



STATE EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTER

EQUITY | EXCELLENCE | EDUCATION



2022-2023

STATE EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTER

ANNUAL PROGRAM REPORT

2022-2023

STATE EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTER

ANNUAL PROGRAM REPORT

INGRID M. CANADY ED.D.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MARJORIE DAVIS
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

KRISTY GIACCO
PROGRAM SERVICES DIRECTOR

KRYSTAL HEWITT
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER

STEPHEN PROFFITT
DIRECTOR FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

JACQUELINE TEULINGS
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

JEREMY BOND
COMMUNICATIONS, MEDIA, AND PUBLICATIONS MANAGER

JOCELYN E. VELASQUEZ
PROJECT SPECIALIST



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DR. AGNES QUIÑONES, CHAIRPERSON

ERIN D. BENHAM

DR. DIANE CLARE-KEARNEY

BRYAN KLIMKIEWICZ

JEFFREY LEAKE

RICHARD J. PORTH, JR.

THOMAS R. SWAN

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ingrid M. Canady, Ed.D.

To our Partners, Friends, and Colleagues,

It is my pleasure to present SERC's 2022-2023 Annual Program Report.

As you read through the report and learn about the many achievements, events, and activities that took place during the year, keep in mind that SERC'S wheels kept moving while we also prepared for the excitement of planning a big move to our offices in a brand new building in Waterbury!

This year, we experienced the joy of reconnecting and reuniting in person with colleagues, peers, partners, and collaborators after two years of isolation and primarily virtual meetings. For the first time since 2019, the annual Dismantling Systemic Racism conference was held in person once again at the Connecticut Convention Center in May 2023, with over 500 participants in attendance. You can read more within the report, along with amazing photos from the event.

We are excited about the opportunity to welcome educators, partners, and the community to our building as we transform our new home, which houses our beautiful SERC Library and a state of the art training space on the ground floor, and modern office space on the second and third floors.

In addition to plans for our physical space, preparations are in place for the continued internal professional learning for our staff as they engage in deep reflection and growth to best serve our state going forward. This includes pursuing new and innovative ways to keep our community informed and up to date,

while continuing to further our mission and vision of educational equity and excellence for all children.

The launch of a new podcast and newsletter are on the horizon, along with the next phase of SERC's comprehensive assessment of the agency's technology infrastructure.



The work featured in this report couldn't happen without the support of the SERC Board and the dedication of the SERC team. Their collective commitment and passion drive the impact of all that we do.

Building on the success and growth of this year inspires and motivates me to look forward to 2024. I encourage you to join us!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ingrid M. Canady".

Ingrid M. Canady, Ed.D.
Executive Director

2022-2023

SERC AT A GLANCE

Members



43

Staff members



07

Board Members

Professional Learning Impact

6,000+

Educators Trained

290

Statewide Sessions offered

273

Students in Attendance at Conferences/ Events

200

Districts, Agencies & Organizations Served

A New SERC

Waterbury celebrated the grand opening of SERC's new offices with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on April 27, 2023. Former Waterbury Mayor Neil M. O'Leary was joined by Connecticut Education Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker and Waterbury Regional Chamber President and CEO Lynn Ward, as SERC staff, friends, partners, and stakeholders marked the move from Middletown to The Brass City.

The event took place in the new SERC space at 175 Union Street. U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona, who worked closely with SERC as a Connecticut educator, administrator, and State Department of Education Commissioner, provided remarks via video. The event also included a student vocal performance, food, and a tour of the three-story building, formerly home of the Timexpo Museum.

This is the first time in the agency's 54-year history that it has its own building. The prominent location is alongside the Brass Mill Commons Shopping Center. The building is visible from I-84 and stands out for its historic brick façade and 40-foot outdoor replica of an Easter Island Moai statue dating from the former museum.

Banners of photographs with the words "Equity," "Excellence," and "Education," representing SERC's vision, now line the face of the building, crowned by SERC's logo.



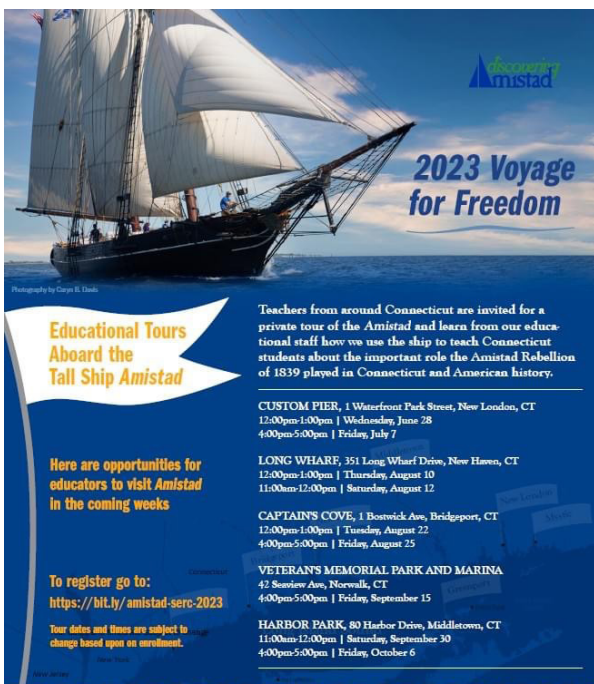
EQUITY IN EDUCATION: CONNECTICUT'S AFRICAN AMERICAN/BLACK & PUERTO RICAN/LATINO COURSE OF STUDIES

With the start of the 2022-23 school year, all Connecticut high schools were required to offer the African American/Black and Puerto Rican/Latino Course of Studies to ensure students of all backgrounds across the state have access to this important history. On July 1, 2021, SERC released the collaboratively developed model curriculum as legislated (see CT PA 19-12 and 21-2).

Highlights from the Curriculum's First Year

In July 2022, SERC partnered with Ed Advance, West Ed, and NewsELA in applying for an Education, Innovation, and Research (EIR) grant to increase accessibility and reading comprehension proficiency for students taking the course. The EIR program, federally funded under section 4611 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), "is designed to generate and validate solutions to persistent educational challenges and to support the expansion of effective solutions to serve and support teachers with substantially larger numbers of students." Although the grant was not awarded, SERC continues to pursue instructional options to increase student accessibility and maintain rigor of course.

During the summer and early fall of 2022, SERC partnered with Discovering Amistad to offer "VIP Days" for teachers and students enrolled in the course. This included a guided tour of the Amistad ship while in different ports throughout the state and the opportunity to get a first-hand glimpse of the important role the Amistad Rebellion played in Connecticut and American history.



2023 Voyage for Freedom

Teachers from around Connecticut are invited for a private tour of the Amistad and learn from our educational staff how we use the ship to teach Connecticut students about the important role the Amistad Rebellion of 1839 played in Connecticut and American history.

CUSTOM PIER, 1 Waterfront Park Street, New London, CT
12:00pm-1:00pm | Wednesday, June 28
4:00pm-5:00pm | Friday, July 7

LONG WHARF, 351 Long Wharf Drive, New Haven, CT
12:00pm-1:00pm | Thursday, August 10
11:00am-12:00pm | Saturday, August 12

CAPTAIN'S COVE, 1 Boswick Ave, Bridgeport, CT
12:00pm-1:00pm | Tuesday, August 22
4:00pm-5:00pm | Friday, August 25

VETERAN'S MEMORIAL PARK AND MARINA, 42 Senneff Ave, Norwalk, CT
4:00pm-5:00pm | Friday, September 15

HARBOR PARK, 80 Harbor Drive, Middletown, CT
11:00am-12:00pm | Saturday, September 30
4:00pm-5:00pm | Friday, October 6

Photography by Corey B. Elias

Discovering Amistad

Educational Tours Aboard the Tall Ship Amistad

Here are opportunities for educators to visit Amistad in the coming weeks

To register go to:
<https://bit.ly/amistad-serc-2023>

Your dates and times are subject to change based upon an enrollment.



Discovering Amistad gratefully acknowledges the generous support of our sponsor.



In October 2022, members of the SERC Project Team presented at Pacific Education Group's National summit in Washington D.C. regarding the history of PA 19-12 and 21-2 and the curriculum development process. Throughout the year, SERC Project Team members were also invited to speak about the curriculum and their experiences at the following local and national conferences and events:

- Connecticut Council for Social Studies Fall Conference
- Cooperative Educational Services (CES) Social Studies Council
- Connecticut Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (CALAS) Conference
- Hamden Library Teaching Black History Podcast Series
- Panel for The Governor's Council for Women and Girls
- 2023 Education Leaders of Color (EdLoc) National Convening
- Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) Teaching and Learning Committee Meeting.

On May 25, 2023, SERC consultants Paquita Jarman-Smith, Michelle LeBrun-Griffin and Nitza Diaz were awarded with the Service to Social Studies award by the Connecticut Council for the Social Studies at the Old State House in Hartford. This is given annually to individuals who go "beyond the call of duty" to assist social studies teachers.



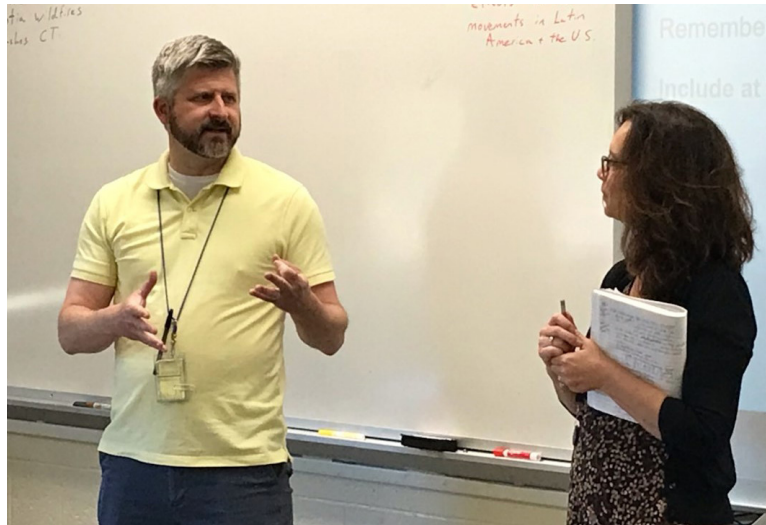
Women and Girls Panel, 2023 (Left to Right): Dr. Ingrid Canady, Executive Director, SERC; Paquita Jarman-Smith, Consultant, SERC; Alyssa Underwood, student, Cheshire High School, (with parent); Carmita Hodge, Assistant Principal and former teacher of course, Groton High School; Nitza Diaz, Consultant, SERC; Dr. Karen DuBois Walton, Chairperson, SBOE; and Commissioner of Education, Charlene Russell-Tucker, CSDE



Connecticut Council for Social Studies Service Award, 2023 (Left to Right): Paquita Jarman-Smith, SERC Consultant; Michelle LeBrun-Griffin, SERC Consultant; Stephen Proffitt, SERC Director for Special Education Programs and Instructional Design; Nitza Diaz, SERC Consultant; Heather Dawes, SERC Project Specialist

During the winter of 2023, SERC Consultants who serve as coaches for the course participated in professional learning with educational organization thinkLaw to assist with fidelity of implementation of the curriculum. This training included alignment of curriculum standards, lesson design, and teacher moves to maintain the historical accuracy and rigor of the course while maximizing students' critical thinking and engagement.

In the spring of 2023, site visits were completed demonstrating a high level of authenticity of teacher and student engagement with curriculum topics and materials.



SERC Consultant Michelle LeBrun-Griffin during a site visit to Southington High School with Social Studies teacher Kevin Curtiss.

Feedback received from Cohort 2 educators and stakeholders regarding training series and curriculum design included:

"Fantastic training! Pacing and varied activities were right on. Breakout Rooms allowed independence to work and chance to meet and discuss with other teachers and SERC staff."

"The presenters that have been brought in so far have been phenomenal. They've provided valuable information and insight on how to actually apply what we are learning in the classroom."

"Today was amazing. Full of useful and practical pedagogy and helpful activities."

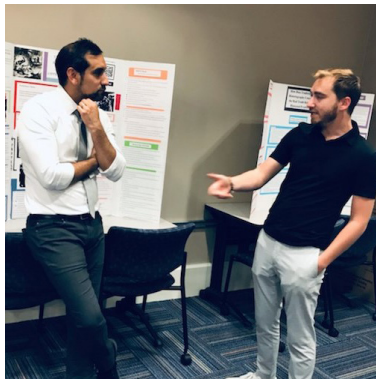
"This is the best conference I've been to. And this is really making me EXTREMELY prepared and ready for the course next year, where before I was really stressed and worried I would do something wrong."

"As the training is going on, I am getting more excited and more nervous at the same time. Excited, because we are being given a lot of great tools and ideas on how to run the class, and nervous because I don't feel qualified to deal with the pain and sadness that could come out in class when discussing these issues,"

"Having the time to unpack the curriculum and develop lesson plans has been very useful in thinking about the very practical nature of teaching this course."

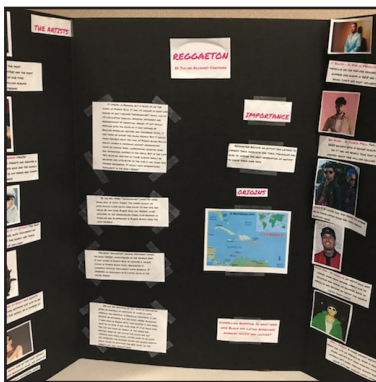
By June of 2023, a second set of curriculum “Book Bundles” was provided to schools and programs implementing the course in partnership with Barnes and Noble. These resources supply classrooms with reference materials from the curriculum to support teacher implementation and student enrichment.

Throughout the 2022-2023 school year, the CSDE/SERC Training Series was replicated for three cadres of educators implementing the African American/Black and Puerto Rican Course of Studies. Social Studies Teachers, Curriculum Coordinators, Adult Education Teachers, and Teachers of Specialized Programs participated in a summer institute, quarterly trainings, and on-site coaching, and received exclusive access to GoOpenCT (Connecticut’s Open Education Resource platform - goopenct.org) culminating with a virtual student showcase and in-person reception on June 2 at SERC. Here, 15 high schools shared their experiences with the course and participants learned about dynamic and inspiring experiences of high school teachers and students from across the state involved in the second year of curriculum implementation.



Top left: Teachers of the curriculum engage in conversation during the June Showcase. (Left to Right): Adrian Solis, Abbot Tech High School, Danbury and Jeremy Timperanza, Fairfield Ludlowe High School

Top Right: SERC Consultants (Left to Right): Nitza Diaz, Michelle LeBrun-Griffin and Paquita Jarman-Smith at the June 2023 Showcase.



Bottom left: Exhibitor presentation at the June 2023 showcase

Bottom Right: Carlos Torres, professor at Southern CT State University and Dr. Gladys Labas, CSDE Director of Equity and Languages attend the June 2023 showcase, both were instrumental members of the Puerto Rican/Latino Content Development Committee.

Connecticut’s African American/Black and Puerto Rican/Latino Course of Studies - CSDE/ SERC 2022-2023 Training Series

01

Summer Institute

04

Quarterly Trainings

03

Cadres

166

Participants

78

School Districts Represented

SERC FOUNDATION

The SERC Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established in 2015 to sustain SERC's programming and services, particularly focused on racial equity work. The Foundation is grateful for the support from the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund to further SERC's commitment to racial equity in education

DISMANTLING SYSTEMIC RACISM CONFERENCE 2023



Beginning in 2016, and each year thereafter SERC and the SERC Foundation have hosted a conference to advance racial equity in education. "Dismantling Systemic Racism - Conference on Race, Education & Success" is designed to support a transformational approach to equity that ensures all students get what they need to be successful.



500+

Attendees



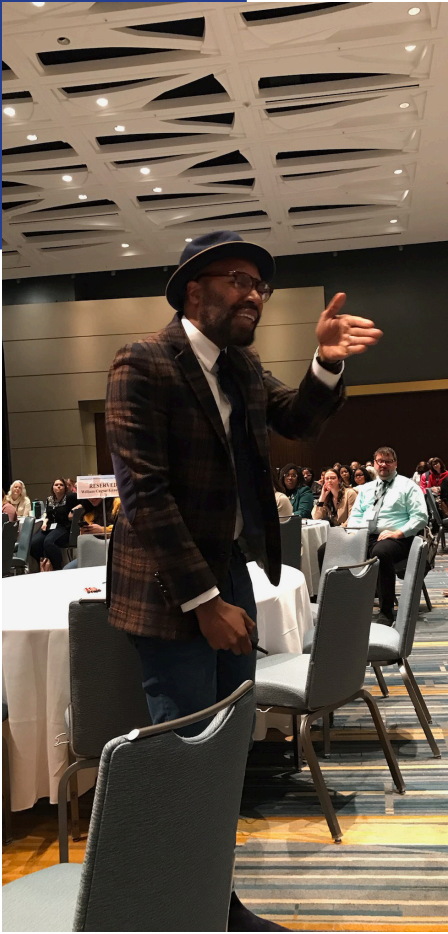
22

Breakout Sessions



61

School Districts Represented



Participants heard a powerful keynote address from Dr. Christopher Emdin, a Robert A. Naslund Endowed Chair in Curriculum Theory and Professor of Education at the University of Southern California, where he also serves as Director of youth engagement and community partnerships at the USC Race and Equity Center. Dr. Emdin is an award-winning author and Minorities in Energy Ambassador for the Department of Energy.



The event also featured Jessica Care Moore, internationally renowned poet, playwright, performance artist and producer, CEO of Moore Black Press, Executive Producer of Black WOMEN Rock!, and founder of the literacy-driven Jess Care Moore Foundation. Moore partnered with international recording artist Apropos and musician Kenny Watson for special morning and afternoon performances.



Throughout the conference, participants engaged in topical facilitated workshops that provoked thoughts and action in addressing systemic racism and increasing students' opportunities for success. SERC offered 22 sessions delivered by local and regional leaders featuring their work related to advancing racial equity.



George A. Coleman Excellence in Equity Award



SERC's 2023 George A. Coleman Excellence in Equity Award winners: Bianca Shinn, Director of Family Advocacy Middle Schools and After School Programs at Domus Kids (left) and students from the Farmington High School Social Justice Council.

Quotes from members of the Farmington High School Social Justice Council after attending the 2023 DSR Conference.

"Today was amazing, thank you."

"This is the best conference ever!"

"We loved our breakout session."

A Farmington student-led organization and a longtime Stamford advocate for youth received the George A. Coleman Excellence in Equity Awards at the 2023 Dismantling Systemic Racism conference.

The Farmington High School Social Justice Council, where students have taken a leadership role in fulfilling the district's efforts addressing equity and social justice, and Bianca Shinn, a director at a Stamford-based nonprofit and a vocal and active member of her community, received the honors and exemplify educational equity in action.

"It's no surprise that one of this year's awards honors students themselves," said SERC Executive Director Ingrid M. Canady. "The Social Justice Council demonstrates how our young people can create a more equitable environment through their own leadership. And advocates like Bianca Shinn are on the pulse of what students and families need and aren't afraid to confront inequity wherever they see it."

SERC created the award to honor and highlight extraordinary acts of commitment and courage to ensure all Connecticut students, especially students of color and culturally and linguistically diverse students, are valued and respected in their school experience. Award recipients are selected based on their steadfast and unwavering action in advocating for children and families of color; galvanizing individuals and coalitions toward equitable action; taking risks in conversation and action regarding issues of equity for racially, linguistically and culturally diverse groups; engaging the diverse needs of members of an education community and reconciling them toward a shared vision; and furthering the exchange of information that affects thinking and effects conviction on matters of equity.

SERC Recognition Awards



(Left to Right) Senator Douglas McCrory, Representative Bobby Sanchez, and Representative Bobby Gibson

Another conference highlight came as The SERC Foundation and SERC honored Senator Douglas McCrory, Representative Bobby Sanchez, and Representative Bobby Gibson for their continued partnership, commitment and legislative leadership in promoting social justice and racial equity on behalf of children and communities in the state. Their contributions and unwavering advocacy, particularly in the development and passing of Public Act 19-12, An Act Concerning the Inclusion of Black and Latino Studies in the Public School Curriculum, are commendable.

Building a Strong Foundation for Social Justice Community Coalitions

Through the generous support from the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund, SERC began work to assist Regional School District 15 in establishing a community coalition while also providing technical assistance and training support for their racial equity work. District 15 applied for the opportunity in order to build a foundation that will support the success of their Social Justice Community Coalition.

The project is a collaborative effort between the SERC Foundation and SERC and aims to:

- Deliver high-quality technical assistance in establishing a community coalition;
- Deliver high-quality professional learning to participating coalitions;
- Enhance district-community connections to advance equity; and
- Align equity work to community and district goals.

Work began with RSD 15 in June 2023 with plans to continue during the year with summer training for the District Equity Leadership Team, technical assistance for the team in preparing for community conversations in the fall, support facilitating two community conversations, and action planning following the community conversations. The training will address best practices in coalition building, the importance of shared leadership, and facilitation skills for community forums.



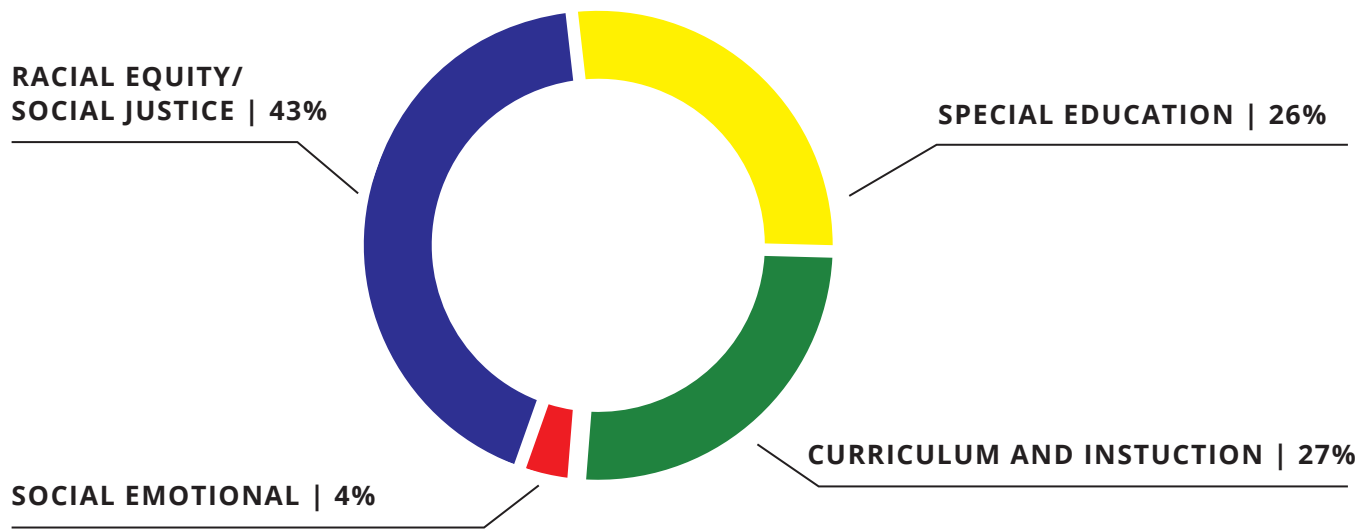
On October 3, 2022, SERC Executive Director Ingrid M. Canady received the Asa G. Hilliard Award for Outstanding Achievement in Racial Equity in Washington, D.C..

The Pacific Educational Group (PEG) honored Ingrid with this most prestigious recognition at its annual National Summit for Courageous Conversation®.

The award, named for influential educational psychologist Asa G. Hilliard III (1993-2007), pays tribute to those who confront and challenge racism, are “passionate” and “revolutionary,” and who understand themselves and nurture greatness on others.

Under Canady’s leadership, SERC has continued to work with school districts across Connecticut on addressing racial equity, drawn hundreds to its annual Dismantling Systemic Racism conference, and led the development and implementation of the state’s first statewide African/ Black and Puerto Rican/ Latino Course of Studies in partnership with the CT State Department of Education.

SERC IN-DISTRICT AND WITHIN THE COMMUNITY



SERC continues to accept many requests from districts for customized contracts to address their specific professional learning needs relative to school/district priorities, specifically around racial equity, special education, and curriculum and instruction topics. Below is a snapshot of in-district contracts by topic from July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

2022-2023 IN-DISTRICT CONTRACTS BY TOPICS AND CATEGORY

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

- Data Driven Decision-Making
- Differentiated Instruction
- English Language Arts
- English Learners
- PBIS Implementation
- Reading
- SLD/ Dyslexia
- SRBI Implementation
- Strategies - Behavior Support Structures
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

RACIAL EQUITY/ SOCIAL JUSTICE

Culturally Relevant Practice

Facilitation

Racial Equity

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL/BEHAVIOURAL

Challenging Behaviors

Restorative Practices

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Co-Teaching

Secondary Transition

Early Childhood Education

IEP Rubric

Inclusive Services Delivery

Paraprofessionals

Training for PPT Chairs

Standards Based IEPs

Youth Leadership

The logo for SERC features the letters 'S', 'E', 'R', and 'C' in a large, bold, sans-serif font. Each letter is filled with a brick pattern and has a white shadow effect, giving it a 3D appearance. The letters are set against a background of a brick building with arched windows.

DISTRICT SUPPORT

Wethersfield: Community Social Justice Coalition & Steering Committee

SERC Consultants Sarah Jones and Malik Champlain engaged with Wethersfield Public Schools, providing ongoing support and learning for the Wethersfield Social Justice Coalition and Steering Committee in their continued racial equity and social justice work.

Throughout the 2022-2023 year the Wethersfield Social Justice Coalition explored topics related to equity, diversity, race, and cultural responsiveness in order to create significant, sustainable, and meaningful change. The Coalition has a collective commitment to learning, sharing perspectives, and working collaboratively. It is comprised of Wethersfield residents including students and parents, representatives from community agencies, elected officials, and Town and Board of Education staff representing the community's diverse population in religion, experiences, racial and ethnic background, age, gender, sexual orientation, roles in the community, or other identities. The Coalition met several times during the year to engage in dialogue and work in subcommittees to address the goals and objectives developed.

Wethersfield: Administrators/Equity Team

SERC Consultants Sarah Jones and Malik Champlain also supported district administrators and the equity team of Wethersfield Public Schools in the development of their racial equity and social justice knowledge.

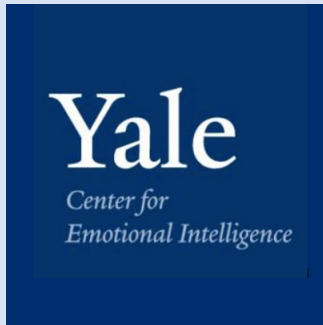


Training session with participants in Wethersfield

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

In addition to supporting school districts, SERC works with organizations to build capacity and understanding of equity issues. Examples in 2022-2023 included:

Yale Center of Emotional Intelligence: RULER Curriculum Equity Audit



During 2022, SERC consultants Dwight Sharpe, Nikki Hendry and Claire Conroy reviewed and assessed the Teaching Guides, Core Routines, Introductory Lessons, Book Lists and various sample lessons from the Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle School and High School Curricula provided by the YCEI RULER Team consisting of included Nikki Elbertson, Rebecca Rubin, and Tangular Irby.

The NYU Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard was adapted as a new tool, which was converted to a Google Form to track assessment and data. This new tool was geared specifically to analyzing curriculum with an equitable and culturally responsive lens.

The SERC team recommended that the use of this rubric and previously adapted rubric would prove more illuminating and helpful if used by a diverse group made up of representation from multiple views, perspectives, and identities.

As a collection, the materials assessed were very representative and inclusive of various identities, cultures, and dynamics. Centering the multiple perspectives of students was extremely evident throughout the curriculum. More so were the many examples of guidance reminding teachers to validate each perspective with equivalent weight. Classrooms can be diverse in a multitude of ways, but the teaching force on a whole does not typically mirror that same diversity. This incongruence makes the rubric statement that pertains to providing guidance to teachers to bring awareness to their own “biases and the gaps between one’s own culture and students’ cultures” that much more important.

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): Racial Equity Training



NAMI Connecticut embarked on a transformative journey, engaging SERC consultants Christina Simms and Malik Champlain to infuse a racial equity lens into its mission and vision through trainings with its board, staff and community affiliates.

This strategic initiative was designed to ensure that the organization’s services, programs, and advocacy efforts are sensitive to the unique challenges faced by diverse communities, and reflect the organization’s commitment to inclusivity, acknowledging the diverse needs of its community.

Through incorporation of a racial equity perspective, NAMI Connecticut aims to foster a more inclusive and equitable mental health landscape. Dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for individuals impacted by mental health conditions, NAMI Connecticut has been a determined advocate through support, education, and advocacy efforts.

As NAMI Connecticut continues its journey, the strengthened mission and vision provide a solid foundation for creating positive change in the landscape of mental health, ensuring that no one is left behind.

SERC LIBRARY



The SERC Library, like SERC itself, has been in existence since 1969. It provides Connecticut education professionals, college and university students, families, and community members access to research, reference, instructional materials and resources related to education.

Throughout the fall of 2022, the library continued patron processes initiated as the pandemic waned in April 2021, offering patrons appointments to pick up and return materials via the building lobby. It also added the option to enter the library and pick up materials by appointment.

Library collections were prepped for their eventual move to the new library space in Waterbury during the winter of 2022 and 2023. The library remained closed for the month of March as the physical collections were moved to the new space and a new online catalog system was implemented. On April 4, 2023 the SERC Library opened its doors at 175 Union Street, Waterbury.

SERC Librarians Megan Devine, Peter Williams and Adriana Pullit offer reference and library support via phone and email Monday through Friday as well as in-person with patrons at the new location.

Materials Update

The librarians used this year and the move to our location as an opportunity to update the existing collection and prepare the collection for the new space. Materials were rehoused to help ensure their longevity as a continuation of the efforts from the previous year. The librarians also conducted a thorough inventory and subsequent weeding of both the current collection and all materials in storage to help flesh out the collection. During the move to our new Waterbury location, specific locations were set aside for the oversized materials collection, which includes many of our curriculum and program kits, our games and activities, assistive technology, tests, and the children's collection.



In February 2023, the SERC Library also migrated to a new library system created by Surpass Software. Library staff were able to use tools provided by this system to create discovery pages for certain material types, tutorials for how to use the library, and recreations of certain SERC Guides. Additional library

information such as documents and hours of operation can be accessed from the new library system as well. Library staff continued to make recommendations for social and emotional development and substance abuse prevention resources to purchase in order to support the agency's grant with the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). Staff spent time cataloging and processing numerous materials purchased through the grant. Through the continued efforts of this project more materials were added to the Children's and Spanish collections. Additional language materials were also acquired in Portuguese, Italian and Hindi to help better support diverse populations within the state.

Connecticut Association of School Librarians - Connecticut Educators Computer Association Conference

SERC Library staff were present at the 2023 CASL-CECA conference in support of school librarians and library media specialists. The team led table presentations to share materials, with a special focus on mental health and substance abuse prevention, and shared our resources and information with other members of the school staff population

National Prevention Week "Make it Grow" Event

Library staff were present at the 2023 National Prevention Week "Make it Grow" event to help spread awareness of the School-Based Center for Prevention, Education, and Advocacy collection. Staff shared resources and information with families and community partners from the Hartford area.



SERC Librarian Megan Devine at the National Prevention Week event on May 13, 2023



Participants attending the National Prevention Week event

The SERC Library looks forward to improving its online presence and continuing to update and develop the collection.

More information about the Library can be found on its website: <https://ctserc.org/library>.

SUPPORTING THE CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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

The programming is designed to address 17 indicators under the State Performance Plan (SPP) / Annual Performance Report (APR), which evaluates the state's efforts in implementing the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and improving outcomes for students receiving special education and related services.

Back to School

Each year, SERC works closely with BSE in planning the Back to School meeting for special education administrators. SERC handles registration, management of the online resources page, and other logistics.

The 19th Back to School event was held in-person on September 9, 2022 at the Connecticut Convention Center with the theme "Leading Forward". The days agenda included welcome remarks from BSE Division Director Bryan Klimkiewicz and CSDE Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker, with the "Gearing Up for the Road Ahead" keynote delivered by Gregg Abell, who for over the last 30 years has worked to support educators with a specific focus on Leadership and bringing individuals together in pursuit of mutual purpose to establish effective communities.



The afternoon offered the following breakout sessions:

- Leading through Change
- CT-SEDS Data and Reporting
- CT-SEDS SLD/Dyslexia
- Determination Process
- CT-SEDS Internal Training Design
- CT-SEDS External Stakeholder
- (Parents) Communications
- CT-SEDS Systems Alignment (Special Education Procedures and Practices)



Top Left: Participants listening to presentation by Gregg Abell during morning keynote

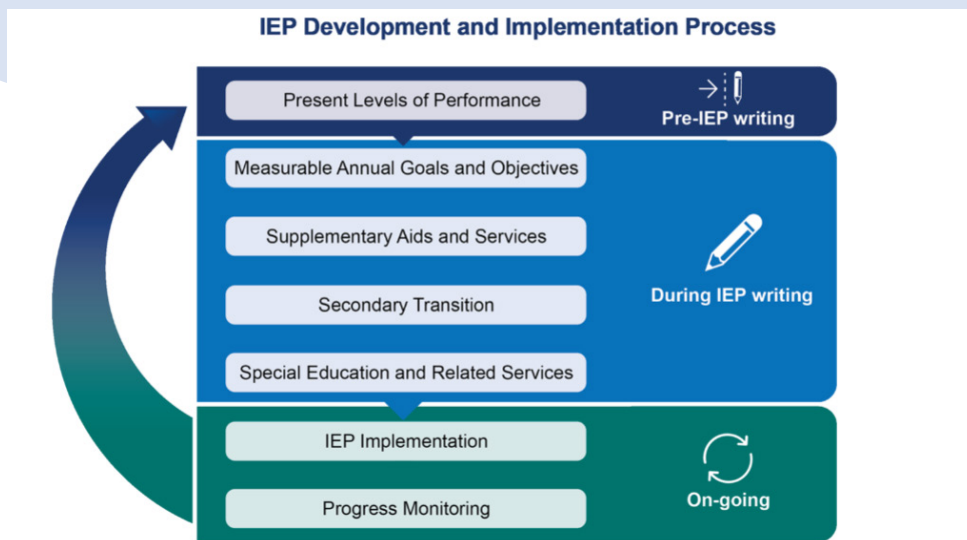
Top Right: The event featured motivational cards at tables

Bottom: SERC Librarian Megan Devine at the 19th Annual Back to School Event

IEP QUALITY TRAINING

During the 2022-2023 school year, SERC Director for Special Education Programs and Instructional Design Stephen Proffitt, along with SERC Consultants Claire Conroy, Ann Marie Cordisco, Nikki Hendry, Michelle LeBrun-Griffin, and Missy Wrigley, provided the CSDE/AIR IEP Quality Training for educators in the following priority districts: Danbury, East Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Norwalk, Norwich, and Waterbury. This included two-day, back-to-school/Fall in-person sessions for special education and related services staff in Danbury, New Britain, Norwalk, and Waterbury. In addition, four virtual, half-day sessions for Durational Shortage Area Permit (DSAP) Special Education Teachers were held in January and two in-person, full-day sessions for New Administrators were held in March at CAS in Cheshire. A combined total of 1,357 educators were trained by SERC through these trainings.

Stamford Public Schools continued to use their District Facilitators to train two additional cohorts of schools via the 7-session, 1.5-hour virtual format for IEP Quality Training. In addition, Stamford partnered with SERC to provide on-site, school-based technical assistance regarding the application of training content in practice with educators using a case study approach. Areas of focus included key features of quality Present Levels of Performance, Goals and Objectives, and Progress Monitoring. This was delivered in three, 1.5-hour sessions with teams of special education and related services staff from previously trained schools in Cohort 2: Dolan Middle School, Newfield Elementary School, Northeast Elementary School, Stillmeadow Elementary School, Scofield Middle School, and Turn of River Middle School. Assistant Principals, who serve as special education administrators in each of these buildings, collaborated with district special education administrators to support the continued improvement and implementation fidelity of practices learned during intersession. Over 60 administrators and educators worked to refine their practice and reported on the relevance and value of in-person coaching, modeling, and guided practice in supporting their depth and application of new learning.



Nearly 1,400 educators received training or technical assistance from SERC regarding IEP Quality. Pre and post comparison of sample IEPs demonstrated greater alignment with age-appropriate grade level curriculum and more comprehensive and targeted specially designed instruction. Hypothetically, if each educator serves 10 or more students with disabilities that would equate to more than 14,000 strategically planned IEPs.

In-person district training and school-based technical assistance continues to evidence change in practice. The combination of customized coaching and contextual applications provides relevance and opportunity for clarification of key training content and concepts in real-time. SERC will continue to provide this level of support for priority districts and begin to include general education staff in the coming year to increase provision of specially designed instruction in the LRE.

Attendance and Engagement Initiative

The Attendance and Engagement initiative, a partnership between CSDE and SERC, has operated since January 2021. SERC Consultant Christine Kuehlewind and Stephen Proffitt, SERC's Director for Special Education Programs and Instructional Design, have worked with CSDE Consultants Kari Sullivan-Custer and Jay Brown to help meet the goals and outcomes of the project.

"Talk Tuesdays" are virtual, approximately bi-monthly, information sharing sessions focused on supporting educator and community members' work to improve student attendance and engagement. These sessions provide opportunities for networking with other school professionals, community agencies, content experts, and consultants from the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), the State Education Resource Center (SERC), and the Regional Educational Service Centers (RESC) Alliance.

Per the CSDE "Talk Tuesdays" website, "The objectives of 'Talk Tuesdays' are to: 1) stay up-to-date on state policies, practices, events and issues; 2) share successes and lessons learned, 3) trouble-shoot common concerns and 4) provide overall support to each other." Topics covered in the 2022-2023 school year included Attendance and Multilingual Families, Educational Neglect and Truancy, Positive Interventions for Truancy, Aligned and Integrated Efforts: Teams and Data, the Learner Engagement Attendance Program (LEAP), and more.

Attendance and Engagement Team Members include:

- Kari Sullivan Custer, CSDE
- Jay Brown, CSDE
- Christine Kuehlewind, SERC / Attendance Lead
- Ann Marie Cordisco, SERC
- Stephen Proffitt, SERC
- Holli Ryan, SERC

General Summary of Data

Over the course of the 2022-23 school year, representatives from 61 school districts attended at least one "Talk Tuesday" session. A total of 159 school or district staff members participated over the course of the year. On average, school or district staff members attended 5.2 sessions per year with a range of participation between 1 and 18 sessions. Additionally, representatives from seven Charter or Magnet Schools, four Approved Private Special Education Programs, and two Endowed Academies participated in Talk Tuesday in the 2022-23 school year.

SERC has the following roles in the initiative:

- A. Develop, prepare, and provide leadership and guidance to and participate as a member of the Attendance and Engagement System of Support and its Professional Communities, supporting the facilitation of:
 - Attendance & Engagement Talk Tuesdays
 - Attendance & Engagement Advisory Team
- B. Provide leadership, planning, curriculum development and coordination of the Attendance & Engagement System of Support:
 - Update and maintain a project plan;
 - Take and share notes/minutes at planning meetings and events;
 - Schedule a calendar of planning sessions in advance with a timeline for meeting deliverables, e.g., timed and annotated agendas, speaking points, and other meeting details for review by SERC and CSDE leadership; and
 - Maintain a line of communication with CSDE for planning purposes.

CSDE Attendance Peer Learning Network for Charter Schools

This professional learning opportunity, provided by the Connecticut State Department of Education in collaboration with Attendance Works and SERC, offers a small cohort of charter schools four virtual Attendance Peer Learning Network sessions (APLNs) where colleagues will learn about and share effective practices inclusive of structures, evidence-based strategies, and tiered supports to address student attendance and reduce chronic absenteeism rates. In addition, this cohort will participate in guided self-assessment activities inclusive of on-site

school walkthroughs, administration and Attendance Team interviews, and stakeholder focus groups to identify needs. Content experts will utilize information gathered from assessment activities to tailor technical assistance for each school. Technical assistance will include interim on-site and individual coaching sessions to build the capacity of school attendance teams and develop an actionable implementation plan.

Attendance Peer Learning Network was facilitated by various content experts and districts throughout the state. Shakira Jacobs-Vazquez and Jay Brown from CSDE are SERC's partners, along with SERC consultant Christine Kuehlewind and SERC Director of Special Education Programs and Instructional Design Stephen Proffitt, SERC Technical Assistance providers were consultants Nicole Vitale, Missy Wrigley, Dwight Sharpe, Eben McKnight, Paquita Jarman-Smith, Malik Champlain, Nitza Diaz, Nikki Hendry, and Ann Marie Cordisco; and supported by SERC project specialist Lauren Johns. Attendance Works (national presenters) provided the content expertise with strategies to assist the charter schools.

CAS Special Education Coaching

During the year, the Connecticut Association of Schools and the Connecticut State Department of Education offered Executive Coaching for Administrators. SERC consultant Ann Marie Cordisco, Director of Special Education Programs and Instructional Design, Stephen Proffitt and Project Specialist Linda Adorno provided logistical coordination while coaches worked with SERC to provide targeted resources and identify contacts who can help to answer complex question as related to special education issues.

Coaches provided support to administrators with the implementation of the new IEP and continued to support schools with the challenges posed by COVID-19. Topics covered included Co-Teaching Models, Early Childhood Programming, IEP Meeting Facilitation and Review and Strengthening of SRBI Protocols. Coaches were carefully matched with administrators, taking into consideration the background of the coach and the identified needs of the administrator.

Assistive Technology (AT): "Easier with AT"

SERC Consultants Claire Conroy, Smita Worah, Greg Glidden and Craig Struble partnered with creative digital agency Haddad & Partners to create an AT Hub website for Connecticut users and providers of AT. The "Easier with AT" initiative was led by Thomas Boudreau, Education Consultant with the Connecticut State Department of Education,

Connecticut's Assistive Technology Resource Hub



I am seeking help with

GET RESOURCES

Claire and Smita wrote and edited sections of the website copy, and also wrote and recorded a webinar on districts' responsibilities with AT provision and maintenance. In CT-SEDS they created demo students to show how AT is documented in the new IEP in different ways. Greg and Craig provided many hours of technical design support. Special Education Administrators from school districts attended sessions for the rollout of the website.

AT "Petting Zoo"

On May 9, 2023, approximately 30 public librarians from the CT Library Association attended and received hands-on demos of many different assistive technologies available for loan to use for their patrons.

SERC Consultants Claire Conroy and Smita Worah, along with SERC librarian Sanna Cheema, assisted with coordinating the daylong activity where librarians visited different tables to experience the technology in person. Collaborating partner agencies included the CT State Library, CT Library for Accessible Books, CT Tech Act, Oak Hill CT, and United Cerebral Palsy of Eastern Connecticut.

SLD/Dyslexia Workgroup

Led by the CT State Department of Education (CSDE), SERC partnered with external writers in a workgroup to review and revise SLD/Dyslexia guidance documents.

SERC Consultant Claire Conroy and team worked closely with many additional stakeholders including members of the CSDE on the targeted documents, which include:

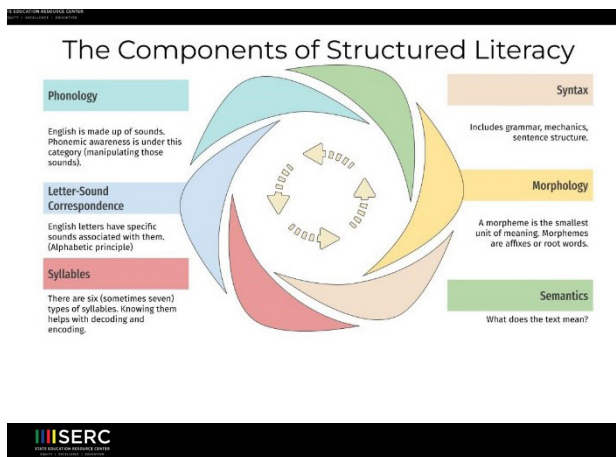
- Learning Disability Guidelines
- New IEP forms
- Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation Report (MER)
- Reading Worksheet, Mathematics Worksheet
- Written Expression Worksheet
- Connecticut Assessment Resource Guide for Specific Learning Disabilities in Reading and Written Expression.

SLD/Dyslexia Training Series

CSDE, in collaboration with SERC, sponsored an online training series featuring research-based structured literacy approaches designed to work with students with SLD/Dyslexia and other decoding challenges. The trainings offered in 2022-2023 were:

- Wilson Reading System Introductory Workshop
- Orton-Gillingham Introductory Workshop
- Lindamood-Bell Seeing Stars® Program Symbol Imagery for Phonological and Orthographic Processing in Reading and Spelling (SI)
- Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing® Program for Reading, Spelling, and Speech (LiPS)
- The Nancibell® Visualizing and Verbalizing® Language Comprehension and Thinking (V/V)

All trainings were provided at no cost to public school personnel. Each session's attendance ranged from 30-50 public school staff, including but not limited to special education teachers, general education teachers, speech-language pathologists, general and special administrators, early interventionists, and reading consultants.



SERC's Claire Conroy, a trained dyslexia practitioner, facilitated each session answering questions specific to Connecticut public schools and providing numerous resources to further learning.

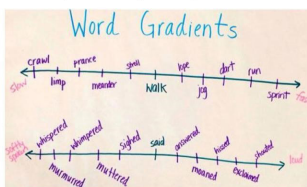
Structured Literacy Approaches: Making the Shift

Through a contract with Regional School District 14, SERC Consultant Claire Conroy presented a daylong session with the goal of supporting the district's shift from a balanced literacy approach to a structured literacy approach.

Approximately 50 elementary general and special education teachers participated in hands-on activities encompassing the six components of structured literacy, including jigsaw discussions, phonemic awareness, letter-sound correspondence, syllabication, morphology, syntax and sentence combining, fluency, and a semantic gradient activity (graphic provided). Solid participant feedback showed the session to be well-received.

Morphology

Semantic Gradients (from Reading Rockets)



CT 8th Annual Secondary Transition Symposium: “My Goals, My Future, My Life!”

SERC annually collaborates with CSDE and other partners in presenting the Connecticut Secondary Transition Symposium. The event is designed to provide learning experiences for educators/professionals and families supporting students who are preparing to transition into adult life. In addition, specific learning sessions are provided for students at the middle and high school level.

This 8th annual symposium with the theme “My Goals, My Future, My Life!” continued to build the capacity of educators and other professionals to help ensure successful postsecondary outcomes.

Symposium sponsors included:

- CT Department of Developmental Services (DDS)
- CT Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS)
- CT Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC)
- The Regional Educational Service Centers Alliance
- The University of Connecticut Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD)
- The CT Youth Advisory Board
- The CT Youth Council

The event once again featured Dan Habib, who was joined by his son Samuel to kick off the Symposium on Day 1. Dan began with his most popular keynote presentation, “Disabling Segregation,” sharing how an inclusive education and social life has prepared his son Samuel for transition to higher education and employment, as well as the powerful impact that inclusion has on students and adults without disabilities. Samuel and Dan shared their new short film “My Disability Roadmap,” and discussed how they have worked to build a culture of inclusion in their family, school district, and community, while planning for a full adult life as Samuel enters his 20s. Dan returned on Day 3 to close the Symposium.



Left: Dan Habib, Keynote Speaker

Right: Samuel Habib, Keynote Speaker

Breakout Sessions were offered within three strands: Family, Student/Youth, and Educator/Professional.

February 7th 8:30-10:30 am: Welcoming Address and Keynote Presentation by Dan and Samuel Habib

10:45am to 12:15pm: Get Ready for College: Tips for Success, Secondary Transition Discussion with CT State Agencies, Strategies to Support Mental Health, and Work-Based Learning

February 14th 12:30-2:00pm: Resources, Services, and Supports in CT, Navigating Postsecondary Education, Making Community Connections, and Transition Assessment

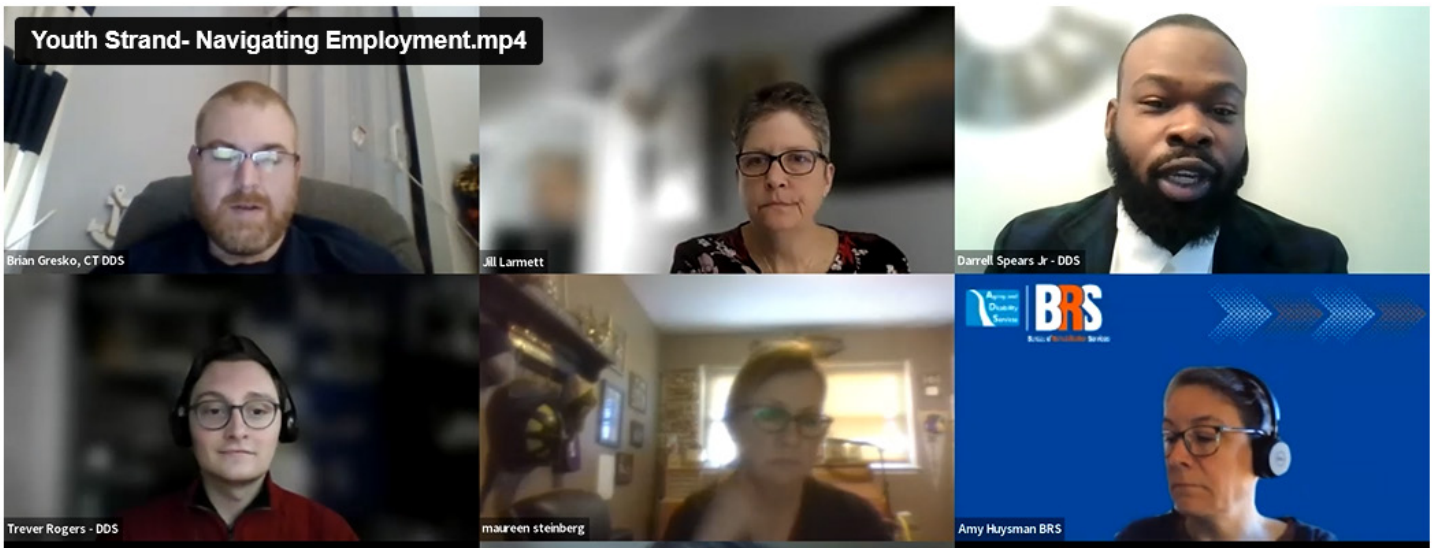
2:15-3:45pm: Transition Planning in the New IEP, Navigating Employment, Overview of Customized Employment in CT, and Transition Planning in the New IEP/Q&A

February 28th 5:30-7:30pm: “Creating a Road Map for Inclusive IEPs and Transition” by Dan Habib



Left: Keynote Presenters Dan Habib and his son Samuel (bottom left and right) and CT young adults supporting the session.

Below: Participants attending the Youth Strand – Navigating Employment session.



In addition to organizing and facilitating the symposium, SERC works with CSDE on year-long planning meetings. SERC consultants, project specialists, and tech support coordinated the virtual platform, facilitated breakout sessions and provided training sessions.



SERC Consultants Nikki Hendry and Christine Kuehlewind at Greenwich High School

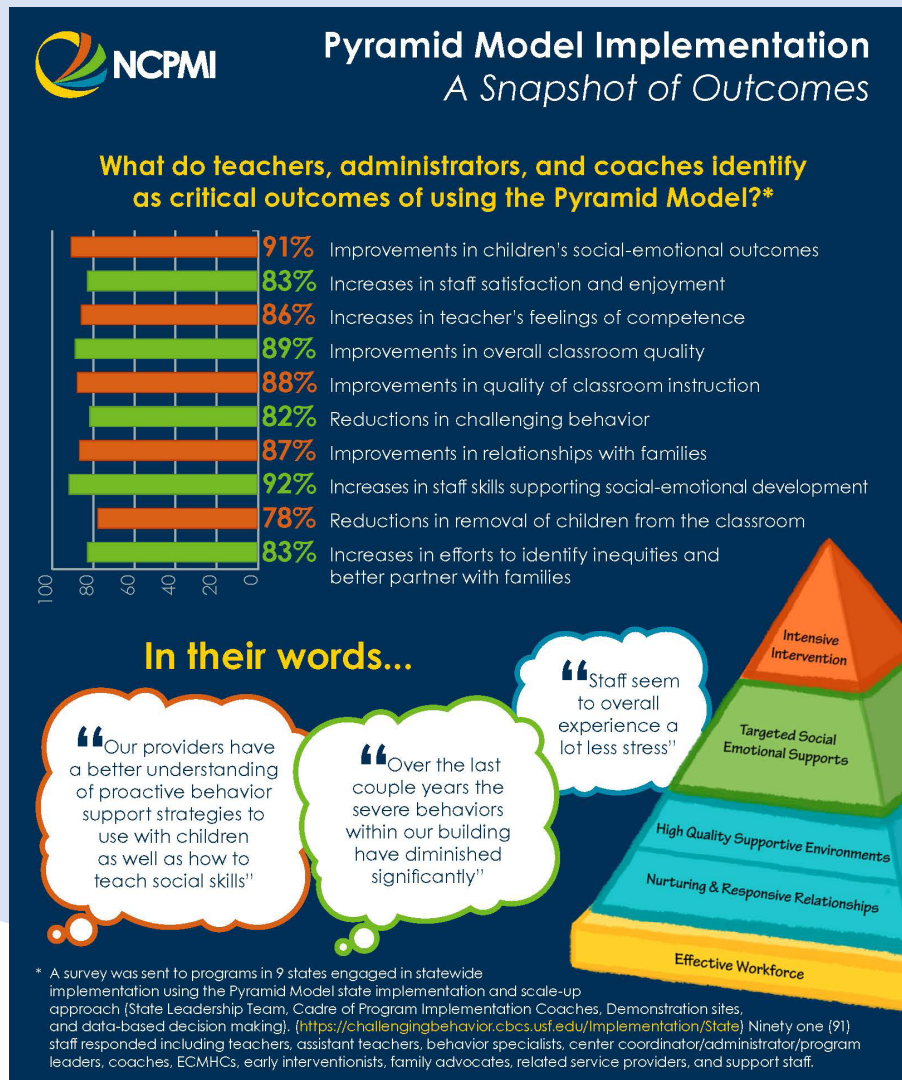
Greenwich High School: Co-Teaching

During a one day SERC facilitated training session in June 2023, Greenwich High School General and Special Education Teams immersed themselves in 6 co-teaching approaches, building parity with their co-teaching partners and collaboratively planning for instruction.

SERC Consultants Nikki Hendry and Christine Kuehlewind reviewed the following co-teaching approaches:

- one teach/one observe
- one teach/one assist
- teaming
- parallel teaching
- station teaching
- alternative teaching

EARLY CHILDHOOD





ChallengingBehavior.org Pub: 09/20/21
The republication of this document is encouraged. Permission to copy is not required. If modified or used in another format, please cite original source. This is a product of the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations and was made possible by Cooperative Agreement #H3268170003 which is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

Pyramid Model Program Coaching

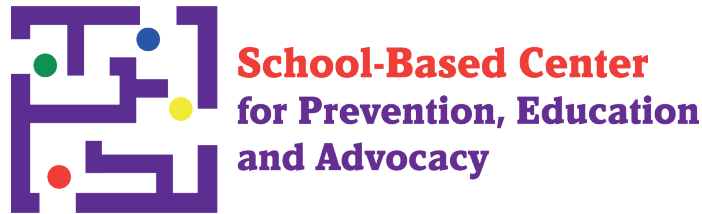
In the spring of 2023, SERC Consultant Paquita Jarman-Smith provided coaching under the Pyramid Model framework to the Women’s League in Hartford. Pyramid Partnership is funded by the CT Office of Early Childhood in partnership with the Pyramid Model Consortium in supporting building capacity of the Pyramid Model in Connecticut. Program staff and coaches work together to set goals and make changes supporting the implementation of Pyramid Model practices and high-quality learning experiences.

This program implements evidence-based practices that:

- Build positive relationship
- Develop supportive and nurturing environments
- Provide individualized supports to address persistent challenging behavior when needed

The Pyramid Model stresses the importance of teams, coaching, and data-based decision making.

PARTNERING WITH DMHAS ON SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION



In August of 2022, SERC announced the development and operation of the School-Based Center for Prevention, Education and Advocacy through an extended partnership with the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). The effort reflects the state's continued focus on addressing substance misuse as evidenced by Gov. Ned Lamont proclaiming August 31 Overdose Awareness Day, "We continue to provide programs and services to our schools and communities as we collectively create equitable and safe learning environments for our young people, and we look forward to this ongoing support in substance misuse prevention as well," said SERC Executive Director Ingrid M. Canady. "The school-based center will help schools connect to what they need before the next crisis."

Under this initiative, SERC collaborates with other agencies on shared resources, reviewing and collecting data on risk and protective factors influencing student behavior, raising awareness and involving the school community in preventing substance misuse while engaging families and the wider community. The SERC Library serves as a hub of information for the new center to disseminate to schools and their communities.

The center is a natural extension of SERC's collaborative work with DMHAS under a 2018 State Opioid Response Grant from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Under the grant, SERC has developed programming and materials and held conferences, virtual workshops, and technical assistance on school-based substance misuse.

The Center provides culturally conscious services and resources including:

- Prevention Education and Advocacy Collection
- Centralized location for data and experience sharing
- Centralized location for regional resources
- New online substance use prevention knowledge and awareness course
- On- site and/ or virtual coaching and technical assistance for school districts and youth programs to help assess and strengthen prevention efforts



SERC Consultant Bianca Irizarry leads and coordinates the initiatives of the School-Based Center for Prevention, Education and Advocacy.

Library

The SERC Library serves as a central repository for substance use prevention curricula and school-centered, evidence-based programs, resources and tools for K-12 educators. The library includes The Prevention, Education and Advocacy Collection, Curriculum and Program Materials, and the Children and Family Collection.



Marketing

News of the Center's launch was shared through a marketing initiative to raise awareness and inform schools, partners and community about the resources offered. The initiative included the unveiling of the website, postcard mailings, promotional video, email campaign banners, posters and social media. To learn more please visit <https://prevention.serc.co/>

A marketing banner featuring the School-Based Center logo and a photograph of a teacher and students looking at a laptop. The text reads: "INTRODUCING! Substance Use Prevention Resources Especially for Schools".

A marketing banner featuring the School-Based Center logo and a photograph of a teacher and students in a classroom setting. The text reads: "NEW Prevention Resources for Your Classroom!".

Samples of Marketing Materials announcing the Center's launch

A large vertical marketing banner. At the top is the School-Based Center logo. Below it is a photograph of a teacher and students. The text reads: "Click for RESOURCES AND SUPPORT for Teachers and Their Students". At the bottom are the logos for dmhas (CT Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services) and SERC.

A large horizontal marketing banner. It features the School-Based Center logo and a collage of three photographs: a teacher at a laptop, a teacher and students looking at a laptop, and a teacher and students in a classroom. The text reads: "INTRODUCING! Substance Use Prevention Resources Especially for Schools".

Statewide School District Outreach

SERC prevention staff surveyed Connecticut school districts to explore their current practices regarding prevention programs already being implementing around mental health, suicide prevention, substance misuse prevention, and social-emotional learning. The survey covers which programs are being used, impacts of the programs, and prevention priorities for districts.

The results were made publicly available through the Center for use by school districts, the Regional Behavioral Health Action Organizations (RBHAOs) and other DMHAS Links members, and community partners. The public dissemination of results provided opportunities for districts to share knowledge and showcase best practices and lessons learned, and build a community of practice, mentoring links, and other support systems to further connect districts together to leverage their experience and knowledge around use of these programs.

SERC and DMHAS Partnerships

Resource Links

SERC partners with the Resource Links such as the RBHAO's, Governor's Prevention Partnership, TTASC and CPES to provide prevention within the state of Connecticut.

Boys and Girls Club

Under an MOA, SERC collaborated with the Boys & Girls Club to reduce and prevent substance misuse by strengthening prevention knowledge amongst youth and in schools with prevention efforts. This includes education for staff, information for parents, and positive role modelling for youth.

Opportunities Industrialization Center of New Britain

Under an MOA, SERC collaborated with OIC of New Britain to reduce and prevent substance misuse amongst youth. Programs goals were to develop and conduct outreach efforts on prevention.

Faith and Education Coalition of NHCLC, CT

Under an MOA, SERC partnered with Faith and Education Coalition of NHCLC, CT to support outreach, family engagement and community partnerships and build prevention strategies. Youth and families engaged in regular sessions covering topics such as building blocks of prevention, effective communication, empowerment and character building.



DMHAS partners come together for collaboration and networking in May 2023

BY DEFAULT OR BY DESIGN



Keynote Speaker Dr. Jamila Lyiscott aka, Dr. J presenting at the virtual mini-summit

Prevention Mini-Summit 2023

On May 18, 2023 through a collaboration between DMHAS and SERC, a virtual mini-summit celebrated the new center and focused on Youth Drug Prevention, Advocacy, and Education. The Summit connected schools and youth to content on topics including, identity, empowerment, community, partnerships and more. Keynote speaker Jamila Lyiscott, aka, Dr. J, aspiring way-maker, community-engaged scholar and nationally renowned speaker. engaged and motivated participants with her keynote presentation.

YOUTH & FAMILIES

Now in its sixth year, the Special Education Youth Advisory Council (SEYAC), coordinated by SERC Consultant Nicole Vitale, engages and supports middle and high school students with disabilities to share their special education experiences and increase their capacity to make informed decisions regarding their educational programming. During 2022-2023, more than 120 students from 9 school districts participated.



SERC Consultant Nicole Vitale with presenter Jordan Toma



Youth Advisory Council Symposium participants and facilitators

Youth Advisory Council Symposium

On May 16, 2023, students heard from Jordan Toma, author of "I'm Just a Kid with an IEP," who shared his experience with anxiety and learning disabilities growing up. He discussed how his "struggle became his strength," pushing through to become a successful financial broker and business owner who travels the world sharing his inspiring and motivational story. Student feedback showed that they truly felt connected to the presentation and left feeling motivated to stay focused in school. Amanda Gregg, a college student and a three-time national Taekwondo champion who earned the opportunity to represent the United States among 25 countries at an invitational in Australia, also presented. Amanda, who has autism, shared how she overcame many challenges and how learning taekwondo helped to improve her self-confidence and inspired her work helping other students with disabilities.



Students at Sunset Ridge MS in East Hartford participated in the Youth Leadership for Equity

Youth Leadership for Equity

Students at Sunset Ridge Middle School in East Hartford participated in the Youth Leadership for Equity Program which began in 2021 and continued through 2023. The students were initially part of a newly formed equity team and in 2021 joined listening circles to share feedback regarding experiences in school which helped contribute to a more positive environment for all students. They participated in training to understand how aspects of their identity impact their capacity and efficacy and influence their educational community, and learned

methods and tools to engage in transformational discourse. At the start of 2022, SERC consultants Nicole Vitale, Malik Champlain and Christina Simms along with students from the equity team met at the school library and discussed what they learned over the past year. At the end of the 2023 session eighth grade students presented to 7th grade students (who were new members of the equity team) to share their experiences, engage in team-building activities and share their perspective on what can be done to improve the school community. Eighth graders also met with a newly formed teacher equity team and shared their learnings.

Engaging our Communities & Families



SERC is one of five agencies comprising the Connecticut Family School Partnerships (CFSP), created out of a federal grant to design a Statewide Family Engagement Center for Connecticut. The CFSP promotes shared leadership between schools and families, partnerships to promote equal voice, and a comprehensive web-based hub for family engagement resources and information. Led by primary grantee the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC), collaborating partners also include CSDE, CPAC (the Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center), and the African Caribbean American Parents of Children with Disabilities (AFCAMP).

SERC's efforts under the CFSP have focused on professional learning for schools and community agencies and direct service and training for families, specifically:

- Supporting activities identified in the grant that are specific to SERC's strengths and outreach to culturally responsive, relevant, and conscious approaches to family engagement; and
- Building the capacity of families, schools, and communities to construct a robust system of family engagement support and training to ensure that students benefit academically, socially, and emotionally, stay in school, and graduate on time.

A brief summary of 2022-2023 trainings, sessions, and activities follows below.

IDENTITY, ANTI-RACISM AND BELONGING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

*Creating Joyful and Liberated
Early Childhoods for all*

Anahsa, an education-focused consulting firm, guides individuals and organizations to use anti-racist and holistic frameworks and concepts to better understand the impacts of systems of oppression on children, schooling, and the educational system at large.

TAKIEMA BUNCHE SMITH
MS Ed, MPA
CEO | Anahsa Consulting

In the fall of 2022, Takiema Bunche Smith, CEO of Anahsa Consulting, presented two learning sessions for educators and caregivers. They focused on how racism and bias impacts the early childhood field, how preschools socialize young children into racial and cultural identities, and on exploring models of antiracism and anti-bias in early childhood environments.

AFFINITY SPACE: African American/Black Male Educators

On December 8, 2022, SERC Consultants Malik Champlain, Eben McKnight and Dwight Sharpe along with educator Leonard Epps presented a session aimed at connecting, supporting, and empowering African American/Black male educators in Connecticut, and cultivating a safe space for male educators who identify as African American or Black to have authentic and open conversations and affirm their unique experiences and identities.



AFFINITY SPACE: African-American/Black Male Educators

Thursday, December 8, 2022
6:00pm-7:30pm

Presenters:
Leonard Epps, Educator/Ankhitect
Malik Champlain,
Eben McKnight &
Dwight Sharpe, SERC Consultants

For **content questions**, contact
Malik Champlain, SERC Consultant,
champlain@ctserc.org.

CREATING A SAFE AND INCLUSIVE SPACE FOR *Black Girl Brilliance*

Tuesday, December 13, 2022
11:30am – 1:00pm

Presenters:
Shauna Brown, Teach for the
Culture, LLC

This session focuses on the experiences of Black girls in education. Participants will discuss what it means to cultivate safe, affirming, and inclusive spaces for Black girls in schools, how we can build upon



CREATING A SAFE AND INCLUSIVE SPACE FOR Black Girl Brilliance

This December 13, 2022 session focused on the experiences of Black girls in education. More than 70 participants met virtually to discuss what it means to cultivate safe, affirming, and inclusive spaces for Black girls in schools, how to build upon the brilliance of Black girls, and how to navigate some of the barriers preventing Black girls to fully thrive within educational spaces. Presenter Shauna Brown with Teach for the Culture, LLC facilitated.

Raising Highly Capable Kids


Raising Highly Capable Kids is an interactive curriculum for families based on the 40 Developmental Assets from The Search Institute. It supports families by equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to raise resilient and capable children while ensuring holistic development (physical, social and emotional success).

The curriculum emphasizes connection and relationship by “promoting meaningful connections, open communication, love and trust between parents and their children”.

It also provides parents with tools to build resilience and perseverance during challenging times, while empowering them with skills and knowledge to strengthen and supporting their role as parents.

During the 2022-2023 year, SERC Consultant Nitza M. Diaz coordinated both English and Spanish sessions with facilitation by the following partners: Lourdes Delgado, Sardis Alegria, Jason Martinez, Ayo Haynes, Arden Santana and Belito Garcia.


The following are samples of the many positive comments parents, caregivers and facilitators provided the about the trainings:



Arden Santana

“I'm more mindful about taking my children's perspective into consideration regarding my parenting style and decision making. The assets are a reference point for parental problem solving. I became a facilitator so that I can be a resource for other parents who take parenting seriously!”

Throughout this summer, we will focus on Restraint, Resistance Skills and Self-Esteem with our daughters.



Diondrea & Leon Brown

“I am more patient with my children.”
~Diondrea

“I have implemented improved communication.” ~Leon

The Assets we are working on are:
Positive Family Communication
Boundaries
Planning and Decision Making

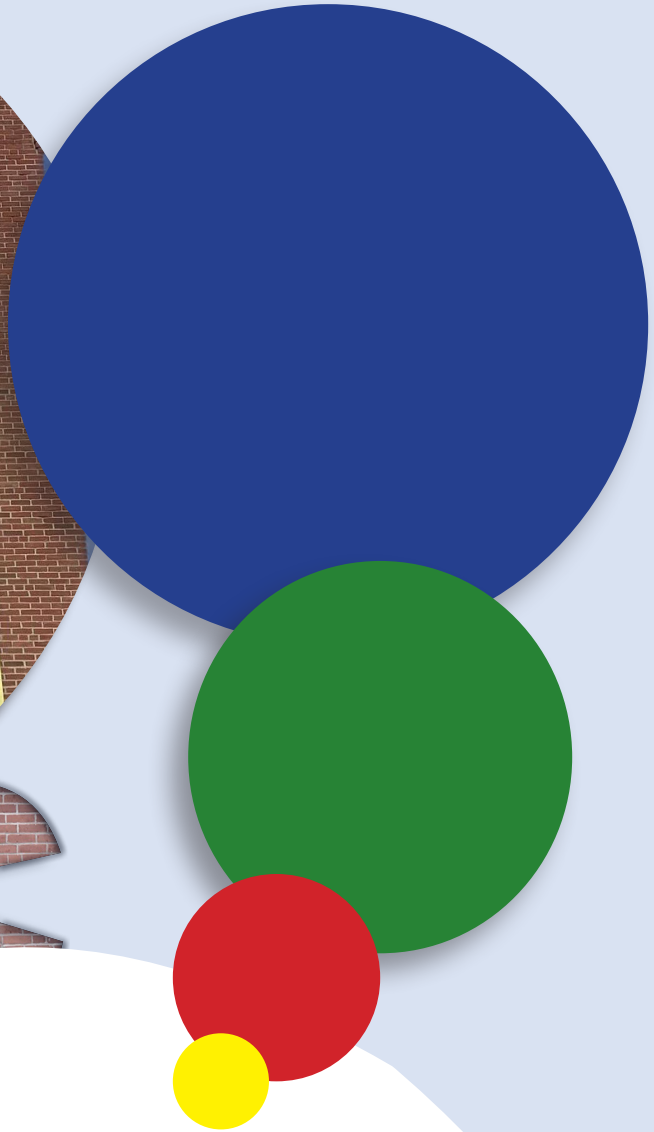
Mayerlin Gomez

He estado aplicando la autorregulación, Elemento #31. En lo personal como mamá necesito tener control de mi situación/emociones. Al igual, tengo que aplicarlo también en mi hija. También he aplicado la motivación personal, elogiando las fortalezas de mi hija y #2 Comunicacion y voy a enfocar en #30 Responsabilidad



The sessions culminated in a graduation celebration on June 1, 2023 at Housatonic Community College.





OUR MISSION:

SERC PROVIDES RESOURCES, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND A CENTRALIZED LIBRARY TO EDUCATORS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN COLLABORATION WITH THE CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND OTHER PARTNERS.

STAY IN TOUCH:

(860) 632-1485

info@ctserc.org

www.ctserc.org

175 UNION STREET, WATERBURY, CT 06706

 **SERC**
STATE EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTER
EQUITY | EXCELLENCE | EDUCATION