

CONNECTICUT

OVERALL RANK: 17TH¹
TIER 2 (STRONG)

STRONGER WEAKER

OVERALL		17			
1. RESOURCES AND MEMBERSHIP	9				
2. INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS			29		
3. SCOPE OF BARGAINING		13			
4. STATE POLICIES		13			
5. PERCEIVED INFLUENCE			27		

AREA 1: RESOURCES AND MEMBERSHIP TIED FOR 9TH

Connecticut's NEA and AFT state affiliates have a broad foundation of resources from a variety of sources. With 98.8 percent of its teachers unionized, the Constitution State posts the largest percentage of unionized teachers in the nation. The unions see \$516 per teacher each year, the 22nd highest revenue among all states. While education spending by the state places Connecticut in the middle of the pack (the state is 21st in the percentage of its expenditures directed to K-12 education), total per-pupil revenue from all sources is high: \$13,959 annually, the 9th-highest in the country.

AREA 2: INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS² TIED FOR 29TH

Connecticut's teacher unions have been moderately involved in state politics over the last ten years. Their contributions made up a relatively small portion of total donations received by candidates for state office (0.32 percent, putting the state in 35th place). Teacher unions were a bigger presence among donors to state political parties, giving 2.0 percent of all donations received by parties (14th). Of the Connecticut delegates to the Democratic and Republican national conventions, 15.4 percent were teacher union members (18th).³

*AREA 3: SCOPE OF BARGAINING
13TH*

Connecticut is one of thirty-two states that require collective bargaining for public school teachers, and state law allows unions to automatically collect agency fees from non-member teachers—a key source of union revenue. The state allows for a broad scope of bargaining: Of twenty-one items examined in this metric, the state explicitly excludes just one as a subject of bargaining: pension/retirement benefits. The remaining twenty are either mandated topics for bargaining (seven items), permitted subjects (one item), or the state is silent on their inclusion, implicitly permitting them (twelve items). The state does not allow teacher strikes.

*AREA 4: STATE POLICIES
13TH*

Most Connecticut policies align at least partially with traditional teacher union interests. While state requires that objective evidence of student learning factor into teacher evaluations, it does not specify what weight those data should carry. While it takes teachers four years to earn tenure (the national norm is three), as of May 2012, the state granted tenure nearly automatically and required all ineffective teachers to go through remediation before they were dismissed. (As of press time, however, the law now requires teacher effectiveness to factor into tenure decisions and provides channels to dismiss ineffective teachers without intervention; unfortunately, the changes made were too late to be included in our calculations.) Unions traditionally oppose individual performance pay, and

Connecticut does not provide it. Further, state law caps the number of charter schools allowed to operate and only offers one viable authorizer to prospective charter operators. In addition, Connecticut teachers contribute proportionally less to their pensions than their employers do, as compared to teachers in all but two other states. A handful of policies, however, run counter to union goals: The state does not mandate a maximum class size for grades K-3 and is permissive in the types of charters it allows (meaning new start-ups, public-school conversions, and virtual charter schools).

*AREA 5: PERCEIVED INFLUENCE
27TH*

Stakeholders in Connecticut perceive the teacher unions to be one influential entity of many. Survey respondents rank teacher unions second- or third-most influential, along with education advocacy organizations and the state school board. They agree that teacher unions are effective in protecting dollars for education and in warding off most statutory proposals with which they disagree. But they note that both policies proposed by the governor in the latest legislative session and those actually enacted were only somewhat in line with union priorities.⁴ Moreover, they report that state teacher unions, like many of their counterparts in other states, more often than not turn to compromise to see some of their preferred policies enacted.

*OVERALL
17TH*

Connecticut boasts the highest teacher union membership in the nation. Its unions enjoy a broad scope of bargaining and favorable state policy environment, and they have garnered a reputation among stakeholders as moderately influential.

With education his main priority for the 2012 legislative session, Governor Dannel Malloy set his sights on reforming teacher tenure. He declared in his state of the state speech, “In today’s system, basically the only thing you have to do is show up for four years. Do that, and tenure is yours.”⁵ The comment quickly inflamed teacher tempers across the Constitution State. “There was no need for the governor to kick off his ‘year of education reform’ by being so adversarial to teachers,” said Kristen Record, the state’s 2011 Teacher of the Year. “He made purposeful statements that were outright lies and damaged his relationship and credibility with teachers.”⁶

Malloy appeared to learn from his mistake. In March 2012, he back-pedaled: “In my state of the state speech I used some words to describe tenure which, taken in isolation, did not do a good job of describing my feelings on the subject... Every day, Connecticut’s teachers do far more than show up.”⁷ Despite his reversal, however, unions seized upon the gaffe to paint Malloy as out-of-touch and anti-teacher, and the education reform bill passed by the legislature in May 2012 lacked many of his original proposals, including provisions to make tenure rules more stringent, link teacher evaluations with pay and certification, and strip teachers in the lowest-performing schools of many rights guaranteed by collective bargaining.⁸

On the other hand, the reform bill did redesign the teacher evaluation system: While evaluations will not have a significant impact on teacher job security (a major union victory), student performance will count for 45 percent of a teacher’s rating—changes also endorsed by the governor.⁹ And teacher tenure must be “informed by” the results of the evaluations. The Connecticut Education Association (CEA) charged that the evaluation guidelines are ill-advised: “This bill puts the cart before the horse,” said CEA president Phil Apruzzese. “These systems aren’t properly developed yet.”¹⁰ After seeing only partial success with the reform bill, Malloy may have learned a valuable lesson here: It’s important to play nice with the CEA.

CONNECTICUT RANKINGS BY AREA AND INDICATOR

OVERALL RANK: 17TH

Area and Rank ^a	General Indicator	Sub-Indicator	Sub-Indicator Rank/Status ^b
AREA 1: RESOURCES & MEMBERSHIP 9*	Membership	By rank, what percentage of public-school teachers in the state are union members?	1st
	Revenue	By rank, what is the total yearly revenue (per teacher in the state) of the state-level NEA and/or AFT affiliate(s)?	22nd
	Spending on education	By rank, what percentage of state expenditures (of state general funds, state restricted funds, state bonds, and federal "pass-through" funds) is directed to K-12 education?	27th
		By rank, what is the total annual per-pupil expenditure (of funds from federal, state, and local sources) in the state?	9th
		By rank, what percentage of total annual per-pupil expenditures is directed to teacher salaries and benefits?	21st
AREA 2: INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS 29*	Contributions to candidates and political parties	By rank, what percentage of the total contributions to state candidates was donated by teacher unions?	35th
		By rank, what percentage of the total contributions to state-level political parties was donated by teacher unions?	14th
	Industry influence	By rank, what percent of the contributions to state candidates from the ten highest-giving sectors was donated by teacher unions?	47th
	Status of delegates	By rank, what percentage of the state's delegates to the Democratic and Republican conventions were members of teacher unions?	18th
AREA 3: SCOPE OF BARGAINING 13	Legal scope of bargaining	What is the legal status of collective bargaining?	Mandatory
		By rank, how broad is the scope of collective bargaining?	8th*
	Automatic revenue streams	What is the unions' legal right to automatically collect agency fees from non-members and/or collect member dues via automatic payroll deductions?	Permitted
	Right to strike	What is the legal status of teacher strikes?	Prohibited
AREA 4: STATE POLICIES 13	Performance pay	Does the state support performance pay for teachers?	State does not support
	Retirement	By rank, what is the employer- versus employee-contribution rate to the teacher pension system?	3rd
	Evaluations	What is the maximum potential consequence for veteran teachers who receive unsatisfactory evaluation(s)?	Teacher improvement plan ^c
		Is classroom effectiveness included in teacher evaluations? If so, how is it weighted?	Evidence of student "learning" required
	Terms of employment	How long before a teacher earns tenure?	Four years
		Is student/teacher performance considered in tenure decisions? If so, how is it weighted?	Not included ^c
		Is seniority considered in teacher layoff decisions? If so, how is it weighted?	Optional; Weighted at district discretion
		Is teacher performance included in teacher layoff decisions? If so, how is it weighted?	Not required
		By rank, what percentage of the teaching workforce was dismissed due to poor performance?	23rd
Class size	Is class size restricted for grades 1-3? If so, is the restriction higher or lower than the national average (20)?	No restriction	

Area and Rank	General Indicator	Sub-Indicator	Sub-Indicator Rank/Status
AREA 4: STATE POLICIES 13 (cont.)	Charter school structural limitations	Is there a cap (limit) placed on the number of charter schools that can operate in the state (or other jurisdiction) and/or on the number of students who can attend charter schools?	State cap with limited room for growth
		Does the state allow a variety of charter schools: start-ups, conversions, and virtual schools?	Yes
		How many charter authorizing options exist? How active are those authorizers?	Single option; No or limited activity
	Charter school exemptions	Are all charter schools automatically exempt from state laws and state/district regulations (except those that safeguard students and fiscal accountability)? If not, are they eligible for exemptions?	No; Schools can apply for exemptions
		Are all charter schools automatically exempt from state teacher-certification requirements? If not, are they eligible for exemptions?	No; Certification is required but can be partially waived
		Are all charter schools automatically exempt from collective bargaining agreements (CBAs)? If not, are they eligible for exemptions?	Partially; Full automatic exemption for some schools, others must apply for waivers

AREA 5: PERCEIVED INFLUENCE^c 27	Relative influence of teacher unions	How do you rank the influence of teacher unions on education policy compared with other influential entities?	Second- or third-most influential
	Influence over campaigns	On a scale from always to never, how often do Democratic candidates need teacher-union support to get elected?	Sometimes/ Often
		On a scale from always to never, how often do Republican candidates need teacher-union support to get elected?	Rarely/ Sometimes
	Influence over spending	To what extent, from strongly agree to strongly disagree, do you agree that even in times of cutbacks, teacher unions are effective in protecting dollars for education?	Agree
		Given recent budgetary constraints, would you say that teacher unions generally make concessions to prevent reductions in pay and benefits or fight hard to prevent those reductions?	Generally fight
	Influence over policy	To what extent, from strongly agree to strongly disagree, do you agree that teacher unions ward off proposals in your state with which they disagree?	Agree
		On a scale from always to never, how often do existing state education policies reflect teacher-union priorities?	Sometimes/ Often
		To what extent, from totally in line to not at all in line, were state education policies proposed by the governor during your state's latest legislative session in line with teacher-union priorities?	Somewhat/ Mostly in line
		To what extent, from totally in line to not at all in line, were legislative outcomes of your state's latest legislative session in line with teacher-union priorities?	Somewhat in line
	Influence over key stakeholders	On a scale from always to never, how often have the priorities of state education leaders aligned with teacher-union positions in the past three years?	Sometimes/ Often
Would you say that teacher unions typically compromise with policymakers to ensure that their preferred policies are enacted, or typically need not make concessions?		Generally compromise	

* Tied with another state

^a Area ranks are calculated using a weighted average of sub-indicators. For a more detailed description, see Appendix A.

^b Where possible, we report a state's rank as compared to other states on a given metric. For example, out of 51 states, Connecticut has the highest percentage of teachers who are union members. Otherwise, we report a status: Connecticut has mandatory collective bargaining, and union agency fees are permitted. For a more detailed description of our metrics and methodology, see Appendix A. To request the raw data for your state, send an email to uniondata@edexcellence.net.

^c See note in Area 4, above.

^d For all survey questions, stakeholders were asked specifically about teacher unions, candidates, policies, and leaders in their state. In addition, we asked about unions and policies in the "current legislative session," but because legislative calendars vary from state to state, responses refer to policies proposed and enacted within the 2010-11 window.

ENDNOTES

¹ A state's overall rank is calculated as follows: First, we score it on multiple sub-indicators (sub-indicator data and scores for Connecticut are shown in the table, *Connecticut Rankings by Area and Indicator*). Second, we take a weighted average of the sub-indicators in each of five areas. In each area, we use that average to place the states in rank order. For example, in Area 1: Resources and Membership, Connecticut is ranked 9th of 51 based on the weighted average of its sub-indicators. To generate the state's overall rank, we average the five area ranks together, then re-order the states. For a more detailed description of data sources and methodology, see Appendix A.

² Readers should note that these figures include only direct donations from unions and union-connected PACs, but not their spending on electioneering/advertising, mobilizing the union's own membership, lobbying, or advocacy. A recent *Wall Street Journal* report found that donations and lobbying activities account for a small share of union political spending compared with their expenditures on member mobilization and advocacy. Even the AFT agreed, making the argument that since its mission is organizing and activism, it will naturally spend significant amounts on these activities. Thus, the percentages we report here are extremely conservative representations of what unions actually spend on politics. For more information, see Appendix A, Area 2; Tom McGinty and Brody Mullins, "Political Spending by Unions Far Exceeds Direct Donations," *Wall Street Journal*, July 10, 2012; and Jeff Hauser, "Wall Street Journal Compares Union Political Spending to Corporate Donations," AFL-CIO, July 10, 2012.

³ At the time of publication, the 2000 conventions were the most recent for which such detailed data were available in forms that met rigorous standards. However, 2008 data provided by the Democratic National Convention were highly correlated with the reliable figures from 2000.

⁴ We asked stakeholders about unions and policies in the "current legislative session," but because legislative calendars vary from state to state, responses refer to policies proposed and enacted within the 2010-11 window.

⁵ Jacqueline Rabe Thomas, "Malloy Clarifies The 'Only Thing You Have To Do Is Show Up' Comment About Teachers," *CT Mirror*, March 21, 2012, <http://www.ctmirror.org/blogs/malloy-backtracks-all-you-have-do-show-comment-about-teachers>.

⁶ Ken Dixon, "This Time, Malloy Swallowed Compromises," *CT Post*, May 12, 2012, <http://www.ctpost.com/local/article/This-time-Malloy-swallowed-compromises-3553866.php>.

⁷ Thomas.

⁸ Jacqueline Rabe Thomas, "Education Reform Bill Passes, Praised As Good Step, Clears legislature," *CT Mirror*, May 8, 2012, <http://www.ctmirror.org/story/16286/education-reform-bill-clears-legislature>.

⁹ Associated Press, "Conn. Endorses New Teacher Evaluation Methods," *CT Post*, February 10, 2012, <http://www.ctpost.com/local/article/Conn-endorses-new-teacher-evaluation-methods-3252498.php>.

¹⁰ Jacqueline Rabe Thomas and Uma Ramiah, "Teachers Unions Say 'No' To Malloy's Tenure Plan," *CT Mirror*, February 21, 2012, <http://www.ctmirror.org/story/15501/teachers-unions-battle-governor-education-committee-hearing>.