

From the House

State Ups Investment in Special Education Services

By Rep. Matt Ritter

Ensuring all students have access to a quality public education is an important responsibility of the state, and \$16 million in new funding is being made available to local school districts to help them enhance special education services to more than 80,000 children across Connecticut.

This funding is part of the state's COVID-19 recovery relief efforts and will be distributed through the Department of Education. Hartford is eligible for \$120,000, the largest disbursement allowed under the program.

What specifically will the money be used for?

The bulk of the funding, \$13 million, will assist districts with addressing any delayed, interrupted, suspended, or inaccessible services due to COVID-19 for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

Up to \$2 million in funds will assist the state's 170 school districts with supporting supplementary tutoring and reading instruction to address the needs of students with an IEP and a primary disability category of SLD/dyslexia.

About \$1 million will help increase the capacity of the state's six Regional Educational Service Centers (RESC) to assist school districts in conducting special education evaluations as well as planning and placement teams.

The balance will provide for 8,000 hours of individualized in-home support through a partnership with the Connecticut Department of Developmental Services to provide one-on-one in-home assistance and support for up to 200 students.

All of these grants are a great example of finding new innovative ways to support the mission of each of our school districts. They also represent an emphasis and commitment to children and communities most impacted by the pandemic, which is one of the greatest educational challenges we currently face.

I strongly share this commitment to our education system and will continue to fight for accessible enrichment programs and services for all students throughout our state.

As always, please contact me if I can ever be of any assistance. I can be reached at Matthew.Ritter@cga.ct.gov or by phone at [\(860\) 240-8489](tel:(860)240-8489), if you have any questions or concerns.