

WHERE TO FIND FUNDS FOR DISTRICT PROGRESS MONITORING

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Connecticut is refining and expanding its Next Generation Accountability System. Using the revised framework, the Connecticut State Department of Education will publish data that will show Local Education Agency, school, and subgroup performance across a range of performance indicators, and will continue to use that data to identify schools that need support and improvement. The CSDE is tentatively planning to identify new schools for support in Categories 4 and 5 in December 2018.

The state will use lagging data, from the previous academic year or even earlier. This presents a challenge for districts wanting to get ahead of this. What tools will your district use to monitor progress against state indicators in real time, so you know you're on track to meet state benchmarks?

On January 31, 2017, Schoolzilla launched its new district performance-management tool, Mosaic District Progress Monitoring. Mosaic District Progress Monitoring provides a curated view of your district's key performance indicators (KPIs) and goals in real time. With Mosaic District Progress Monitoring, you can track progress on your district's strategic plan, monitor and improve performance on your state's accountability system, and share progress with your team, school board, and community. If your district is interested in a tool like this but is hoping for additional financial support to make it happen, keep reading for some ideas for where to look.

Types of Funding Opportunities

Project Budgets

Many funders (including several referenced here) prefer to fund specific projects rather than general operating expenses. It is likely that your district has undertaken specific projects aligned with your strategic plan and performance goals, such as implementing programs for literacy, personalized learning, or career and college readiness. Having access to real-time data on relevant metrics, such as student performance on standards-based assessments or rates of core course failures among high school students, is essential to your district's ability to implement, monitor, and evaluate these projects. Therefore, you can and should include the cost (or at least a portion of it) for a performance-management tool such as District Progress Monitoring in your project budgets.

General Operating Budgets

Other funders specify that they are open to supporting mission-aligned organizations by providing funding for general operating or capacity-building expenses. In these cases, a performance-management tool is an excellent investment in developing the capacity of your district to meet its goals and operate effectively and efficiently.

Following is a list of funding opportunities. Explore them to see whether your project or organization matches their priorities. We have identified these funders for their focus on education and history of funding schools and/or school districts.

Nationwide Opportunities

[Albertsons Companies Foundation](#)

The Albertsons Companies Foundation provides local organizations (including schools and districts) with grants for youth and education projects in certain communities. Check the website to see whether the foundation serves your community. Grants in California require an employee sponsor.

[The Louis Calder Foundation](#)

The Louis Calder Foundation funds the expansion or development of high-performing charter schools and faith-based schools. To date, the foundation has funded schools in all regions of the United States.

[Spencer Foundation](#)

The Spencer Foundation is committed to supporting high-quality investigation of education through its research programs. The foundation supports Research Practice Partnerships between school districts and research institutions to examine problems of practice. These long-term partnership grants include funding for research infrastructure, including the collection and cleaning of data and linking different data sets. School districts that have participated in Research Practice Partnerships include Atlanta Public Schools, Spokane Public Schools, the San Francisco Unified School District, and Jefferson County Public Schools.

U.S. Department of Education

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement has issued a request for proposal (RFP) for new, competitive grant competitions: the [Education Innovation and Research \(EIR\) Competitions](#). It designed these competitions "to generate and validate solutions to persistent educational challenges and to support the expansion of effective solutions to serve more students." Recipients must use funds from this grant program to "create, develop, implement, replicate, or take to scale entrepreneurial, evidence-based, field-initiated innovations to improve student achievement and attainment of high-need students." They must also conduct a rigorous evaluation of their proposed innovations that uses valid and reliable performance data, so they should include costs associated with this evaluation in their project budgets.

[W.K. Kellogg Foundation](#)

The educational focus of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation is on ages birth to eight. The Foundation awards grants throughout the United States and prioritizes organizations serving MI, MS, NM, and New Orleans. The foundation seeks to strengthen collaboration among schools, families, and communities through its grants.

State/Region-Specific Opportunities

[Connecticut Community Foundation](#)

The Connecticut Community Foundation awards grants to support successful educational and social-emotional outcomes for youth in the 21 towns in the greater Waterbury and Litchfield Hills area.

[Hartford Foundation for Public Giving](#)

The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving supports learning "from birth through college" in the Hartford, CT area. It is particularly interested in family/school/community partnerships.

[Nellie Mae Education Foundation](#)

The strategic focus of the Nellie Mae Foundation is "advancing student-centered approaches that better prepare students for the future," especially at the high-school level. The foundation seeks to build educational ownership, leadership, and capacity through grants to develop effective systems designs in New England.

[People's United Community Foundation](#)

The People's United Community Foundation awards grants for educational and academic-improvement programs for low- to moderate-income students and at-risk children and youth. It serves organizations in the communities where People's United Bank branches are located (in CT, MA, VT, NY, NH, and ME). The foundation has provided program support to charter schools and public-school education foundations.