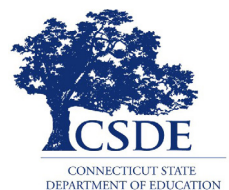


Staffing Shortage Areas in Connecticut Public Schools

2025 Report Prepared by the Wheelock Educational Policy Center



Boston University Wheelock College of Education & Human Development
Wheelock Educational Policy Center



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Schools, districts, and states across the country continue to face challenges related to teacher and staff shortages and their potential impact on student learning. This report updates and extends a prior analysis of educator shortages in Connecticut public schools by incorporating more recent years of data while maintaining the same analytical framework and set of indicators. This report iterates upon earlier findings and provides updated evidence to inform the state's ongoing efforts to address staffing challenges.

This updated analysis finds that the certification areas identified as shortage areas in the previous report continue to exhibit persistent staffing challenges over time. For this reason, it is recommended that Connecticut maintain the same subject-grade certifications designated as shortage areas in 2023. Moreover, updated certification and preparation data indicate that some of these areas may experience more pronounced shortages in future years, as key measures of educator supply have not increased and, in some cases, have declined.

Total public-school enrollment in Connecticut has continued to decrease since SY19–20 (Figure 1). At the same time, the representation of special education students and English learners has increased slightly, sustaining demand for educators serving special populations (Figures 2 and 3). The size of the overall teacher workforce has remained relatively constant over the past decade, with a nominal increase since SY21–22 (Figure 4). Within this stable workforce, the share of special education teachers has increased modestly, and the number of school psychologists and speech and language pathologists has increased substantially since 2018 (Figures 5–7).

Measures of educator supply indicate continued constraints in the pipeline of newly certified teachers. Approximately 40 percent of individuals enrolled in Connecticut educator preparation programs (EPPs) during the 23–24 academic year have obtained certification (Figure 8), though the number of EPP enrollees has decreased significantly since SY20–21 from close to 12,000 individuals down to the 8,000-enrollee range. The number of new endorsements earned by EPP graduates in current shortage areas has not increased over the past decade, and the number of endorsements in non-shortage areas has trended down in recent years (Figure 9). In several subjects, including special education, science, and mathematics, the number of new EPP graduates earning certification has declined over time. This pattern remains unchanged when considering the effective date of new endorsements and is also reflected in trends looking at all new endorsements, both shortage and non-shortage subject areas (Figures 10–13).

Indicators of staffing demand show largely stable patterns since the prior report. Student-teacher ratios for special education and English learner instruction have remained relatively constant over time (Figure 14). With the exception of technology education at the PK–12 level, student-teacher ratios in general education shortage areas have also remained stable (Figure 15). Student-staff ratios for school support personnel have decreased since 2019; however, these ratios remain high in ratio values (Figure 16).

Differences across district types persist. Student-teacher ratios for teachers of special populations and general education shortage areas remain higher in Alliance districts than in non-Alliance districts, with relatively stable gaps over time (Figures 17–18). Student-staff ratios for school support personnel are also higher in Alliance districts, and these disparities have remained largely unchanged in recent years (Figure 19).

Vacancy data from the Educator Vacancy Dashboard further underscore the persistence of educator shortages. The total number of vacancies reported in shortage areas has remained stable between 2023 and 2025 (Figure 20). Demand for special education teachers decreased in 2025, while vacancies for bilingual education teachers remained constant (Figure 21). With the exception of science, vacancies for general education shortage areas did not change substantially over this period, and differences in school support personnel vacancies are minor (Figures 22–23). Alliance districts continue to report higher numbers of vacancies across most shortage areas, and although the relative gap narrowed slightly for special education teachers, disparities persist in most other categories (Figures 24–26).

Taken together, these updated findings indicate that the educator shortages identified in the prior report remain a significant challenge for Connecticut public schools. While some indicators suggest modest improvements in staffing levels, particularly among certain support personnel, trends in educator preparation and certification suggest that shortages in key subject areas are likely to persist and may intensify without targeted action, especially considering the increase in proportion of special population students across the state.

METHODOLOGY

This report describes teacher and staff shortages in Connecticut’s public schools using updated data and the same indicators of educator supply and demand employed in the prior analysis. The following data sources were used:

- Student enrollment (from Connecticut State Department of Education data)
- Recent graduates of in-state teacher preparation programs (from Title II public data)
- New endorsements for new teachers and additional endorsements for existing teachers (from CSDE)
- TCS Data
- The average number of students per teacher, i.e., student-teacher ratio (calculated from CSDE data)
- A district-level survey about the number of unfilled vacancies in schools (administered by CSDE)
- Vacancy data from the Educator Vacancy Dashboard

In addition to examining statewide trends, this analysis compares variation across district types, specifically Alliance versus non-Alliance districts and higher-poverty versus lower-poverty districts. High-poverty districts are defined as those in the highest tercile of the distribution of students receiving subsidized lunch.

IDENTIFICATION OF SHORTAGE AREAS

TEACHERS OF SPECIAL POPULATIONS

SUBJECT AREA	PREVIOUS SHORTAGE AREA?	EPP GRADUATES	NEW ENDORSEMENTS	DIFFERENCES ACROSS DISTRICTS
Special Education PK-12	Yes	Decreased	Decreased	Stable
Bilingual Education PK-12	Yes	Stable	Stable	Stable

Updated enrollment data show continued increases in the representation of special education students and English learners (both increased by 5 pp. From SY14-15 to SY23-24) (Figure 2). These trends sustain demand for special education and bilingual/TESOL teachers. At the same time, the number of EPP graduates and new endorsements in these areas has remained stable or declined (Figures 10-13). Vacancy data indicate that Alliance districts continue to experience greater difficulty filling these positions, although the gap in reported vacancies for special education teachers narrowed slightly in recent years (Figures 24-26). Student-teacher ratios for both areas have remained relatively constant over time, with higher ratios observed in Alliance districts (Figures 17-18).

GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

SUBJECT AREA	PREVIOUS SHORTAGE AREA?	EPP GRADUATES	NEW ENDORSEMENTS	DIFFERENCES ACROSS DISTRICTS
Mathematics 4-12	Yes	Stable	Decreased	Stable
Science 4-12	Yes	Decreased	Decreased	Stable
Social Science 7-12	Yes	Decreased	Decreased	Stable
Technology Education PK-12	Yes	Stable	Stable	The gap in STR between Alliance and non-Alliance districts has increased
World Languages 7-12	Yes	Decreased	Decreased	Stable

Across general education shortage areas, indicators of demand have remained largely stable since the prior report. Student-teacher ratios for mathematics, science, social studies, and world languages show little change over time (Figures 15 and 18). Measures of supply indicate continued declines in the number of EPP graduates and new endorsements in science, social studies, mathematics, and world languages, with particularly steep declines between SY22-23 and SY24-25 (Figures 10-13). Vacancy data show minimal changes between 2023 and 2025, with Alliance districts consistently reporting higher numbers of vacancies across most subjects (Figures 22-23).

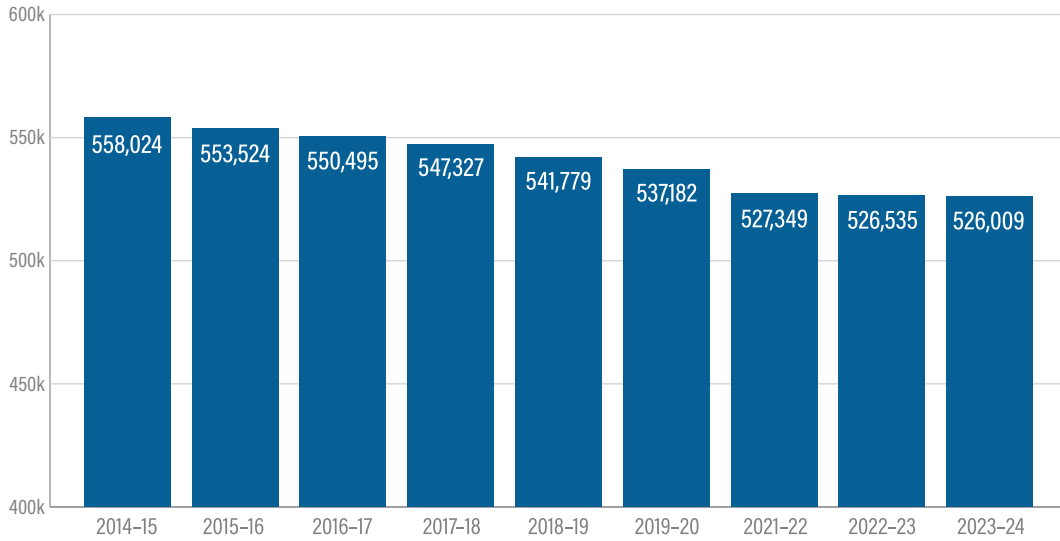
SCHOOL SUPPORT PERSONNEL

SUBJECT AREA	PREVIOUS SHORTAGE AREA?	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	DIFFERENCES ACROSS DISTRICTS
School Library & Media Specialist PK-12	Yes	Decreased	Higher student-staff ratio in Alliance districts
School Psychologist PK-12	Yes	Increased	Higher student-staff ratio in Alliance districts
Speech & Language Pathologist PK-12	Yes	Increased	Higher student-staff ratio in Alliance districts

The number of school library and media specialists employed in Connecticut public schools has stayed relatively stable since SY20-21, while the number of school psychologists and speech and language pathologists has increased (Figure 7). Despite these increases, student-staff ratios remain higher in Alliance districts for all three roles (Figure 19). Vacancy data indicate that Alliance districts continue to report greater demand for school support personnel, with only minor year-to-year variation in reported vacancies (Figure 25).

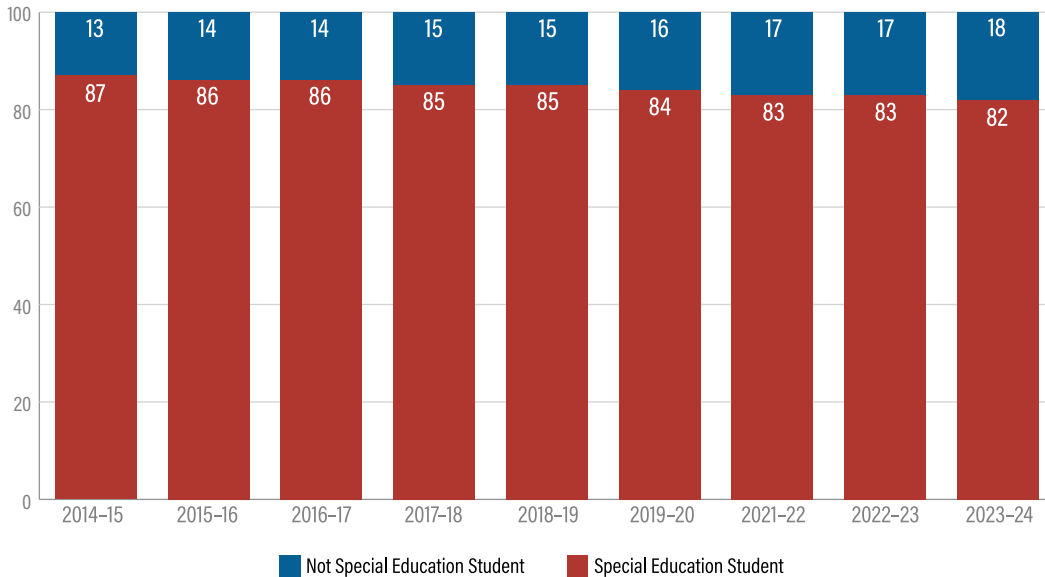
FIGURES

Figure 1: Connecticut's PK-12 Student Enrollment



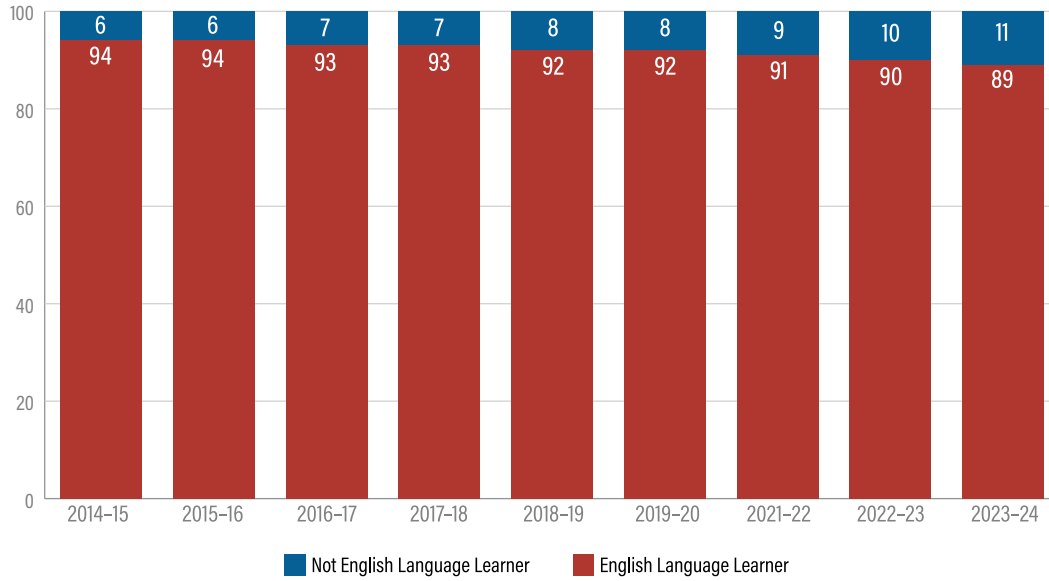
Notes: All data are from CSDE

Figure 2: Connecticut's PK-12 Student Enrollment, by Special Education



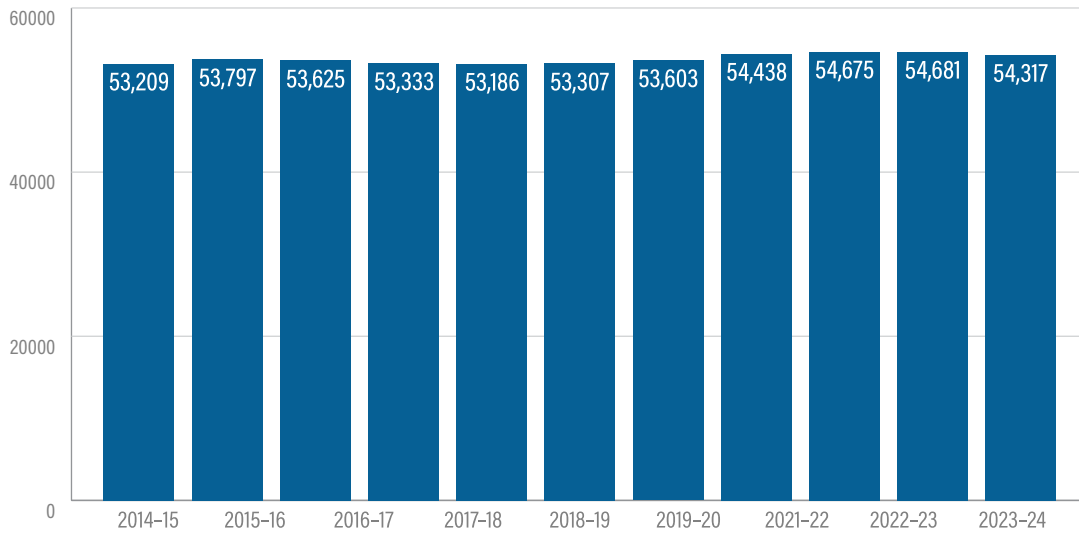
Notes: All data are from CSDE. Excludes students with no information (2% of the sample).

Figure 3: Connecticut's PK-12 Student Enrollment, by ELL Status



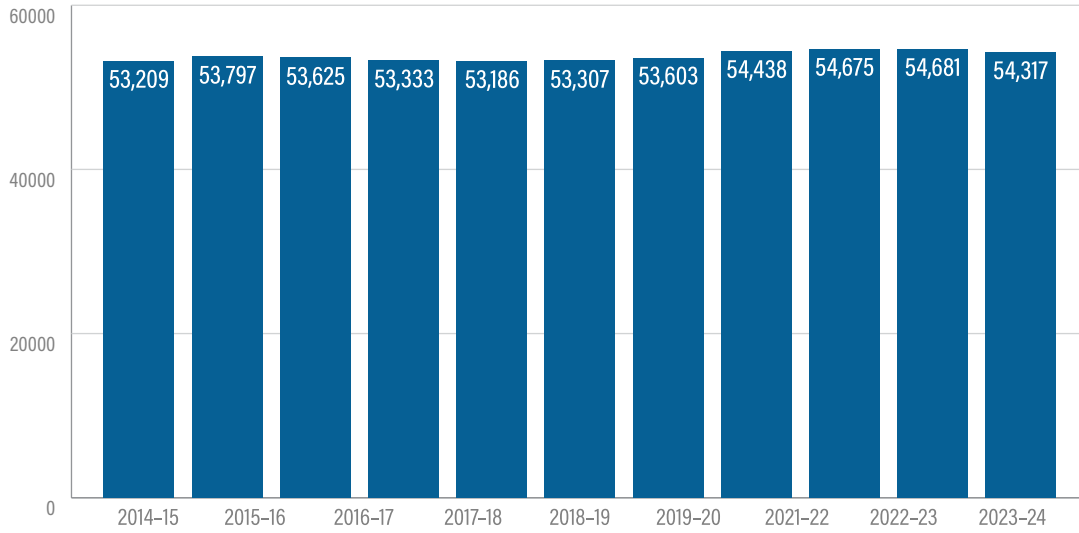
Notes: All data are from CSDE. Excludes students with no information (2% of the sample).

Figure 4: Connecticut's PK-12 Educator Workforce



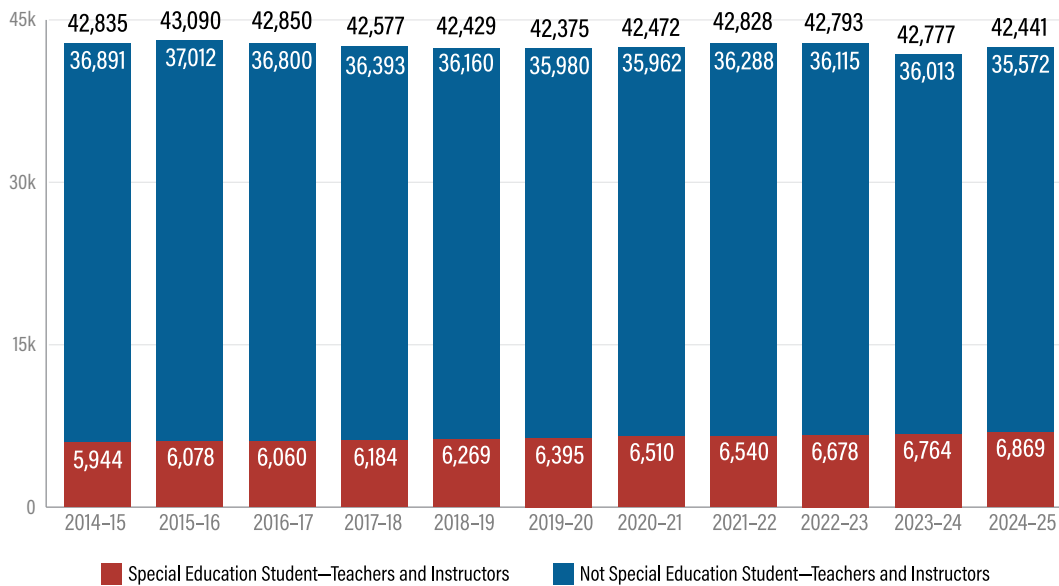
Notes: All data are from CSDE. Excludes students with no information (2% of the sample).

Figure 5: Connecticut’s PK-12 Educator Workforce



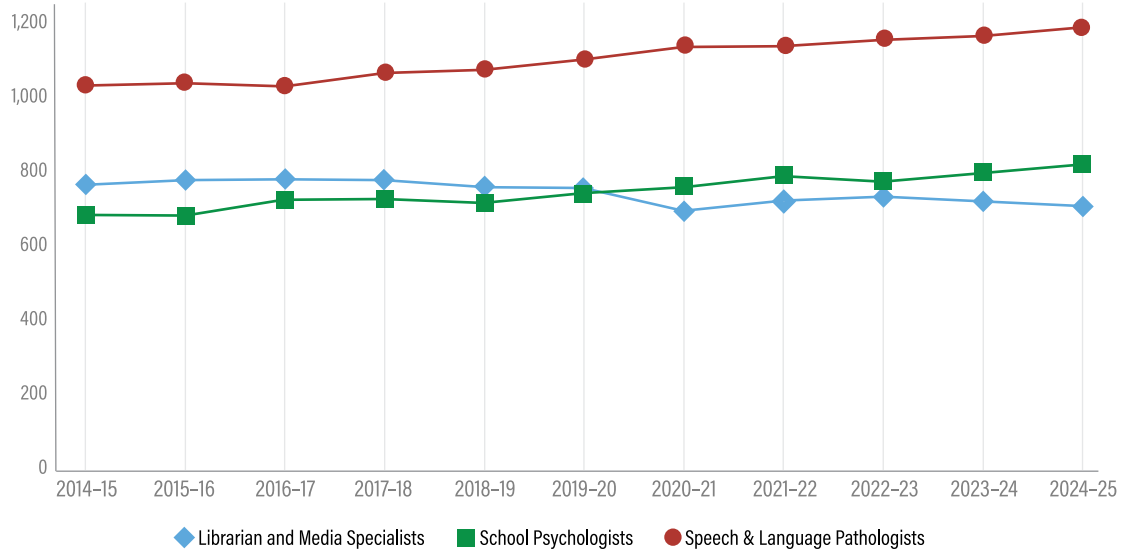
Notes: All data are from CSDE. This plot considers the FTE equivalent number of the General Education teachers/instructors and Special Education teachers/instructors.

Figure 6: Connecticut’s PK-12 Teacher Workforce



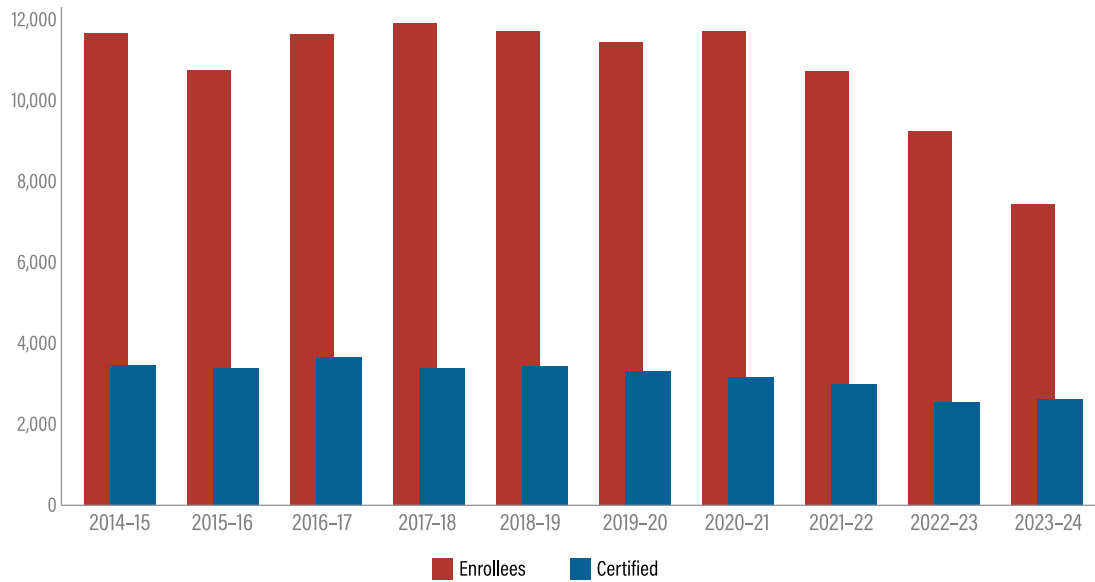
Notes: All data are from CSDE. This plot considers the FTE equivalent number of the General Education teachers/instructors and Special Education teachers/instructors.

Figure 7: Number of Professionals in CT Public Schools



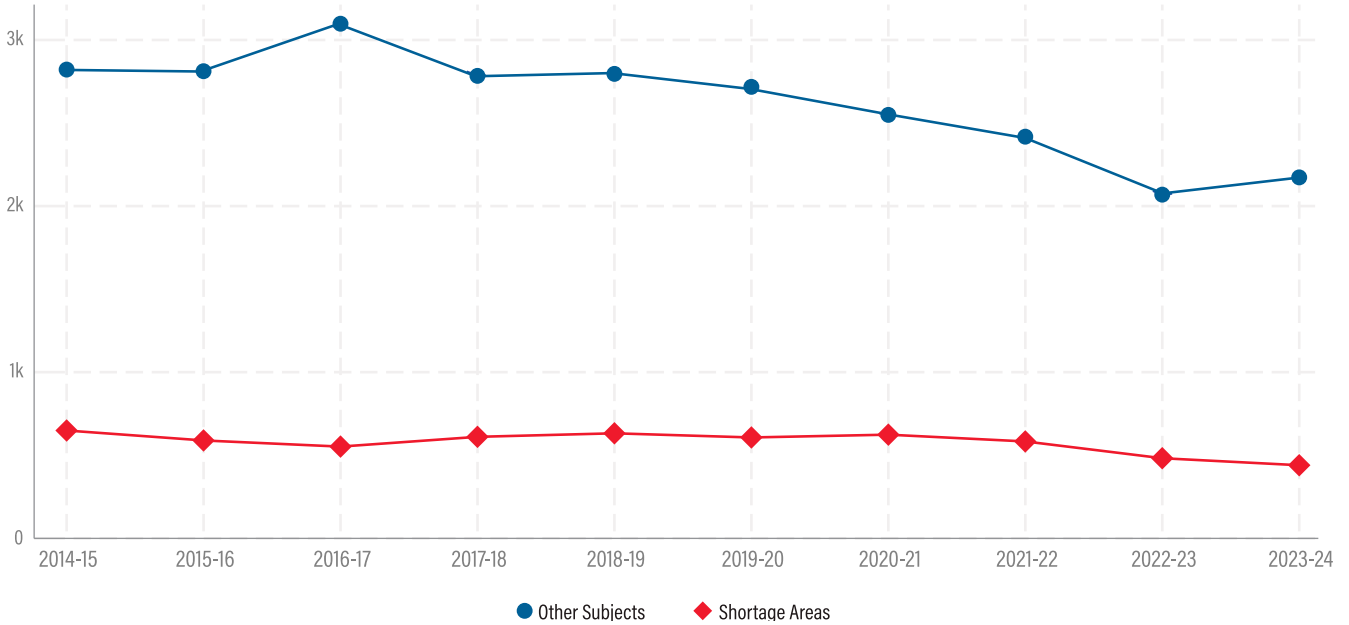
Notes: All data are from CSDE.

Figure 8: Numbers of Enrollees and Certified Individuals in EPPs



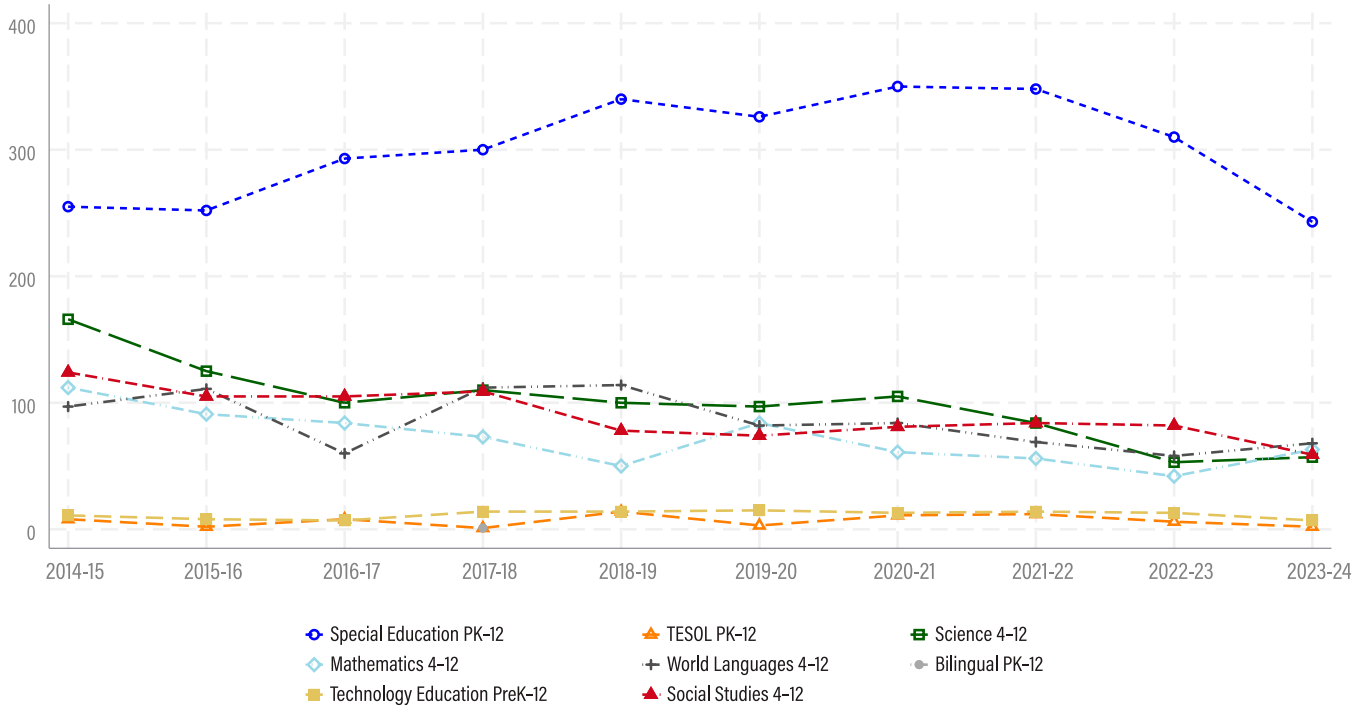
Notes: All data are from CSDE. This plot presents the number of individuals enrolled in EPPs for each reporting year, as well as those who received as initial Educator certification.

Figure 9: Numbers of Endorsements by Shortage Area: EPP Graduates



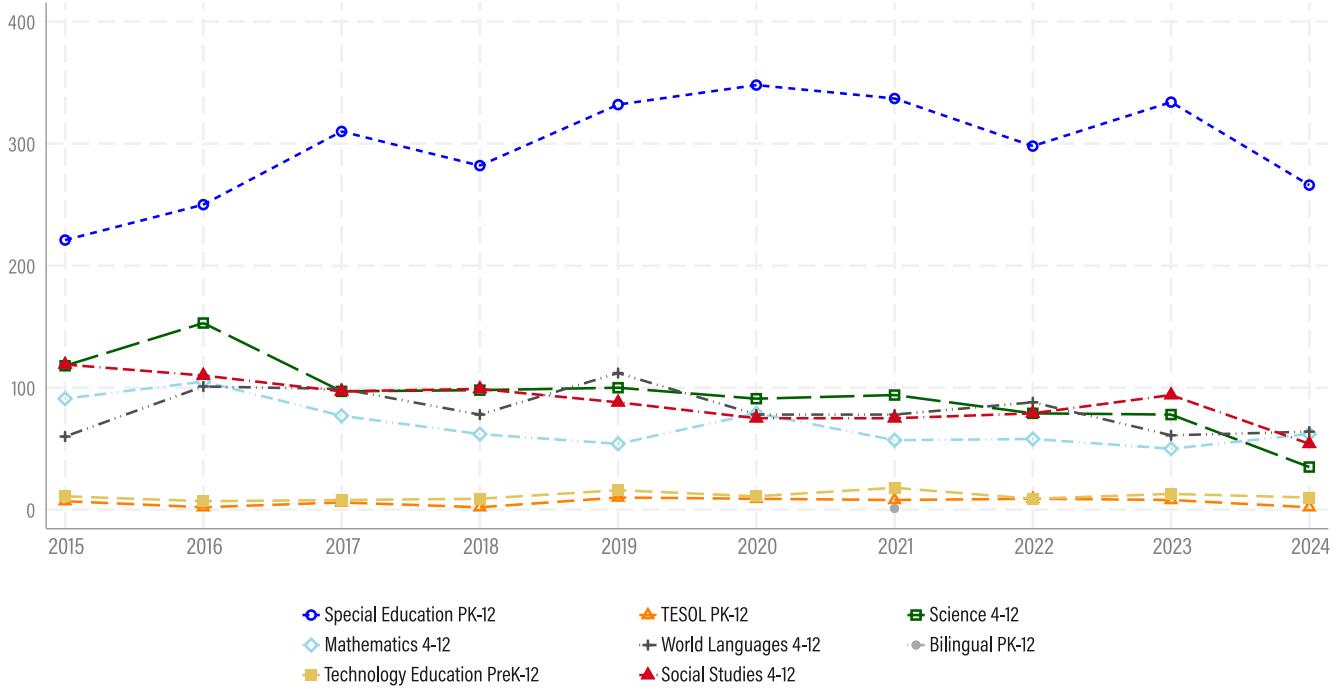
Notes: All data are from CSDE. This plot displays the number of new endorsements for individuals completing a program in an EPP in Connecticut. Shortage areas include: Math 4-12, Science 4-12, Special Education, Technology Education, TESOL, World Languages 4-12, and Bilingual Education PK-12

Figure 10: Numbers of Endorsements by Subject: EPP Graduates



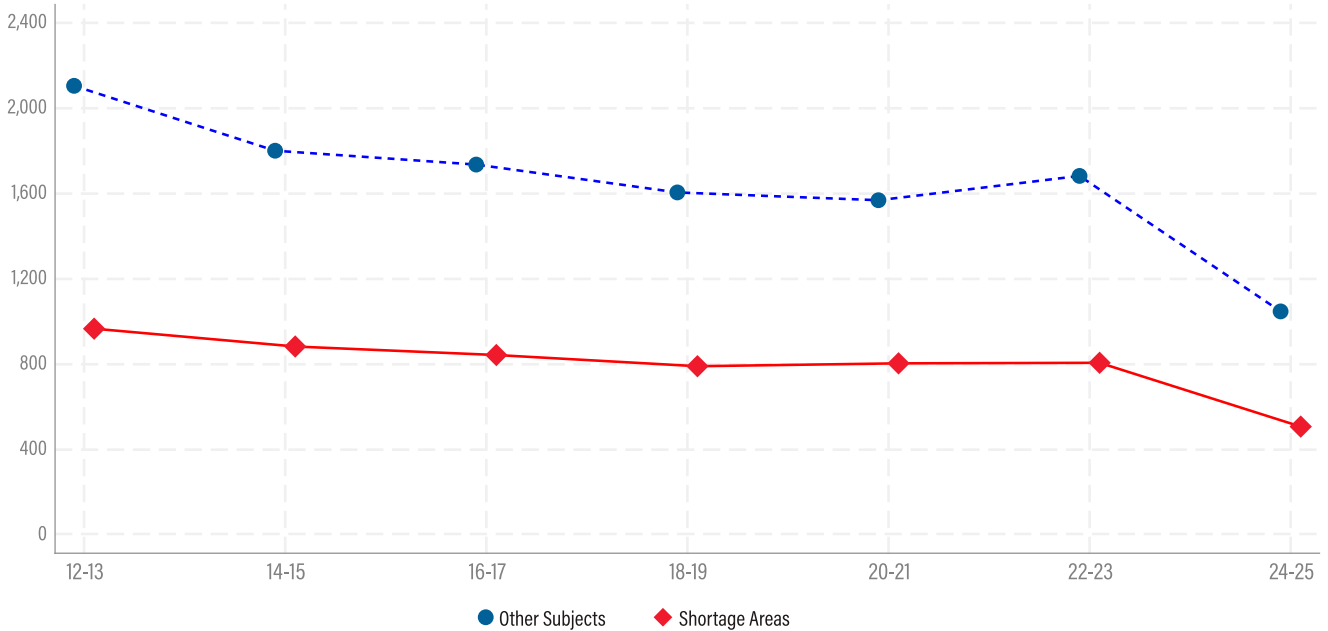
Notes: All data are from CSDE. This plot displays the number of new endorsements for individuals completing a program in an EPP in Connecticut, separately by subject.

Figure 11: Numbers of Endorsements by Subject: EPP Graduates (Effective Date)



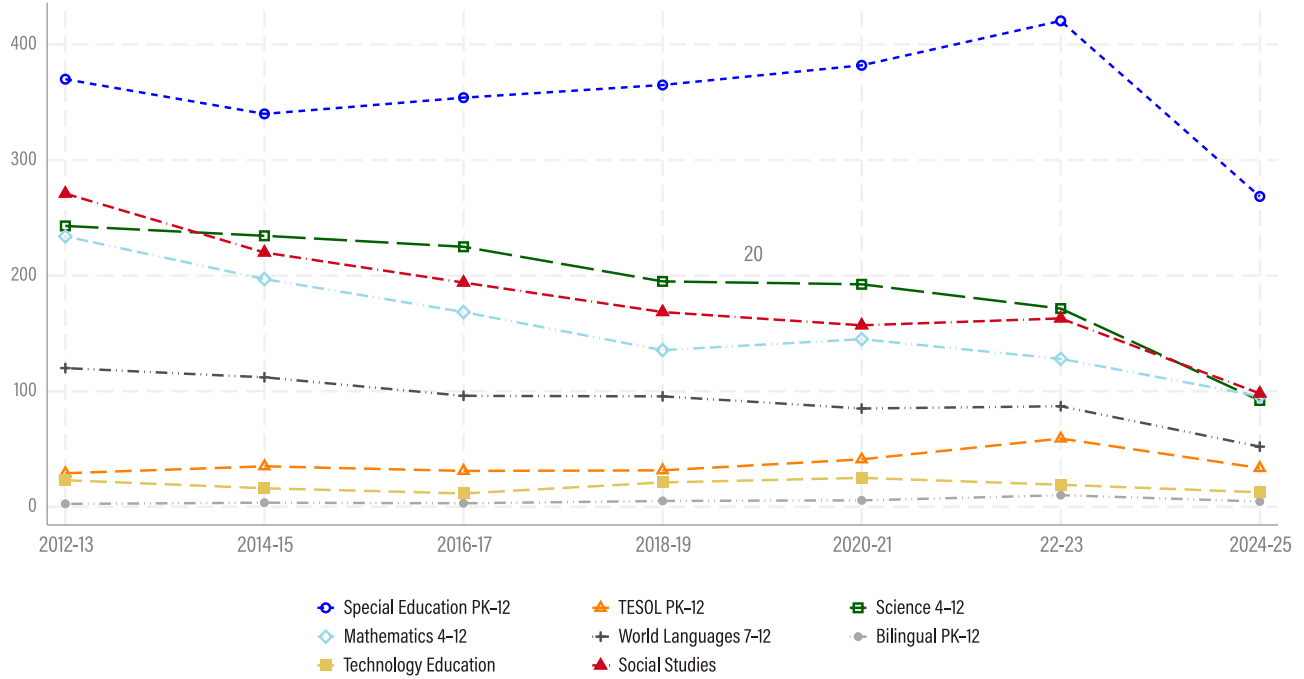
Notes: All data are from CSDE. This plot displays the number of new endorsements for individuals completing a program in an EPP in Connecticut considering the effective date of certification.

Figure 12: Numbers of New Endorsements, by Shortage Area



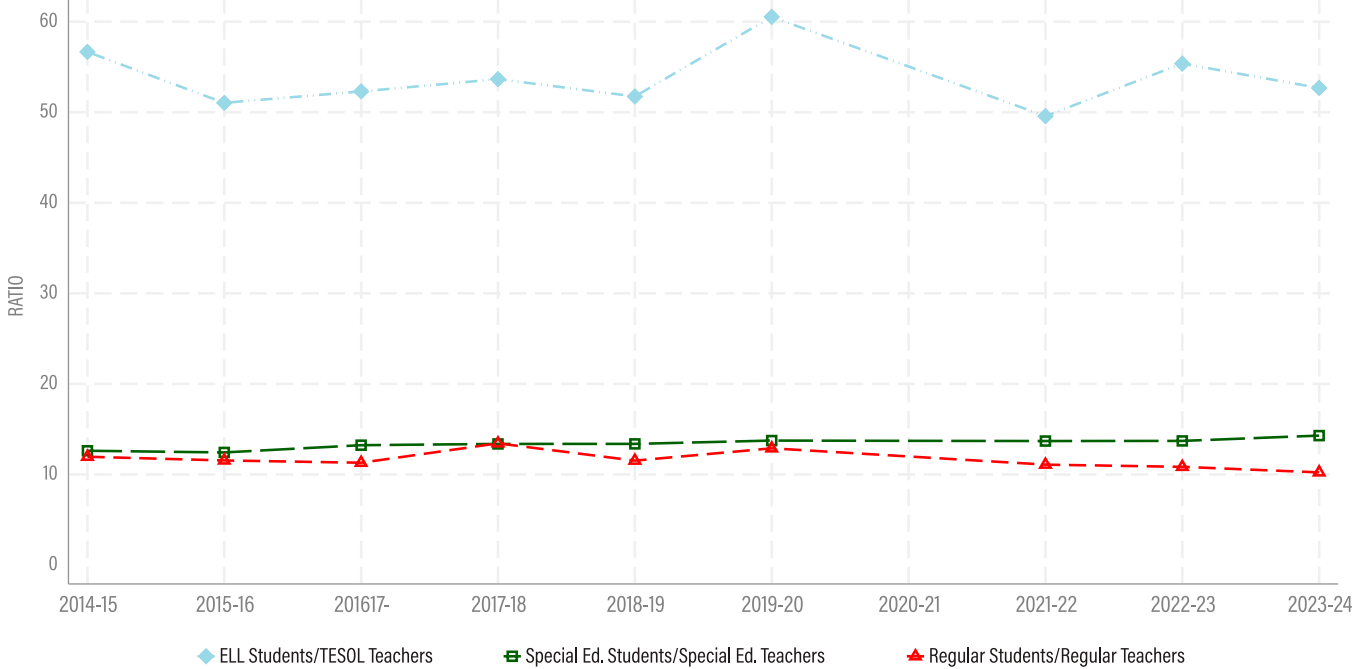
Notes: All data are from CSDE. This plot considers the average number of annual endorsements for initial educator and provisional educator certifications. Shortage areas include: Math 4-12, Science 4-12, Special Education, Technology Education, TESOL PreK-12, World Languages 4-12, and Bilingual Education PreK-12

Figure 13: Numbers of New Endorsements by Subject



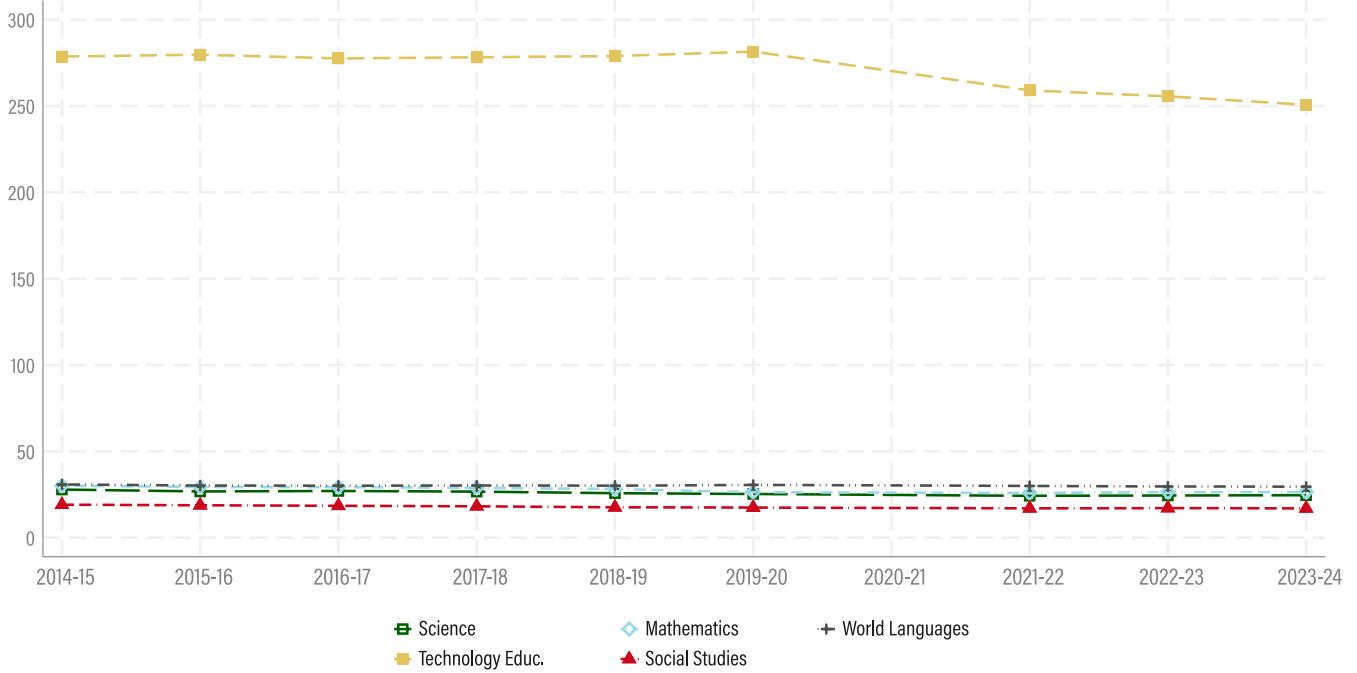
Notes: All data are from CSDE. This plot considers the average number of annual endorsements for initial educator and provisional educator certifications.

Figure 14: Student-Teacher Ratio by Student and Teacher Characteristics



Notes: All data are from CSDE.

Figure 15: Average Student-Teacher Ratio by Subject



Notes: All data are from CSDE.

Figure 16: Average Student-Professional Ratios

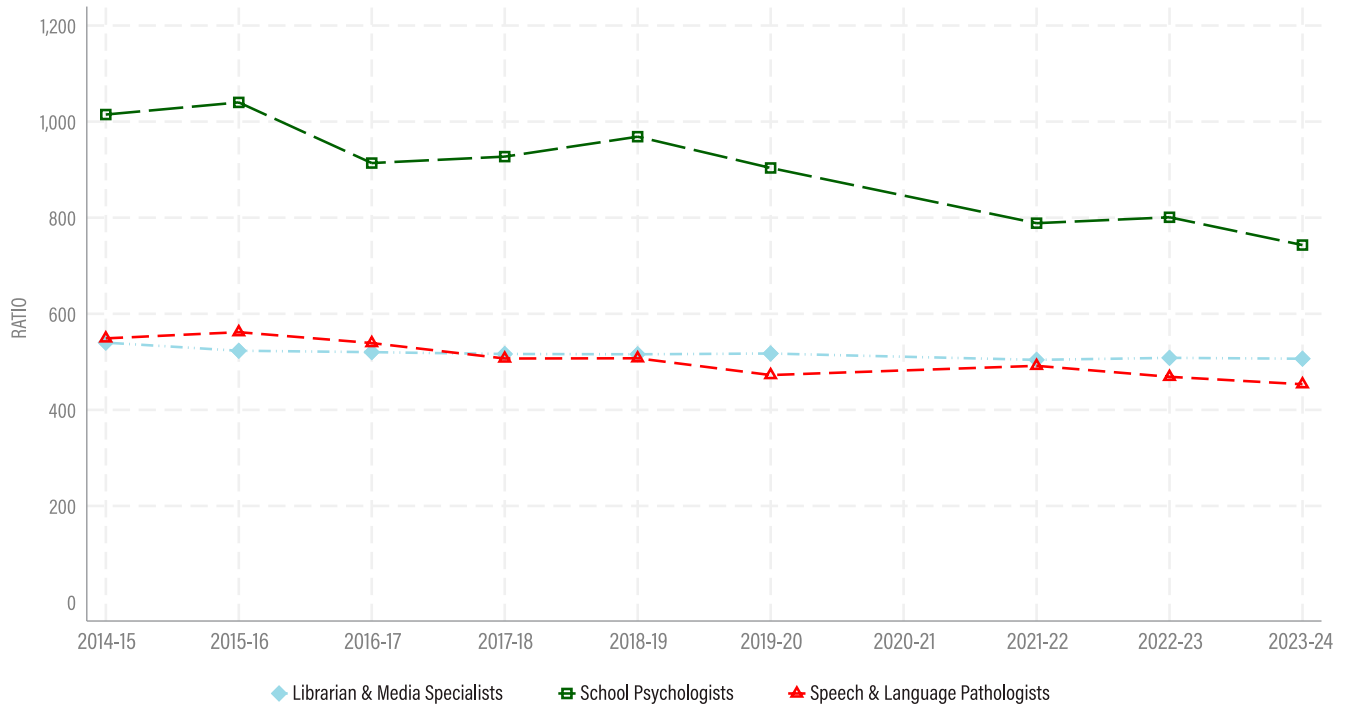


Figure 17: Special Education & TESOL PK-12, 2014-2024

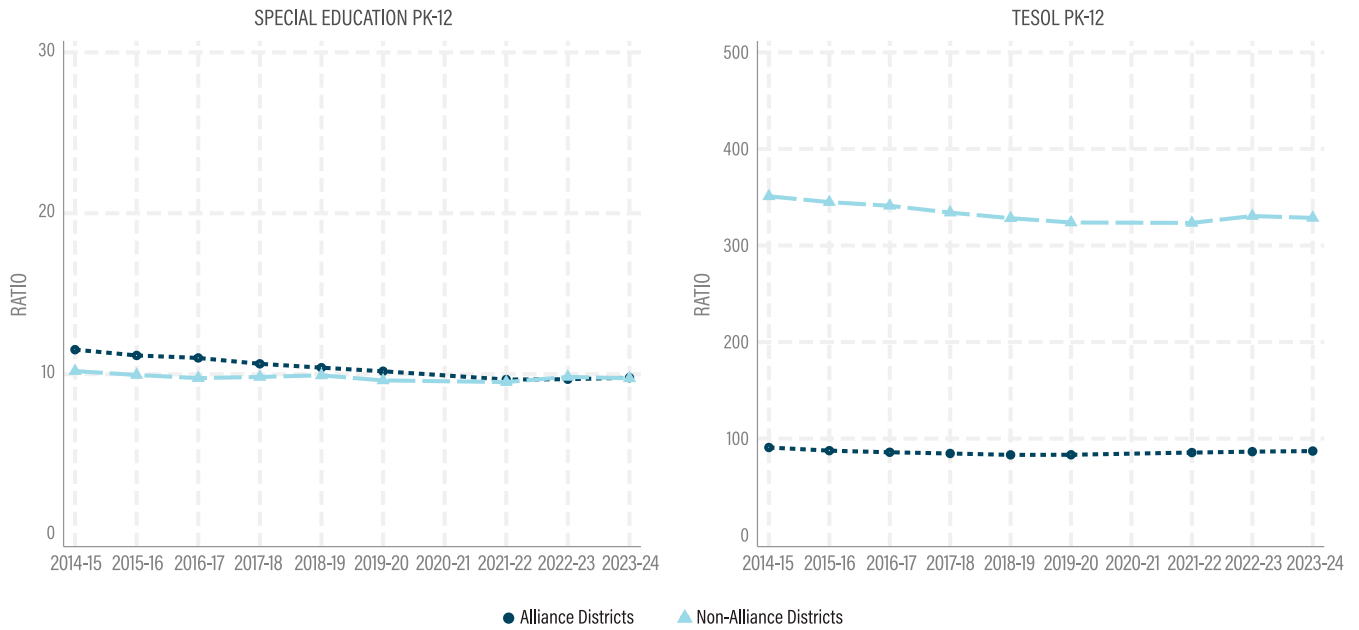


Figure 18: Student-Teacher Ratio by Subject, 2014-2024

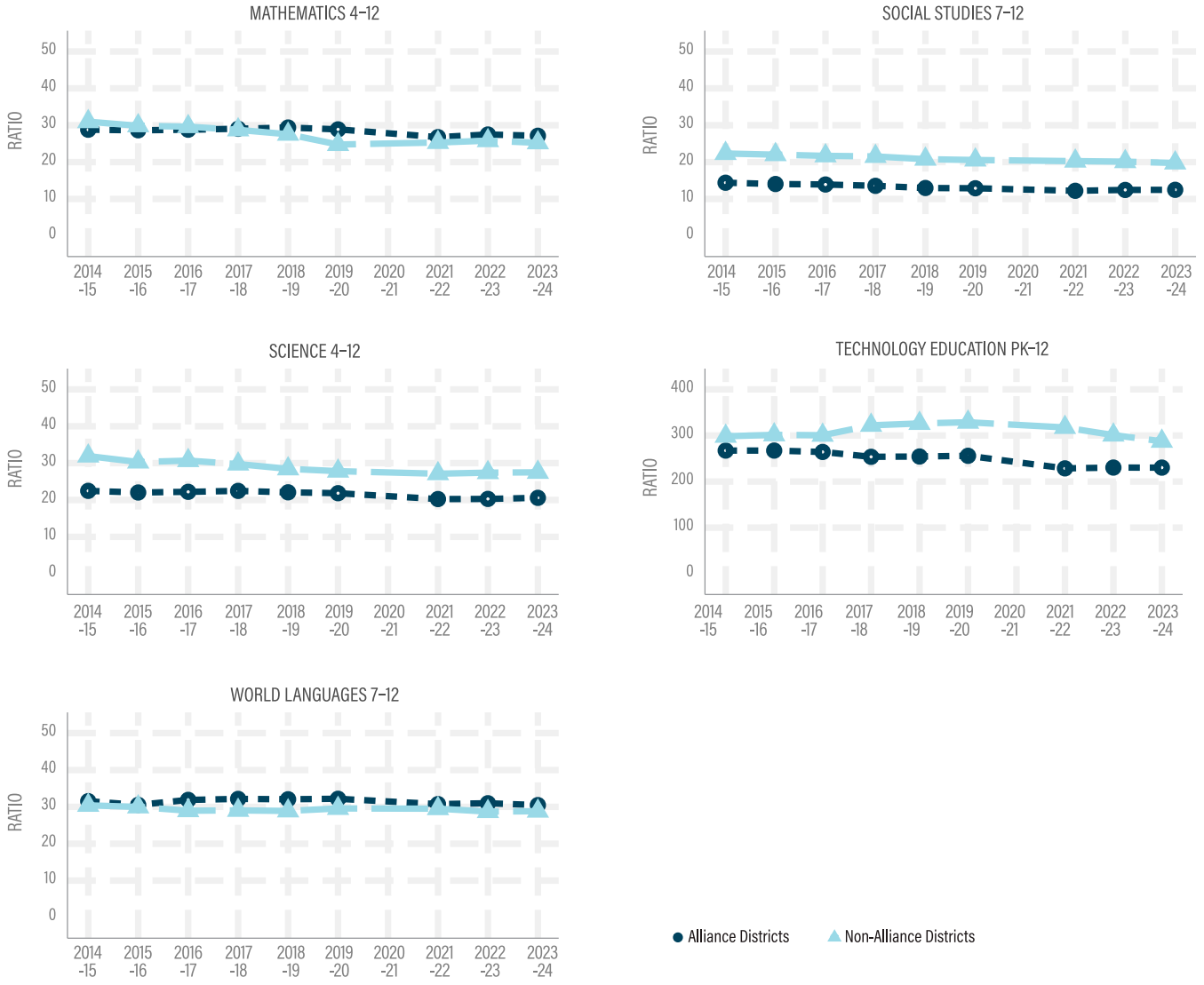


Figure 19: School Support Personnel Ratio, 2014-2024

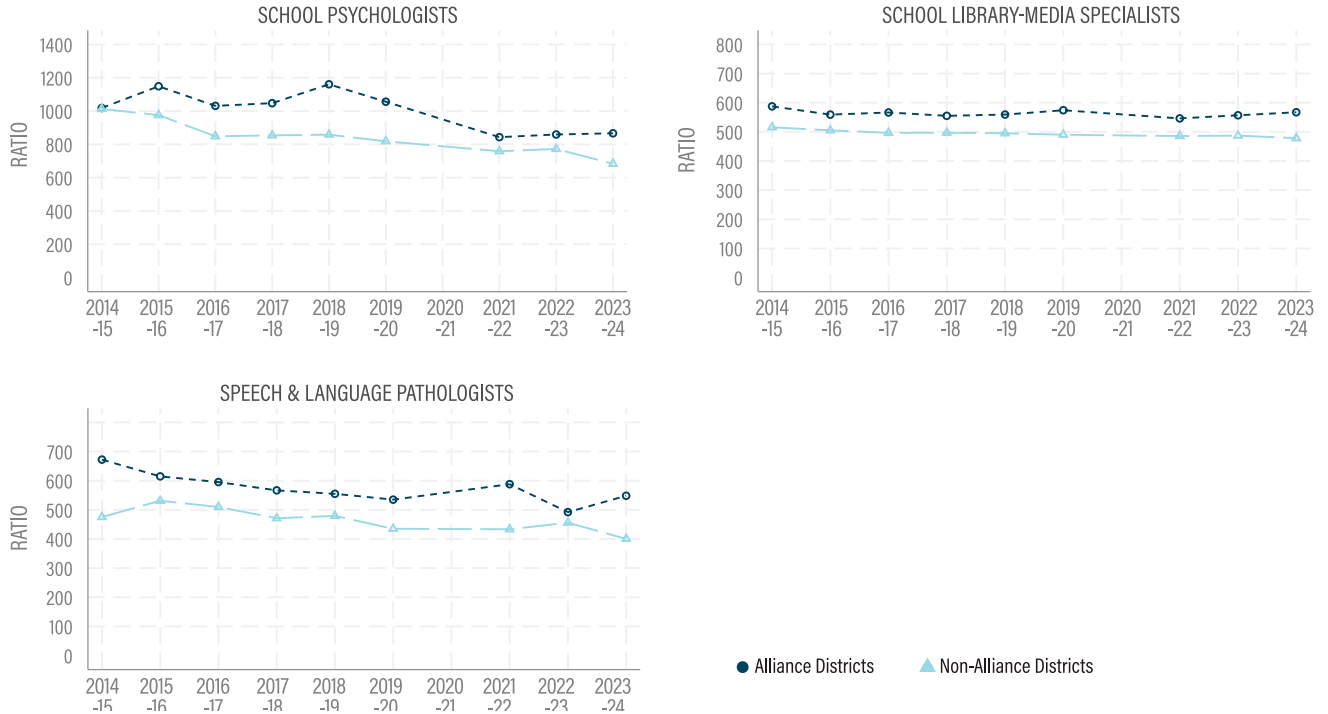
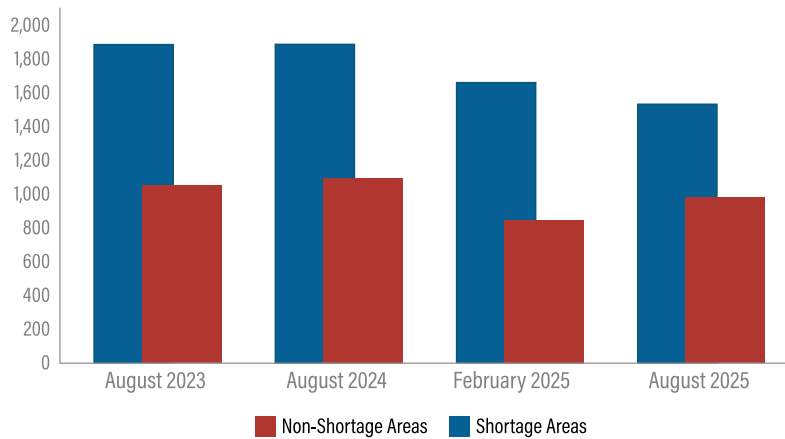
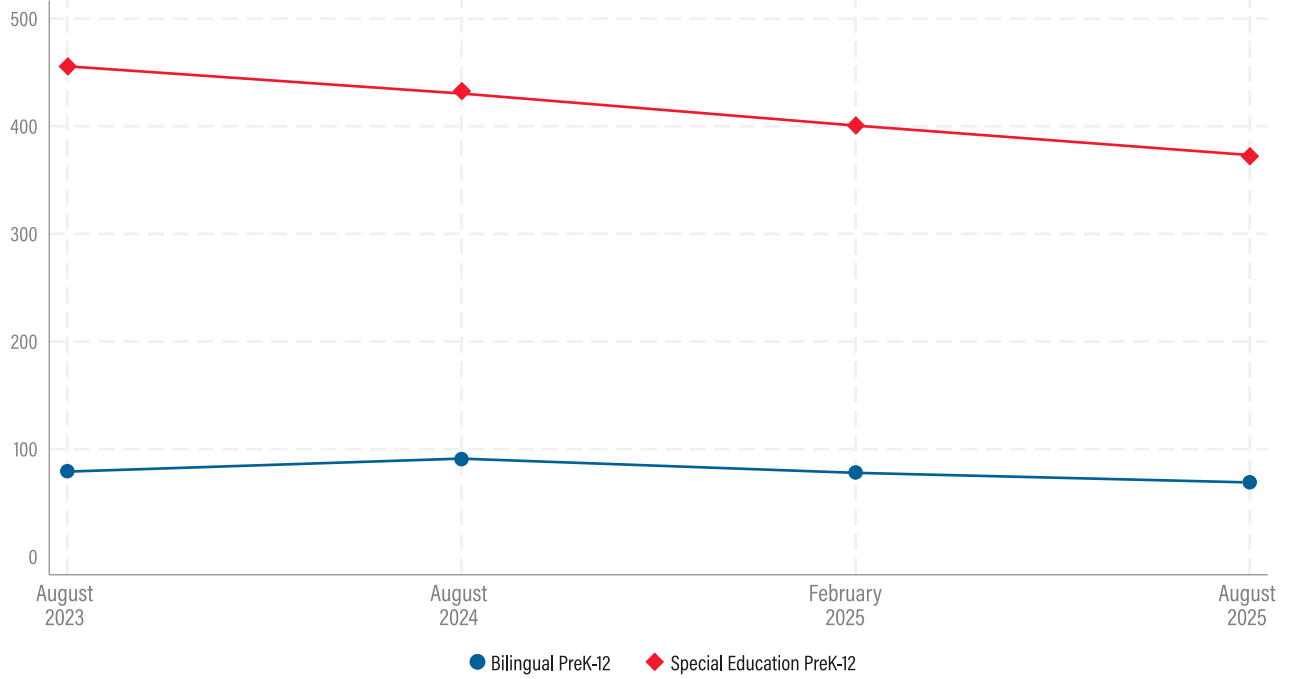


Figure 20: Number of Vacancies Reported



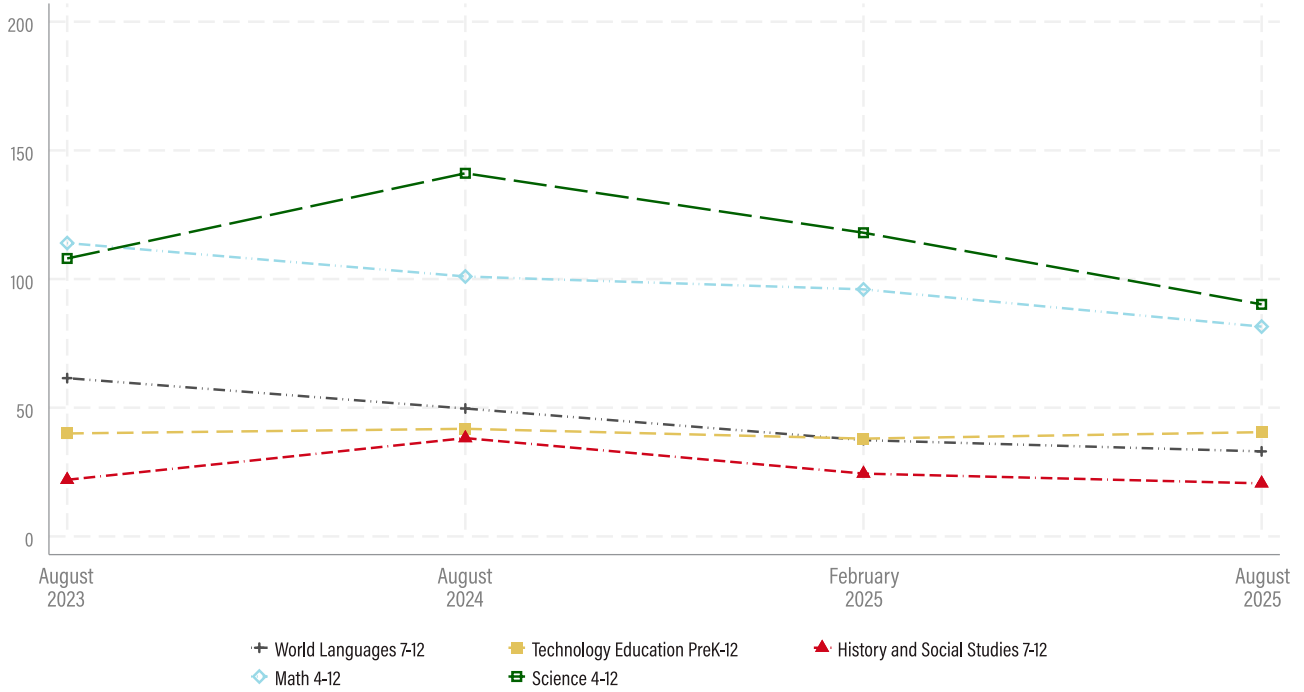
Notes: All data are from the CT Educator Vacancy Dashboard.

Figure 21: Number of Vacancies Reported, Teachers of Special Populations



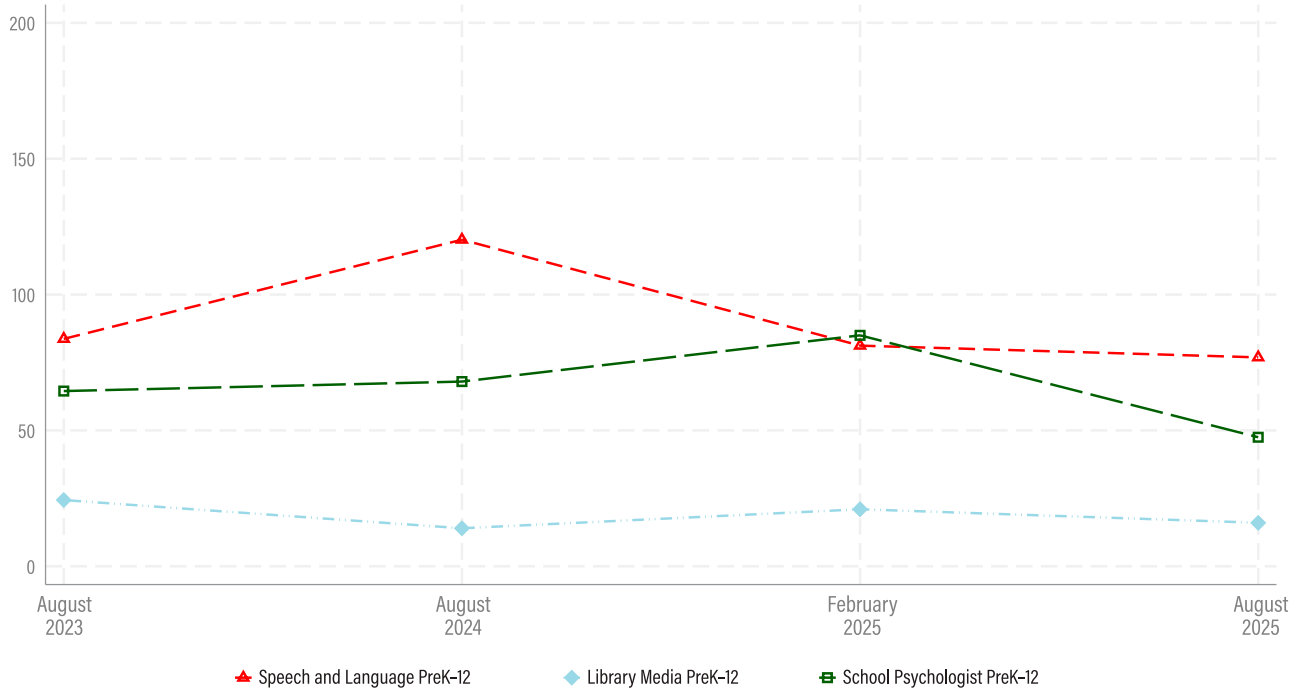
Notes: All data are from the CT Educator Vacancy Dashboard.

Figure 22: Number of Vacancies Reported, General Education Teachers



Notes: All data are from the CT Educator Vacancy Dashboard.

Figure 23: Number of Vacancies Reported, School Support Personnel



Notes: All data are from the CT Educator Vacancy Dashboard.

Figure 24: Special Education & TESOL PK-12, 2023-2025

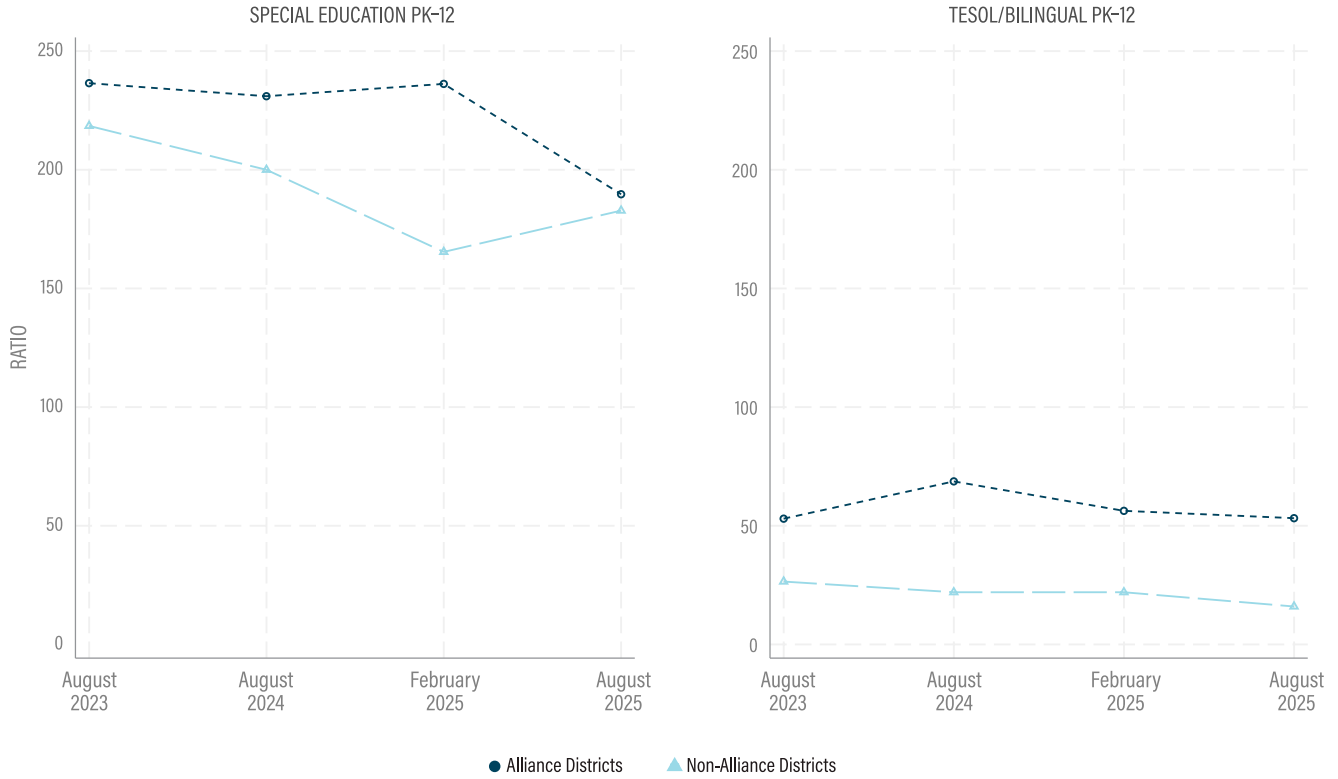


Figure 25: School Support Personnel Ratio, 2023-2025

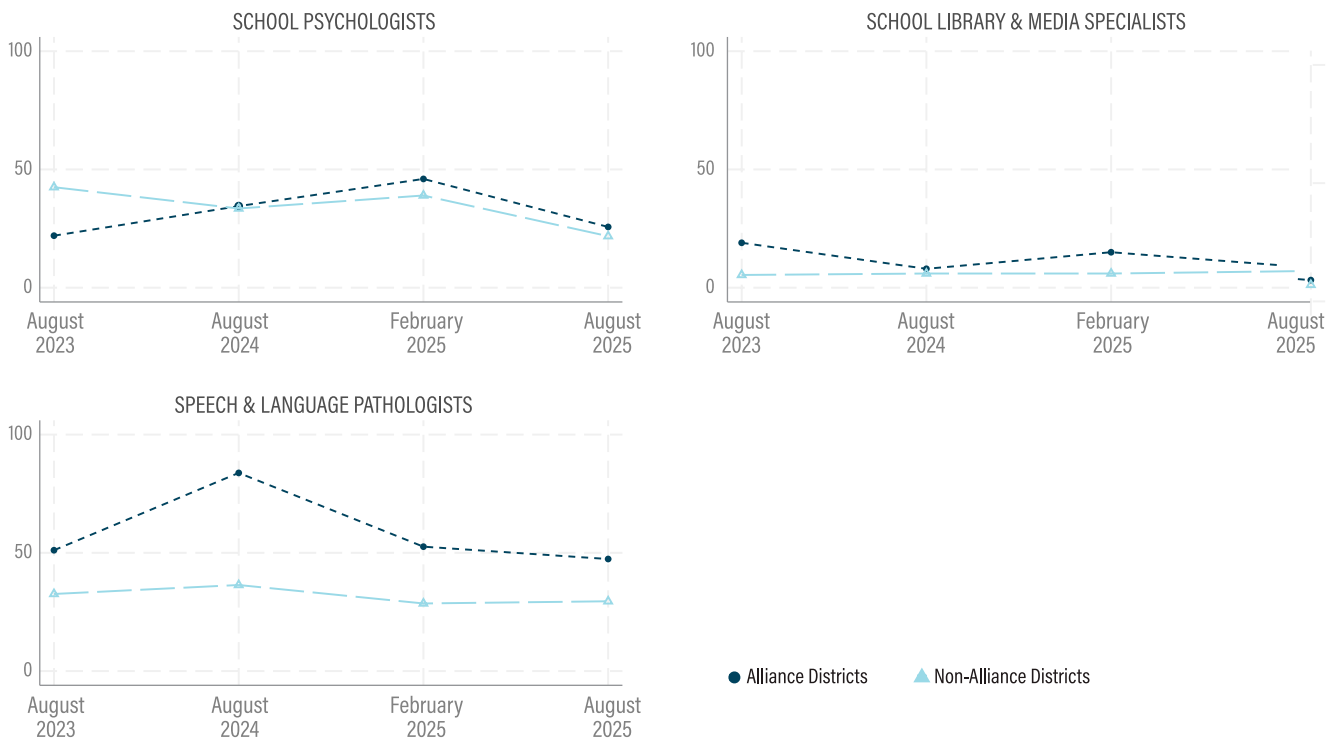
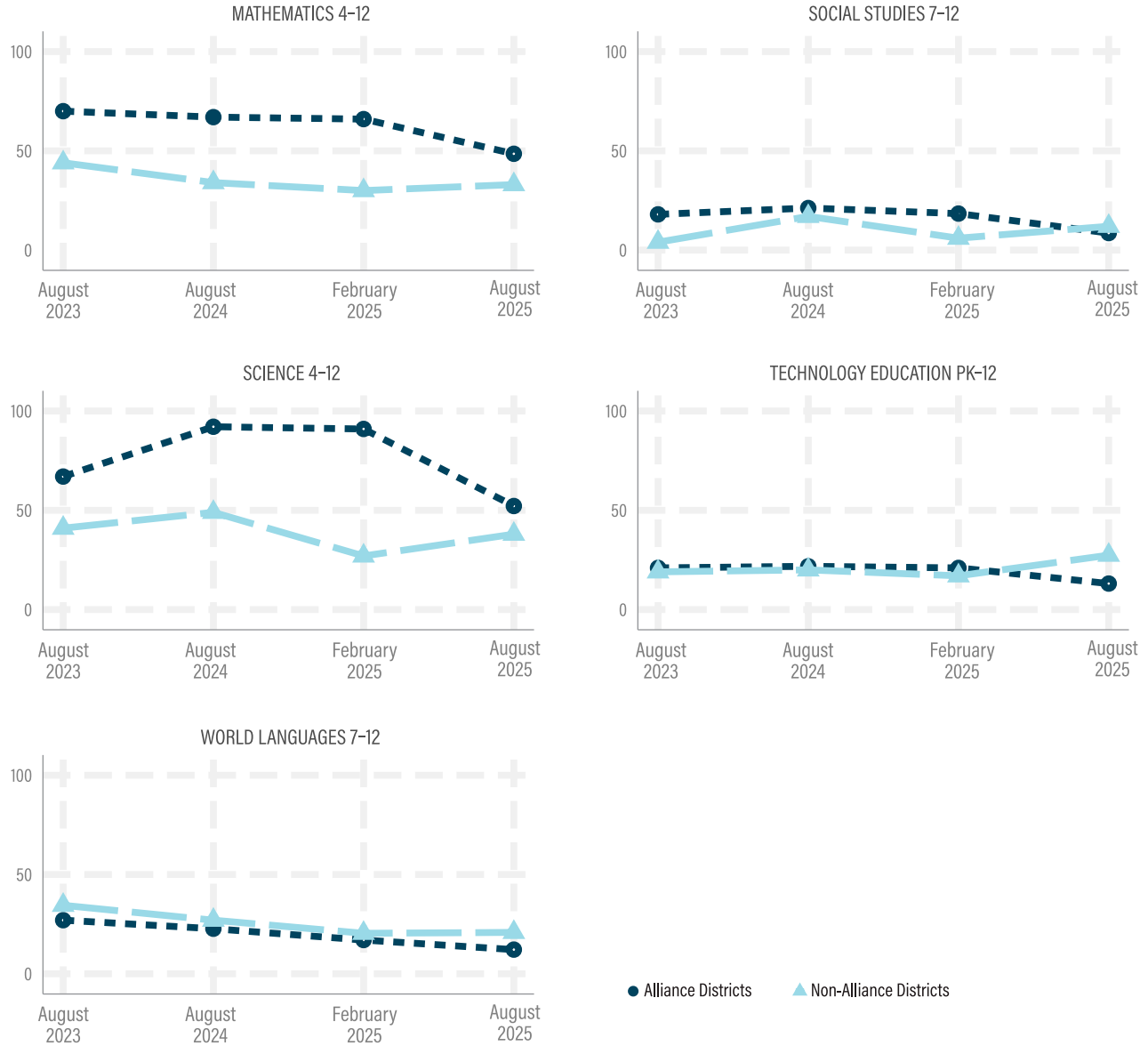


Figure 26: Student-Teacher Ratio by Subject, 2023-2025



OUR MISSION

The Wheelock Educational Policy Center (WEPC) conducts and disseminates rigorous, policy-relevant education research in partnership with local, state, and federal policymakers and stakeholders to improve educational opportunities and holistic outcomes for underserved students.

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