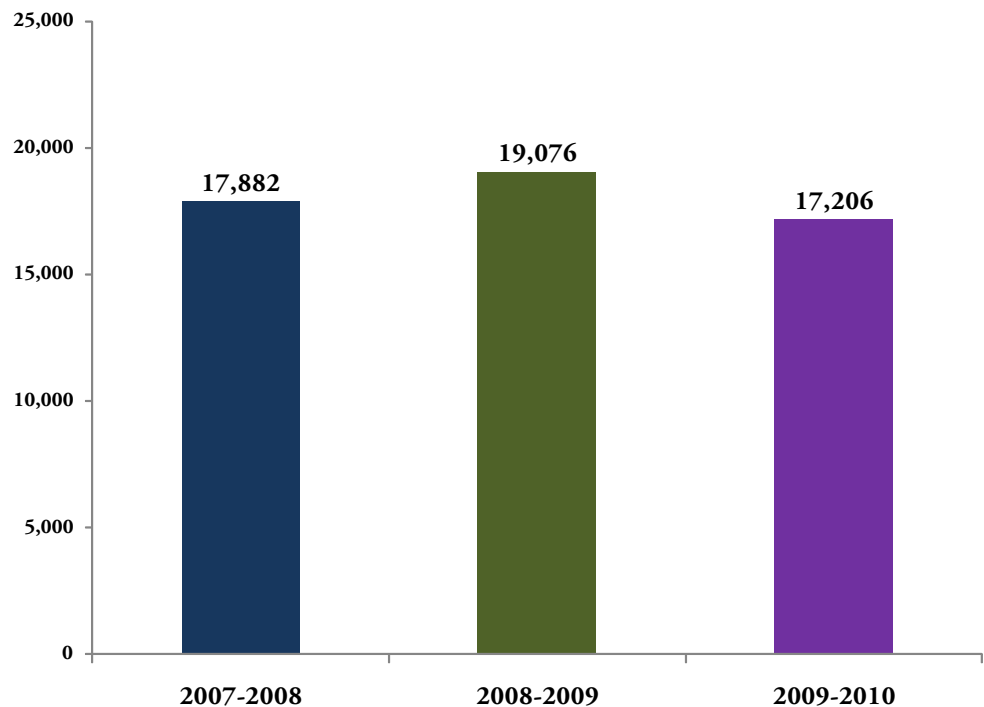
SERC professional development covers a range of services available to schools, districts, families, and many others from the community, from job-embedded on-site technical assistance to workshops held at SERC to large-scale conferences attracting national experts. We invite participants from a range of backgrounds, both inside and outside of a school setting, recognizing all who have a stake in student achievement: community agency leaders, college and university professors, family members, and students themselves.

36,341

TOTAL INDIVIDUALS SERVED

Total includes participants in professional development sessions, school/district staff assisted on-site, and library patrons.

Number of participants in statewide professional development



Over the last three years, SERC has had a steady number of participants in professional development “statewide” sessions (available to individuals from any city or town). We even had a slight “bump” in demand in 2008-2009, despite economic conditions straining school and district budgets.

TOTALS, 2009-2010

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD)

Including Technical Assistance (TA)

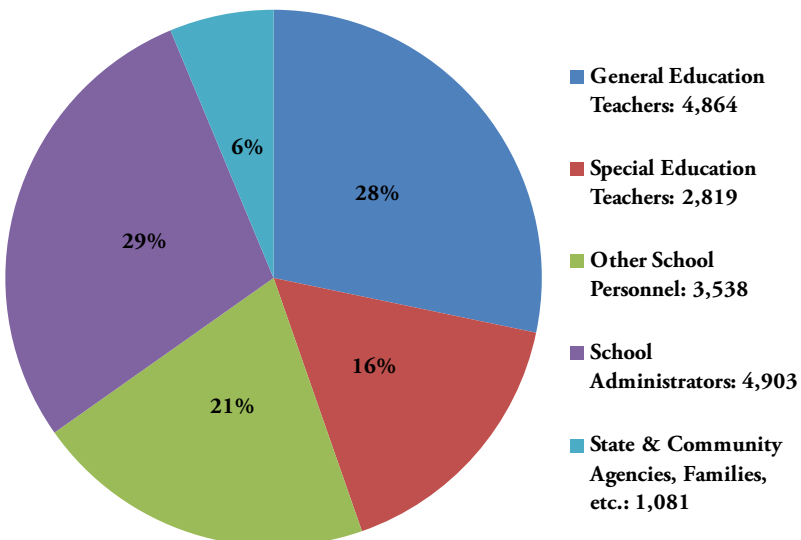
Total Attendance at Statewide PD = 17,206

District Participants in TA = 12,481

Training Opportunities and TA Visits = 1,436



Participants in statewide professional development by role



A Focus on RESULTS

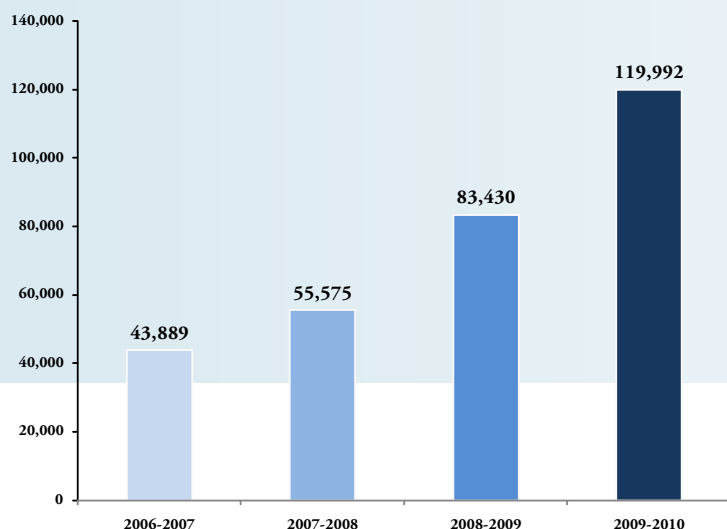
SERC, mirroring the efforts of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), has used results-based accountability (RBA)² to drive decisions and priorities in its programming. The process ensures that professional development has an impact on student learning, measured by three impact questions:

- (1) What did we do?
- (2) How well did we do it?
- (3) Were educators, students, and/or family members better off because of it?

What did we do?

Our professional development reached the entire state. In 2009-2010, SERC served virtually all of Connecticut's 169 cities and towns through our technical assistance, workshops, and conferences. In addition, we disseminated more than 16,000 professional development catalogs statewide, as well as nearly 12,000 additional resources by request and thousands more at various meetings and events.

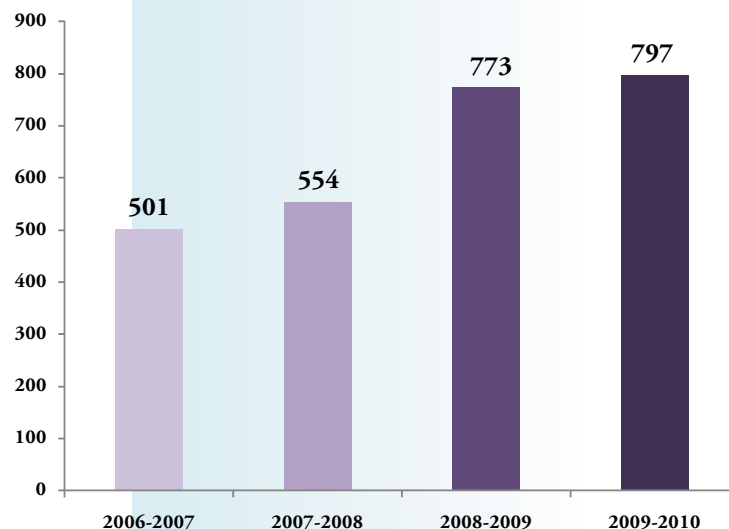
Visits to ctserc.org



We also expanded our professional development beyond Connecticut through steady growth of our Web presence. Over the past four school years, annual visits to ctserc.org have increased by 173 percent. The percent of Web site visits increased 50 percent from school year 2007-2008 to school year 2008-2009 after our site was completely redesigned.

SERC tracks the number of Web sites that link to ctserc.org to determine our site's usefulness to external constituents and organizations. Since 2006-2007, the number of such Web sites has increased by 59 percent.

Web sites referring to ctserc.org



² See Friedman, M. (2005). Trying hard is not good enough: How to produce measurable improvements for customers and communities. Santa Fe, NM: FPSI Publishing.

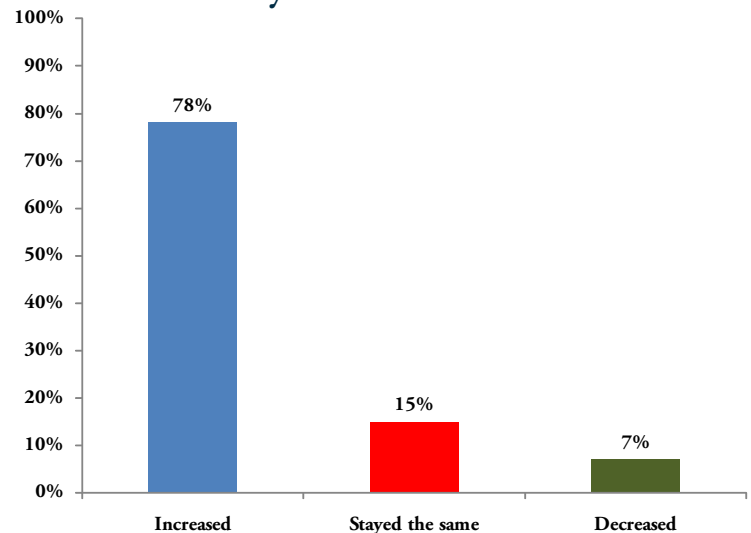
How well did we do it?

SERC uses evaluations at the end of professional development sessions to determine how much participants gain knowledge and understanding from the material presented. Overall, the evaluations show a high satisfaction rate, averaging over 90 percent, for the entire range of professional development that SERC offers.

For one particular workshop, the evaluation gauged the ability of participants to use secondary transition assessments to drive/inform the transition planning process for students moving from high school to college or employment. It measured the participants' perceived knowledge and understanding on a 10-point rating scale, with 10 representing the highest level of knowledge. At the beginning of the professional development, the mean score for the sample was 4.94; at the end, the mean score was 6.92, a statistically significant gain.

Furthermore, a majority (78 percent) of the participants had a higher mean score at post-testing (see graph at right). Just 15 percent had no change in scores from pre-to post-testing. A minority (7 percent) had a lower score at post-testing, and suggested in their additional comments that they had overestimated their initial knowledge; until they received the professional development, they “didn’t know what they didn’t know.”

Participants’ reported knowledge regarding secondary transition assessments



Were educators, students, and/or family members better off because of it?

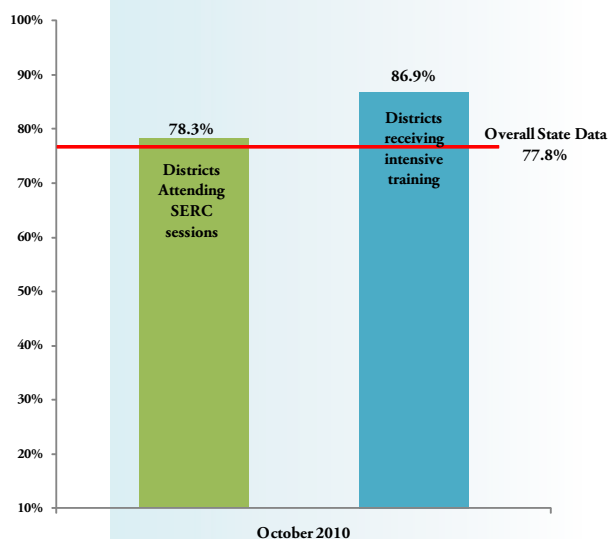
SERC's comprehensive theory/demonstration/practice/feedback/coaching model has been critical for achieving the most visible measures of success, such as a successful transition from high school to college or employment.

Indicator 13 of the State Performance Plan (SPP) for special education is used to gauge the percent of youth, age 16 and older, with an individualized education program (IEP) that includes coordinated, measurable, annual goals and transition services that will reasonably enable the student to meet postsecondary goals. The goal for all districts in Connecticut is to reach a 100 percent compliance rate for Indicator 13. SERC, in conjunction with the CSDE, has developed both statewide and in-district professional development sessions to support districts with developing IEPs that are compliant with the Indicator 13 requirements.

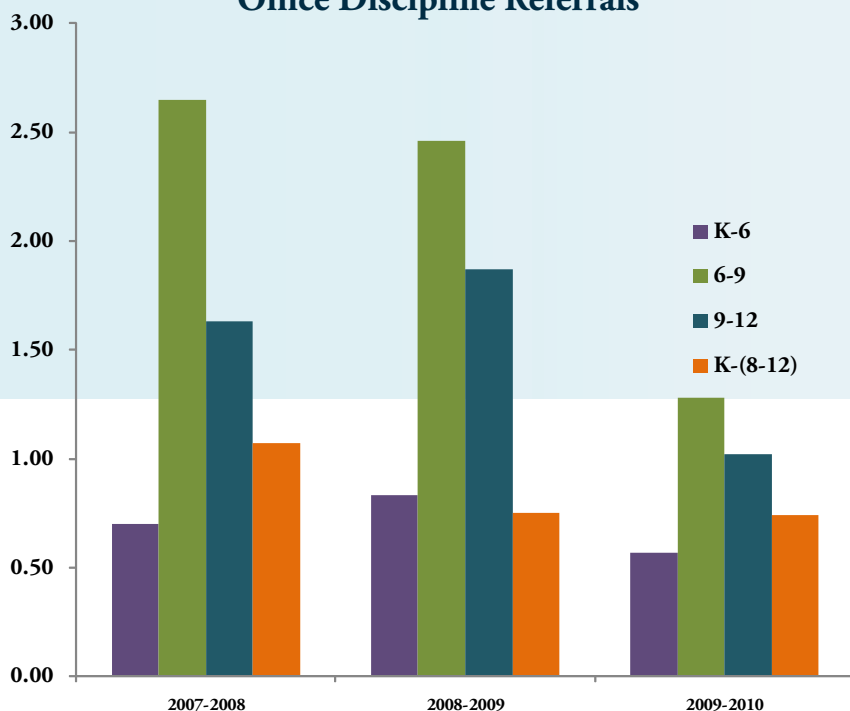
The 2010 data shown in the above graph represents overall state compliance with Indicator 13, the compliance rate for those districts that attended at least one of SERC's statewide transition sessions, and the compliance rate for districts that had more intensive training from SERC. This involved in-district professional development along with four to five days of follow-up technical assistance during the 2009-2010 school year. TA sessions focused on small group meetings to reinforce professional development outcomes and assist district professionals with compliance.

This training has helped not just district professionals. Nearly one-quarter of participants in SERC transition sessions are parents and other family members, who gained the tools and knowledge to help them advocate for their children.

Indicator 13 compliance



Office Discipline Referrals



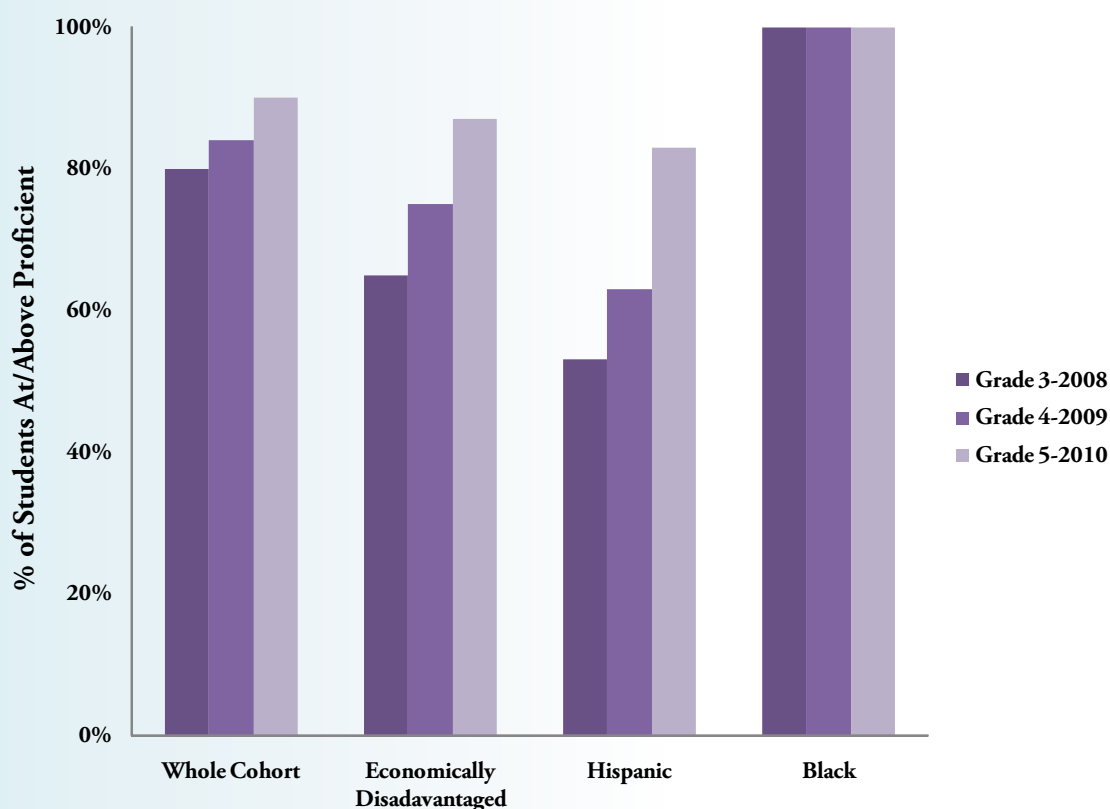
As of 2009-2010, a collaborative program between SERC and the University of Connecticut's Center for Behavioral Education and Research has trained 20 percent of Connecticut's public schools in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS).

After PBIS training, office discipline referrals dropped dramatically in schools implementing PBIS (see graph at left) with fidelity.

*Were educators, students,
and/or family members
better off because of it? (cont.)*

SERC has worked with several schools on improving literacy instruction. Students subsequently made marked progress on assessments and Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) scores. The Bowers Elementary School in Manchester effectively closed the achievement gap among students of color, economically disadvantaged students, and students as a whole.

Bowers School CMT Reading, 2008-2010



The chart above shows growth for a single cohort of students from 2008 to 2010, in third through fifth grade at Bowers Elementary School. These years coincide with Bowers' participation in SERC's Analyzing Literacy Data professional development series. The chart shows that students who are economically disadvantaged and/or Hispanic made 10- to 15- point gains on the CMT. Black students remained at 100 percent proficiency for all three years.

This success did not happen from targeting just literacy performance. SERC has worked closely with Manchester Schools on a number of improvement measures, and the district has embraced efforts to work toward equity in all areas of education. Results such as these reflect the need for coherence among professional development programs and the strong relationships SERC builds with districts over time.

SERC

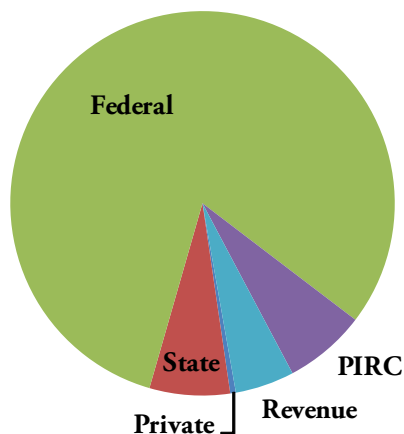
Financials

	Year Ending June 30, 2010	Year Ending June 30, 2009	Year Ending June 30, 2008
Funding Sources			
*Federal Funds	\$9,340,944	\$8,726,094	\$8,906,972
**State Funds	287,509	1,306,431	1,427,613
CT PIRC	688,529	709,362	688,622
Private Grants	53,862	157,678	70,000
Additional Revenue through LEAs/Contracts	496,446	92,129	350,419
Total Operating Support and Revenue	\$10,867,290	\$10,991,694	\$11,443,626
Expenses, Including 6.75% Indirect Costs to Fiscal Agent			
Personnel	\$5,654,601	\$5,114,505	\$4,479,420
Employee Benefits	1,488,311	1,336,880	1,131,833
Program/Inservice	1,487,311	2,777,826	3,144,101
Other Technical Services	180,612	21,677	26,733
Audit	20,000	25,353	21,350
Communications	87,809	106,891	145,512
Travel	14,330	20,554	10,457
Other Professional/Technical Services	363,742	783,874	457,646
Media Supplies	57,085	92,824	53,311
Administrative Supplies	6,835	15,620	21,752
Library	90,905	108,282	108,341
Equipment (Non-Capitalized)	101,939	140,066	225,441
Rent and Other Facility Expenses	102,521	116,909	172,631
Total Operating Expenses	\$9,656,001	\$10,661,261	\$9,998,528

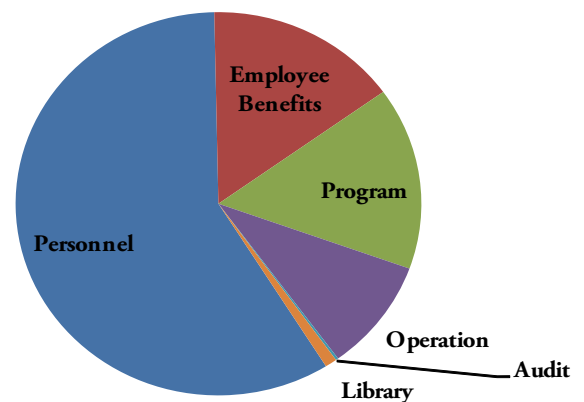
*Unexpended federal funding carries over to the next fiscal year.

**Unexpended state funding is returned to the state agency.

Funding Sources as of 6/30/10



Expenses as of 6/30/10



The SERC Library



“For more than 25 years, as a student, an educator, and now a professor, I’ve relied on the SERC Library’s resources to improve my practices. My students consistently comment on how valuable the Library is and how helpful all of you are.”

- Longtime patron



SERC began as a teacher center at St. Joseph’s College more than 40 years ago. Today, the SERC Library remains open to the public and is centrally located at SERC headquarters in Middletown. It includes an abundant collection of research, reference, and other materials and resources related to education.

In 2009-2010, SERC Library patrons checked out a total of 8,749 resources, and the Library added 450 new resources to its collection of more than 10,000 materials (including books, instructional materials, tests, journals, online databases, a DVD and video collection, CD-ROM programs, and young people’s disability awareness literature). That same year, the Library also:

- hosted **6,654** visitors and welcomed **798** new Library members;
- held **14** formal overviews for university/college classes, providing **196** people with a tour of the facility and information about SERC Library membership and services;
- held three to four **webinars** each month on various current education-related topics and presented by a variety of educational organizations; and
- hosted free events for **children and families** focused on literacy and other topics.

All about CT PIRC



SERC has operated the Connecticut Parent Information and Resource Center (CT PIRC) under a federal grant since the 2006-2007 fiscal year.

CT PIRC is guided by the belief that families of all backgrounds have strengths and that their voice in Connecticut education is one that must be sought, respected, and valued. To work toward this vision, CT PIRC partners with families, school districts, and community partners to ensure that:

- 1) families have access to all educational reform decisions that affect their children's success;
- 2) families become collaborative partners within the decision-making process; and
- 3) educational systems acknowledge the valuable contributions made by families.



Like SERC, CT PIRC provides technical assistance to schools and school districts. Connecticut School-Family-Community Partnerships (SFCP), a project led by the CSDE, SERC, and CT PIRC, helps districts form SFCP Action Teams to promote family engagement and the positive impact of school-family-community partnerships on student learning.

Other professional development opportunities from CT PIRC include family literacy programs and informational sessions on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). In addition, CT PIRC operates a toll-free line for those seeking additional information and services and disseminates information for families statewide.

Impact of professional development from CT PIRC:

95%+ of parents report learning new information and strategies for becoming involved in their child's education

95%+ of educators report learning new information and strategies for engaging parents around student achievement

89% of parents in Raising Readers clubs report reading more to their child as a result of the program

79% of educators report increasing their interaction and communication with parents

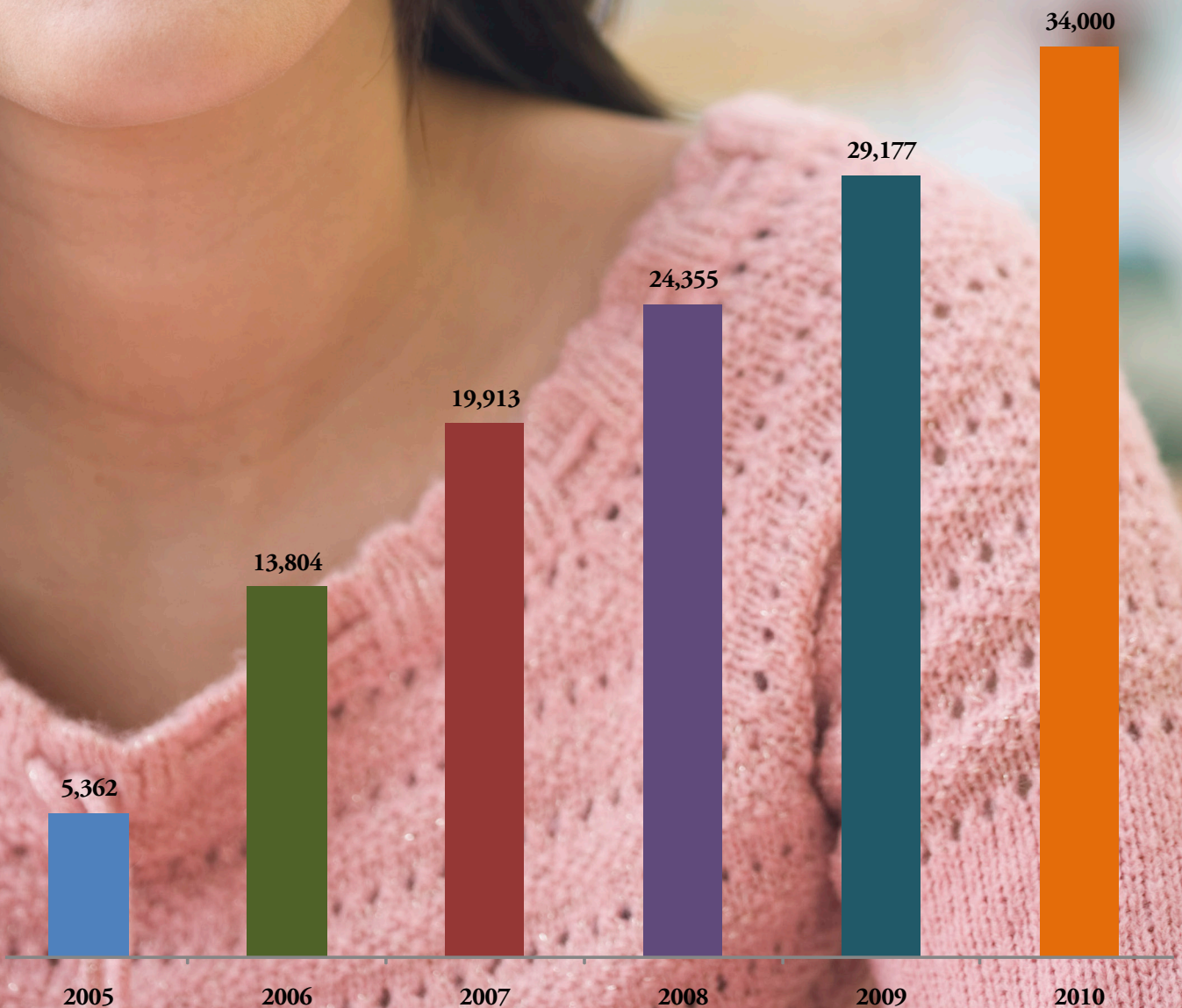
The Annual Faith, Families & Schools conference provides faith and worship leaders, educators, families, and others the opportunity to share ideas about practices that help families support student learning.

More than 89 percent of participants rated the conference as "high" or of "exceptional" quality and "very" or "extremely" useful.



Our MEMBERS

In 2005, SERC launched a new system of tracking individuals using SERC professional development and resources, assigning a membership number to each person. More than 5,000 membership numbers were issued in the first year. Membership has increased steadily since then, as the chart on this page demonstrates. All who register for SERC conferences and workshops and access other services become SERC members.



Our STAFF Our STRENGTH

The SERC staff includes former teachers, principals, and other professionals serving children from preschool through high school and beyond. Our diverse backgrounds also range from psychology to business to health care to law, and our training and technical assistance spans teaching and learning, technology in education, special education, culturally relevant pedagogy, and positive behavioral interventions and supports, to name a few. SERC staff bring a wide variety of expertise and experience and are racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse.

Our staff contribute to the community at large. In February 2010, for example, SERC donated proceeds from a silent auction to the Middlesex County chapter of the American Red Cross. During Library Week, patrons of the SERC Library were asked to provide canned and boxed goods in lieu of paying overdue fines. These items were later donated to the food pantry at St. Vincent de Paul in Middletown.



Marianne Kirner, Ph.D., *Executive Director*

"I would like to thank the educators, the administrators, the families, the school districts, and the school district personnel who access our services. They keep us on our toes, constantly helping us to look inward to improve our programming. I also would like to thank the leadership at the Connecticut State Department of Education. It's their ongoing support, work, and collaboration with SERC that make 40 years possible. On a personal note, it's important to me to thank the SERC staff. They are the best, bar none! I'm very proud to be their director and to work with such a fantastic group of people."





2009-2010 PRIMARY PARTNERS



include the **Connecticut State Department of Education** as well as:

America's Promise Alliance
Board of Education and Services for the Blind
Center for Applied Special Technology
Center for Behavioral Education and Research, University of Connecticut
Commission on the Deaf and the Hearing Impaired
Connecticut Association of Schools
Connecticut Center for School Change
Connecticut Commission on Children
Connecticut Department of Developmental Disabilities, Birth to Three Program
Connecticut Department of Public Health
Connecticut Department of Social Services, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services – Connect-Ability
Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center
Connecticut Parent Teacher Association
Connecticut Parents as Teachers
Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation
Infoline
OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
RESC Alliance
William Casper Graustein Memorial Fund

and...

Connecticut districts, schools, educators, family members, students, and faith and community leaders



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