



Connecticut's Effort to Close the K-12 Digital Divide

KEY FACTS

In 2020, Connecticut has led the region and the country in dollars spent on closing the digital divide and aiding our schools.

- [The governor's commitment of \\$266 million amounts to one of the largest state funding plans per-student in the region and country.](#) In comparison to neighboring states, Connecticut's dedication of CARES Act Funds solely for education is 8 percent higher than both Rhode Island and Vermont, and 3 percent higher than Massachusetts.
- [Based on available data and internal analysis,](#) the governor's per-student spending on closing the digital divide ranks 1st in the region and 3rd in the nation (behind Mississippi and Alabama). The \$67.5 million includes \$43.5 million in CARES Act funds and \$24 million in funds from the Partnership for Connecticut

Top 5 Per-Student Spending on Closing the Digital Divide, by State

Rank	State	Nominal Spending	2020 Enrollment	Per Student Spend
1	Mississippi	\$200,000,000	460,600	\$434.22
2	Alabama	\$114,000,000	732,900	\$155.55
3	Connecticut	\$67,500,000	511,900	\$131.86
4	Vermont	\$11,000,000	85,900	\$128.06
5	Tennessee	\$111,000,000	1,000,200	\$110.98

Per-Student Spending on Closing the Digital Divide (Northeast Region only)

Rank	State*	Per Student Spend
1	Connecticut	\$131.86
2	Vermont	\$128.06
3	Maine	\$52.45
4	New Jersey	\$38.79
5	Massachusetts	\$33.91

*Data for Rhode Island, New York, and New Hampshire are unavailable.

Thanks to Governor Lamont's significant commitment to closing the digital divide, Connecticut has invested in 142,000 laptops and at-home internet for 44,000 in-need students across the state.

- Based on surveys and internal estimates, Connecticut's gap in student device access at the beginning of the pandemic was approximately 142,000.
- Through the Partnership for Connecticut, the [state invested in 60,000 laptops](#) in April 2020.
- A survey conducted by the state in May [estimated a need of 50,000 laptops, but this estimate later changed to about 82,000 laptops.](#) As a result, the state invested in an [additional 82,000 student laptops](#) (and 60,000 at-home internet connections) through the Everybody Learns Initiative, for a total of 142,000 laptops.

As of mid-December, Connecticut will have fully met its school districts' reported device needs, becoming the first state in the nation to provide universal access to learning devices

- At least sixteen states (including Connecticut) are investing in increased device access for their K-12 students in an effort to close the digital divide (see Appendix 1 for list of 16 states and estimated gaps).
- No state has claimed to be the first to fully close the digital divide, however, Maine is the closest at this time given its small gap size (8,000 students) and [investment in 7,500 computers and 14,000 internet-enabled tablets](#). According to a senior official in Maine's Department of Education, Maine is currently conducting a second survey to estimate the gap, but will not know for sure whether the gap is fully closed until December.
- SDE expects to deliver the last laptop in Stratford in mid-December 2020.

It is important to note that the information presented in this memo is primarily based on publicly available information, and consequently, the conclusions drawn are subject to change if new information surfaces. Unlike Connecticut, many states do not publicly report how many computers their funding covers, nor do they report the estimated size of their digital divide. And, in the few states that have committed funding for all students, like New Jersey, tracking the delivery of computers has been a cumbersome process; just last week, [New Jersey officials reported that they are still unsure how many students have access to an at-home device](#). We do know, however, that no state has made claim to being the first to closing the digital divide, but with Connecticut's large and early investments in laptops exceeding its reported gap, it is fair to say that it is among the first states to close the device gap.

Appendix 1: Estimated Device Access Gap in States that have Invested in Devices in 2020

State	Estimated Device Access Gap*
Maine	8k (5 percent)
Rhode Island	32k (23 percent)
Hawaii	36k (20 percent)
Nevada	42k (16 percent)
Connecticut	142k (28 percent)***
Massachusetts	143k (15 percent)**
Washington	173k (15 percent)
Virginia	173k (12 percent)
Missouri	210k (23 percent)
Alabama	231k (31 percent)
New Jersey	231k (17 percent)
Tennessee	277k (28 percent)
North Carolina	355k (23 percent)
Illinois	430k (22 percent)
New York	567k (21 percent)
California	1.2 million (20 percent)

* All information pulled from [BCG/Common Sense Media 2020 report](#), unless noted or linked otherwise.
 ** Information obtained from Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education official
 ***Internal CT estimates

**Laptop Distribution Per District
as of December 2, 2020**

District Name	Alliance District	Total Laptops
Andover School District		12
Ansonia School District	Y	877
Barkhamsted School District		60
Berlin School District		500
Bloomfield School District	Y	863
Bozrah School District		40
Bridgeport School District	O	15256
Bristol School District	Y	3200
Brookfield School District		300
Brooklyn School District		20
Canaan School District		2
Canterbury School District		250
Canton School District		270
Chaplin School District		7
Colchester School District		122
Coventry School District		280
Danbury School District	Y	4324
Darien School District		125
Derby School District	O	934
Eastford School District		25
East Granby School District		68
East Haddam School District		150
East Hampton School District		56
East Hartford School District	O	2726
East Haven School District	O	1043
East Lyme School District		550
Easton School District		270
East Windsor School District	Y	294
Enfield School District		2184
Farmington School District		220
Granby School District		250
Griswold School District		377
Groton School District	Y	4251
Hamden School District	Y	1805
Hampton School District		10

Hartford School District	O	11140
Hartland School District		45
Kent School District		25
Killingly School District	Y	1381
Ledyard School District		120
Lisbon School District		84
Manchester School District	Y	2242
Mansfield School District		91
Marlborough School District		150
Meriden School District	Y	3205
Middletown School District	Y	1754
Monroe School District		341
Montville School District		158
New Britain School District	O	2947
New Canaan School District		33
New Hartford School District		25
New Haven School District	O	17631
Newington School District		1050
New London School District	O	964
New Milford School District		1404
Newtown School District		138
Norfolk School District		26
North Branford School District		360
North Stonington School District		308
Norwalk School District	Y	4324
Norwich School District	O	2923
Old Saybrook School District		194
Orange School District		400
Plainfield School District		484
Plymouth School District		107
Pomfret School District		50
Portland School District		100
Preston School District		255
Putnam School District	Y	479
Redding School District		173
Ridgefield School District		471
Rocky Hill School District		229
Shelton School District		701
Sherman School District		27
Southington School District		1840
Stafford School District		200

Stamford School District	Y	8261
Stratford School District		1318
Suffield School District		279
Thompson School District	Y	271
Tolland School District		1300
Torrington School District	Y	1294
Trumbull School District		730
Union School District		45
Vernon School District	Y	1640
Voluntown School District		75
Wallingford School District		525
Waterbury School District	O	9021
Waterford School District		494
Watertown School District		475
West Hartford School District		190
West Haven School District	Y	2766
Weston School District		600
Wethersfield School District		175
Willington School District		10
Wilton School District		1256
Windham School District	Y	633
Windsor School District	Y	1398
Windsor Locks School District	Y	482
Regional School District 01		46
Regional School District 07		920
Regional School District 09		173
Regional School District 11		35
Regional School District 14		152
Regional School District 15		1100
Regional School District 19		278
Capitol Region Education Council		1466
EdAdvance		39
Cooperative Educational Services		142
Area Cooperative Educational Services		74
Learn		329
Eastern Connecticut Regional Educational Service Center (EASTCONN)		423
Jumoke Academy District		20
Integrated Day Charter School District		7
Interdistrict School for Arts and Comm District		280
The Bridge Academy District		40

Side By Side Charter School District		104
Explorations District		39
New Beginnings Inc Family Academy District		83
Park City Prep Charter School District		96
Highville Charter School District		328
Elm City Montessori School District		190
Great Oaks Charter School District		389
Booker T. Washington Academy District		40
Capital Preparatory Harbor School District		150
Unified School District #1		126
Unified School District #2		75
Connecticut Technical Education and Career System		816
Norwich Free Academy District		568
The Gilbert School District		36