

What are Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs) and how many are there?

Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs), established in state statute in 1972,¹ are voluntary regional partnerships made up of local and regional school districts created to provide cost-effective education resources, programs, and services.² There are six RESCs in Connecticut:³

- Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES), which covers south-central Connecticut and includes most of New Haven County;
- Capitol Region Education Council (CREC), which covers north-central Connecticut and includes most of Hartford County;
- Cooperative Educational Services (C.E.S.), which covers lower Fairfield County;
- EASTCONN, which covers northeast Connecticut and includes all of Windham County, most of Tolland County, and upper New London County;
- EdAdvance, which covers northwest Connecticut and includes most of Litchfield County and upper Fairfield County; and
- LEARN, which covers southeast Connecticut and includes parts of New London, Middlesex, and New Haven Counties.

What do RESCs do? What programs/services do they offer?

RESCs offer fee-based services and programs⁴ to public and private school districts, municipalities, and nonprofits.⁵ The programs and services are tailored to the needs of the RESC's members, and can vary from one RESC to another.⁶ The RESC Alliance^A provides 14 examples of programs offered by RESCs:⁷

- Adult Education and Job Training;
- Advocacy;
- Cooperative Purchasing;
- Curriculum Development and Assistance;
- Data Systems Design and Support;
- Early Childhood Programs, Coaching, and Support;
- Magnet Schools and Choice Programs;
- Diversifying the Educator Workforce;
- Professional Learning;
- Regional Transportation;
- School Construction Support;
- School Improvement Support;
- Special Education and Related Services; and
- Technology Support and Training.

^A The six RESCs created the RESC Alliance in the 1990s to improve collaboration amongst themselves. The RESC Alliance develops programs that address statewide public education issues and advocate at the state legislature.

RESC Alliance (n.d.). About Us. Retrieved from <https://www.rescalliance.org/about>.

School districts, towns, and nonprofit organizations taking advantage of a RESC's cooperative purchasing services — whether located in the RESC's geographic region or not⁸ — can, for instance, take advantage of construction services such as construction development and planning, budgeting and forecasting, energy efficiency measures, remote monitoring, and closeout services,⁹ or purchase classroom materials or fuel oil.¹⁰

Do RESCs operate magnet schools?

RESCs are considered local education agencies (LEAs)¹¹ and are eligible to operate interdistrict magnet schools.¹² All RESCs except EdAdvance operate interdistrict magnet schools.¹³ Additionally, most RESCs operate special education schools that can specialize in autism spectrum disorder;¹⁴ development, social emotional, and behavior disabilities;¹⁵ or hearing loss.¹⁶

Magnet schools are a type of public school choice program, intended to promote racial, ethnic, and economic diversity, and offer students a specialized and high-quality curriculum.¹⁷ Interdistrict magnet schools can serve students across district lines, as well as students residing in the district in which the school is located.¹⁸

The use of state-funded interdistrict magnet schools was increased to meet the State of Connecticut's obligations under the Connecticut Supreme Court's 1996 ruling in *Sheff v. O'Neill* and the case's subsequent stipulated agreements and permanent injunction.¹⁹ Currently, only RESCs and local boards of education operate interdistrict magnet schools.

How are RESCs governed?

Each RESC is governed by a board made up of representatives from participating boards of education.²⁰ The RESC board is authorized to: carry debt; receive and disburse public and private funds; employ personnel; enter into contracts; receive, hold, and convey real or personal property; and otherwise provide the services and activities agreed upon by the member boards of education.²¹ The RESC board may create and delegate these powers to an executive board.²² Boards of education not located within geographical area of a RESC can join with the approval of a majority of a RESC's board.²³ Board members are not compensated for their service, but may be reimbursed for necessary expenses.²⁴

How are RESCs funded?

All RESCs typically have similar funding sources, however, the degree to which a RESC relies on each source varies from one to the other. Generally, RESCs rely on a combination of: state and federal grants and contracts;²⁵ member dues;²⁶ fee-for-service work for member districts, out-of-district LEAs, municipalities, and state agencies;²⁷ and private donations and fundraising.²⁸

Connecticut statute provides for an annual grant for RESCs.²⁹ A formula is applied to the total regional education services appropriation to determine each RESC's grant amount.³⁰

- 50 percent of the appropriation is divided equally among the RESCs;³¹
- 25 percent of the appropriation is multiplied by the ratio of the number of the RESC's member boards of education to the total number of statewide boards of education;³² and
- The final 25 percent is multiplied by the ratio of the sum of the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grants for the RESC's member boards of education to the total ECS appropriation.³³

The State allocated approximately \$200.3 million to RESCs in FY 2023. With budgets for the RESCs ranging from approximately \$40,552,798³⁴ to over \$428,252,237,³⁵ state funding is often a small portion of overall RESC funding.³⁶

Additional state funds are expected for RESC-operated magnet schools starting in FY 2025. In the biennial budget for FYs 2024 and 2025, \$150 million was allocated for Education Finance Reform in FY 2025 – \$40.2 million of which will be used to increase per-student grant amounts to interdistrict magnet school operators that are not local or regional boards of education. It is unclear the impact additional funds will have on RESCs. The adopted budget will also limit magnet school tuition beginning in FY 2025 to 58 percent of the amount from the previous year. Lastly, it is unclear how state per-student grants will increase after FY 2025.

For state-funded operating grants, funding for RESC magnet schools^B is divided into two overarching categories: *Sheff* and non-*Sheff* regions.³⁷ Funding for both is dependent on the sending districts for the RESC magnet school's students.

RESC-operated *Sheff* magnet schools with less than 60 percent of their students from Hartford receive more than RESC-operated *Sheff* magnets with more than 60 percent of their students from Hartford. Similarly, RESC-operated non-*Sheff* magnet schools with less than 55 percent of their students from a single town receive more than RESC-operated non-*Sheff* magnets with more than 55 percent of their students from a single town.

These formulas, which are summarized in the table below, serve to encourage more diverse student population at interdistrict magnet schools.³⁸

^B For more information about magnet school funding, please see: School and State Finance Project. (2023). *Guide to Connecticut's Magnet Schools*. Hamden, CT: Author. Retrieved from <https://schoolstatefinance.org/resource-assets/Guide-to-CTs-Magnet-Schools.pdf>.

Table 13⁹

	Operator	Enrollment Criteria	FY 2024		FY 2025 and each FY thereafter	
			In-district (or dominant district) Per-Student Grant	Out-of-district (or non-dominant district) Per-Student Grant	In-district (or dominant district) Per-Student Grant	Out-of-district (or non-dominant district) Per-Student Grant
Non-Sheff	Host District	Between 55 and 75 percent of enrollment from a single district	\$3,060	\$7,227	At least \$3,060	At least \$7,227
	RESC	Less than 55 percent of enrollment from a single district	\$8,058	\$8,058	At least \$8,058	At least \$8,058
	RESC	At least 55 percent of enrollment from a single district	\$3,060	\$7,227	At least \$3,060	At least \$7,227
	RESC-operated magnet school that began operations between July 1, 2001 and July 1, 2008 (Edison Magnet School in Meriden)	Between 55 and 80 percent of enrollment from a single district	Edison Magnet Grant ended in FY 2022	Edison Magnet Grant ended in FY 2022	Edison Magnet Grant ended in FY 2022	Edison Magnet Grant ended in FY 2022
Sheff	RESC (or non-local public school district, or Great Path Academy)	Between 50 and 60 percent of enrollment from Hartford	\$10,652	\$10,652	At least \$10,652	At least \$10,652
	RESC (or non-local public school district, or Great Path Academy) for 2015-16 and later classes	Less than 50 percent of enrollment from Hartford	\$10,652	\$8,058 for ½ of non-Hartford students above the 50 percent enrollment ^c	At least \$10,652	At least \$8,058 for ½ of non-Hartford students above the 50

^c The commissioner of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) may, upon request, waive the 50 percent non-Hartford enrollment threshold for good cause. Conn. Acts 21-2 (June Special Session).

	Operator	Enrollment Criteria	FY 2024		FY 2025 and each FY thereafter	
			In-district (or dominant district) Per-Student Grant	Out-of-district (or non-dominant district) Per-Student Grant	In-district (or dominant district) Per-Student Grant	Out-of-district (or non-dominant district) Per-Student Grant
				\$10,652 for all other non-Hartford students		percent enrollment ^D At least \$10,652 for all other non-Hartford students
	Host District	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	\$13,315	Not Applicable	At least \$13,315

RESC-operated interdistrict magnet schools can also charge tuition to sending districts.⁴⁰ The amount of tuition charged cannot bring a RESC's average spending per-student above 120 percent of the statewide average per-student expenditure, which is the maximum allowable threshold beginning in FY 2024.⁴¹ However, beginning in FY 2025, magnet school operators are not allowed to charge more than 58 percent of the prior year's tuition.⁴²

Table 2⁴³

	Operator	FY 24 Tuition Amounts and Limits	FY 25 Onwards Tuition Amounts and Limits
Non-Sheff	Host District	Operator must apply to the CSDE and the commissioner of the CSDE must take into consideration the average per-student expenditure of the operator and any state grants received on a per-student basis before the operator can charge tuition.	Operators can charge up to a maximum of 58% of any per-student regular education tuition charged in FY 24.
	RESC	Operator can charge the difference between the average per-student expenditure from the prior fiscal year and any grants received from the State on a per-student basis.	Operators can charge up to a maximum of 58% of any per-student regular education tuition charged in FY 24.
	RESC	Operator can charge the difference between the average per-student expenditure from the prior fiscal year and any grants	Operators can charge up to a maximum of 58% of any per-student regular education tuition charged in FY 24.

^D Ibid.

	Operator	FY 24 Tuition Amounts and Limits	FY 25 Onwards Tuition Amounts and Limits
		received from the State on a per-student basis.	
	RESC-operated magnet school that began operations between July 1, 2001 and July 1, 2008 (Edison Magnet School in Meriden)	Operator can charge the difference between the average per-student expenditure from the prior fiscal year and any grants received from the State on a per-student basis.	Operators can charge up to a maximum of 58% of any per-student regular education tuition charged in FY 24.
Sheff	RESC (or non-local public school district, or Great Path Academy)	Operator can charge the difference between the average per-student expenditure from the prior fiscal year and any grants received from the State on a per-student basis.	Operators can charge up to a maximum of 58% of any per-student regular education tuition charged in FY 24.
	RESC (or non-local public school district, or Great Path Academy) for 2015-16 and later classes	Operator can charge the difference between the average per-student expenditure from the prior fiscal year and any grants received from the State on a per-student basis.	Operators can charge up to a maximum of 58% of any per-student regular education tuition charged in FY 24.
	Host District	Operators are prohibited from charging tuition.	Operators are prohibited from charging tuition.

State statute also provides transportation grants through the CSDE on a per-student basis for students attending interdistrict magnet schools outside of the district in which they reside.⁴⁴ These grant amounts differ depending on whether or not a magnet school is in the *Sheff* region.⁴⁵ Currently, the General Assembly appropriates funds for schools in both *Sheff* and non-*Sheff* regions. In FY 2024, schools operating in the *Sheff* region are expected to receive \$71 million for transportation, while schools in the non-*Sheff* region will receive \$15 million.

For students attending an interdistrict magnet school in the same district in which they reside, the local or regional board of education is required to provide the same kind of transportation to the interdistrict magnet school students that it provides for students attending its local or regional public school.⁴⁶

Table 3⁴⁷

Per-Student Transportation Grants for Interdistrict Magnet Schools	
Operator Type	Per-Student Grant Amounts
Host Districts and RESCs	\$1,300
CREC and host districts assisting the State in meeting the requirements of the <i>Sheff</i> Stipulated Agreements and Permanent Injunction	\$2,000 plus any additional supplemental grants within available appropriations. All state transportation funding is currently directed to CREC.

Endnotes

- ¹ Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 172, § 10-66ca.
- ² RESC Alliance. (n.d.). About Us. Retrieved from <http://www.rescalliance.org/about/>.
- ³ RESC Alliance. (n.d.). Find Your RESC. Retrieved from <http://www.rescalliance.org/>.
- ⁴ RESC Alliance. (n.d.). About Us. Retrieved from <http://www.rescalliance.org/about/>.
- ⁵ Connecticut Association of School Business Officials. (2015). *Shared Service Whitepaper*. West Hartford, CT: Author. Retrieved from http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.ct-asbo.org/resource/resmgr/CASBO_Shared_Services_Whitep.pdf.
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ RESC Alliance. (n.d.). RESC Programs & Services. Retrieved from <http://www.rescalliance.org/programs/>.
- ⁸ Capitol Region Education Council. (2018). *2017-2018 Annual Report*. Hartford, CT: Author. Retrieved from http://www.crec.org/about/docs/annual/AR_2018.pdf.
- ⁹ Connecticut Association of School Business Officials. (2015). *Shared Service Whitepaper*. West Hartford, CT: Author. Retrieved from http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.ct-asbo.org/resource/resmgr/CASBO_Shared_Services_Whitep.pdf.
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ RESC Alliance. (2013). *Connecticut's Regional Educational Service Centers* [PowerPoint slides]. Hartford, CT: Author. Retrieved from http://www2.housedems.ct.gov/more/BOE/pubs/RESC_Presentation.pdf.
- ¹² Moran, J.D., & Bolger, A. (2018). *Comparison of Charter, Magnet, Agricultural Science Centers, and Technical High Schools* (2018-R-0030). Hartford, CT: Connecticut General Assembly, Office of Legislative Research. Retrieved from <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2018/rpt/pdf/2018-R-0030.pdf>.
- ¹³ Connecticut State Department of Education. (n.d.). EdSight: Public School Enrollment. Available from <http://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>.
- ¹⁴ ACES, Center for Autism Spectrum and Developmental Disorders. (n.d.). Schools & Programs: Overview. Retrieved from <https://www.aces.org/schools-programs/special-education-schools/center-for-autism-spectrum-and-developmental-disorders/about-us/overview>.
- ¹⁵ LEARN. (n.d.). Student Support Services. Retrieved from <http://learnstudentsupportservices.org/>.
- ¹⁶ CREC. (n.d.). About Soundbridge. Retrieved from <http://www.crec.org/soundbridge/index.php>.
- ¹⁷ Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 172, § 10-264l.
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ Lohman, J. (2010). *OLR Backgrounder: State Funding for Interdistrict Magnet Schools* (2010-R-0399). Hartford, CT: Connecticut General Assembly, Office of Legislative Research. Retrieved from <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2010/rpt/2010-r-0399.htm>.
- ²⁰ Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 164, § 10-66b.
- ²¹ Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 164, § 10-66c.
- ²² Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 164, § 10-66b.
- ²³ Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 164, § 10-66l.
- ²⁴ Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 164, § 10-66b.
- ²⁵ EdAdvance. (2019). *Annual Report 2019*. Litchfield, CT: Author. Retrieved from https://edadvance.org/uploads/files/About_Us/Annual_Report_2019.pdf.
- ²⁶ Capitol Region Education Council. (2018). *2017-2018 Annual Report*. Hartford, CT: Author. Retrieved from http://www.crec.org/about/docs/annual/AR_2018.pdf.
- ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸ Cooperative Educational Services. (2019). *2018-19 Annual Report*. Trumbull, CT: Author. Retrieved from <https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1568043244/ces/ham3prpa3pjgfdlgddvj/cesannualreport2018-19.pdf>.
- ²⁹ Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 164, § 10-66j(b).
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 164, § 10-66j(b)(1).
- ³² Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 164, § 10-66j(b)(2).
- ³³ Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 164, § 10-66j(b)(3).
- ³⁴ EdAdvance. (2022). *Annual Report 2022*. Litchfield, CT: Author. Retrieved from <https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.edadvance.org/About+Us/Publications%2C+Media+%26+Other+Resources/Annual+Reports/Annual+Report+2021-2022+COMPILED.pdf>.

³⁵ CREC. (2022). Annual Report, 2021-2022. Hartford, CT: Author. Retrieved from https://www.crec.org/about/docs/annual/AR_2022.pdf.

³⁶ State of Connecticut, Office of the State Comptroller. (n.d.). Open Budget: Regional Education Services. Available from <https://openbudget.ct.gov/#!/year/default>.

³⁷ Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 172, § 10-264i.

³⁸ Lohman, J. (2010). *OLR Backgrounder: State Funding for Interdistrict Magnet Schools (2010-R-0399)*. Hartford, CT: Connecticut General Assembly, Office of Legislative Research. Retrieved from <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2010/rpt/2010-r-0399.htm>.

³⁹ Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 172, § 10-264i.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Conn. Acts 23-204.

⁴³ Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 172, § 10-264i.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.