

**I.X.A.**

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Hartford**

**TO BE PROPOSED:  
February 1, 2017**

**RESOLVED**, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-8b of the Connecticut General Statutes, receives the “Designation of Certification Shortage Areas, 2017-18,” and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved by a vote of \_\_\_\_\_ this first day of February, Two Thousand Seventeen.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Secretary  
State Board of Education

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Hartford**

**TO:** State Board of Education

**FROM:** Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner of Education

**DATE:** February 1, 2017

**SUBJECT:** Designation of Certification Shortage Areas, 2017-2018

**Executive Summary**

**Background Information**

Each year, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) surveys public school districts and approved private special education programs to ascertain:

- the number of certified staff actively employed;
- the number of teaching and administrative vacancies that existed prior to the start of the school year and remained vacant as of October 1; and
- the quantity and quality of applications received for those vacancies.

This data is used to establish Connecticut's shortage areas for the subsequent year. Educators working under an endorsement that is designated as a shortage area may be eligible for loan forgiveness, mortgage assistance, and a waiver from earning limitations otherwise imposed by the Connecticut Teachers' Retirement Board on retirees who return to a position in a shortage area.

**Connecticut's Submission of Proposed Teacher Shortage Areas**

The CSDE Performance Office developed a methodology to identify certificate subject shortage areas that takes into account the following four factors: 1) Number of vacancies due to the lack of qualified candidates; 2) median number of applicants per position; 3) the sum of Durational Shortage Area Permits (DSAPs), long-term substitutes and minimally-qualified hires; and 4) the number of first-time Connecticut certificates and renewals divided by the number of available positions. Each factor is ranked, weighted, and summed to create a shortage area index. Based on this methodology, the following certification endorsements, in rank order, were reported to the United States Department of Education as shortage areas for the 2017-2018 academic year:

- 1) World Languages
- 2) Speech and Language Pathologist
- 3) Mathematics, 7-12
- 4) Science, 7-12
- 5) Special Education
- 6) Technology Education, PK-12
- 7) School Library Media Specialist
- 8) Bilingual Education, PK-12
- 9) TESOL, PK-12
- 10) Occupational Subject, Vocational Technical School

In 2016, Fall Hiring Survey participants included 166 public school districts, 24 charter schools, six Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs), the three endowed and incorporated academies, 51 state-approved non-public special education programs, the Connecticut Technical High School System, and the Connecticut Departments of Correction and Children and Families.

Nine of the 10 designated shortage areas for 2017-18 were also identified shortage areas in 2016-17. For the 2017-18 academic year, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) is identified as a shortage area, and School Psychologist is no longer included as a certification subject shortage area.

The total FTE count statewide (excluding approved private special education programs) decreased slightly from 53,571 in 2015-16, to 53,182 in 2016-17. In the 10 lowest performing Alliance Districts (i.e., the Education Reform Districts), the total number of certified positions decreased by 1.2 percent (a reduction of 129 positions) while in the charter schools, the number of positions increased by over 10 percent (79 positions).

The number of vacancies that districts sought to staff prior to the start of the school year decreased from 4,836 in fall of 2015 to 4,521 in fall of 2016 – a 6.5 percent decline. This represents the second year in a row Connecticut experienced a reduction in the number of vacancies.

The CSDE has continued to take proactive measures to reduce vacancies in Connecticut's designated shortage areas through the following actions:

- partnered with the U.S. Department of Education and the Equitable Access Support Network to convene an Educator Equity Lab on December 19, 2016, to assist Equity Districts to create action plans to attract, recruit, select, and retain high-quality educators with a targeted focus on filling shortage areas and increasing the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity in their district;
- approved the Relay Graduate School of Education in November 2016 as an alternate route to certification (ARC) program in secondary math, secondary science, and elementary education;
- conducted informal interviews with the Equity Districts to connect Equity Plan strategies with Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) program requirements and supports to establish a network and communication mechanism to share best practices for supporting early career teachers in order to increase retention;
- continued to allocate CSDE Title III monies to reduce tuition costs and increase the number of candidates who enroll in the ARC for Teachers of English Language Learners (ARCTELL) program administered by Area Cooperative Education Services (ACES); currently, a total of 101 program completers have received tuition assistance in the ACES statewide cohorts. For the current program year ending June 2017, 42 participants are receiving tuition assistance from CSDE Title III funds;
- established a relationship with the newly-appointed New England representative for Troops to Teachers, a program providing support for retired military seeking to become certified to teach in Connecticut;
- attended college fairs to promote education as a viable, rewarding career choice; and
- increased efforts to distribute promotional materials on Connecticut's designated shortage areas to Connecticut Council for Teacher Professional Standards, Connecticut Council for Administrator Professional Standards, the Teacher of the Year Council, other CSDE advisory councils, and at a variety of sponsored educator events.

Several efforts are currently underway or in various stages of exploration to further engage education partners in the recruitment of a diverse workforce to specific shortage areas. These actions include:

- revising Connecticut’s certification system and processes to increase flexibility, remove barriers, and expand career pathways to increase the current pool of certified and qualified educators;
- engaging with the Center for Public Research and Leadership at Columbia University to conduct a state and national scan of recruitment efforts and partnership models to identify, disseminate, and showcase promising practices, nationally and statewide, for increasing the pool of qualified PK-12 educators with a focus on increasing the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of the workforce and decreasing vacancies in designated shortage areas;
- creating a toolkit of communication strategies to disseminate to LEAs to include information on traditional and non-traditional educator preparation programs (EPPs), loan forgiveness/deferral programs, mortgage assistance, and other financial incentives;
- exploring Next Generation Educator Scholarship opportunities with the Office of Higher Education to provide financial assistance to high-achieving high school and college students interested in pursuing a career in education in exchange for a five-year employment commitment at an eligible Connecticut public school;
- working in close collaboration with the deans and directors of EPPs to explore strategies to address shortage areas and strongly encourage them to focus any new program development in the designated shortage areas;
- proactively reaching out to the RESC Alliance to consider new cross-endorsement ARCs that specifically address shortage areas;
- replicating successful programs such as allocating Title III monies to the ARCTELL program and other EPPs that focus on other designated shortage areas;
- researching models for district-embedded cross-endorsements with a focus on bilingual certification;
- developing media profiles of highly-effective educators for marketing and distribution on multiple media sites;
- providing a Talent Management Inventory to all Connecticut districts with targeted focus on Alliance Districts/Education Reform Districts via facilitated sessions at Alliance District symposiums;
- identifying new programs and funding opportunities in Title II of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) that can be used to support new or expand existing programs that target designated shortage areas;
- planning for a statewide summit in winter 2018 to engage district personnel and educational stakeholders in efforts that address persistent shortage areas;
- communicating with the Teachers Council and the Teacher Placement Group, to sponsor the United States Department of State J-1 Teacher Exchange Visitor Program which will invite highly-effective educators, who meet requirements for a Visiting International Teacher Permit (VITP) Connecticut certification to explore teaching opportunities in the state of Connecticut; and
- partnering with the Department of Labor to develop a plan for targeted recruitment of career changers.

## **Measures of Success**

- Decrease the number of vacancies that remain or are filled with non-certified educators as of the annual October 1<sup>st</sup> count by 5% for each of the next 5 years (specifically for math, science, special education, and bilingual education).
- Increase certification pathways and opportunities for cross-endorsements and/or new EPPs, with a focus on shortage areas.
- Increase the number of well-established partnerships among EPPs, Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic-Serving Institutions, and PK-12 districts.
- Increase enrollment/completion rates for candidates in designated/priority shortage areas and candidates of color over the next five years.

## **Conclusions/Recommendations**

Consistent with national and international trends, Connecticut continues to experience challenges attracting qualified and certified educators in certain subject areas, especially in the Alliance Districts. The CSDE will continue to address these challenges through implementation of the strategies outlined above.

## **Follow-up Activities**

In compliance with subsections (a) and (b) of Section 10-8b of the Connecticut General Statutes, the CSDE will disseminate a memorandum outlining the 2017-18 designated shortage areas to the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority and to the president of every institution of higher education in the state offering a teacher preparatory program. To ensure that information regarding the 2017-18 shortage areas is shared widely, the CSDE will also disseminate the memorandum outlining designated shortage areas to Superintendents of Schools, RESC Directors, Board of Regents, the Office of Higher Education, and the Deans/Directors of EPPs.

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