

VII.A.

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

**TO BE PROPOSED:
February 3, 2016**

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-8b of the Connecticut General Statutes, receives the “Designation of Certification Shortage Areas, 2016-17,” and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved by a vote of _____, this third day of February, Two Thousand Sixteen.

Signed: _____
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 3, 2016

SUBJECT: Designation of Certification Shortage Areas, 2016-17

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, 2015; 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 on retirees who return to a position in a shortage area.

Highlights from the Fall 2015 Hiring Report

The following certification endorsement areas from the 2015-16 data collection remain difficult to fill and are designated as shortage areas for 2016-17:

- Bilingual Education, PK-12;
 - Comprehensive Special Education, K-12;
 - Intermediate Administrator;
 - Mathematics, 7-12;
 - School Library and Media Specialist;
 - School Psychologist;
 - Science, 7-12;
 - Speech and Language Pathologist;
 - Technology Education, PK-12; and
 - World Languages, 7-12.
- Nine of the 10 designated shortage areas for 2016-17 were also identified as a shortage area in 2015-16. For the 2016-17 school year, Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages (TESOL) was not identified as a shortage area and School Psychologist was included as a certification subject shortage area.

- Though the total number of certified positions statewide (excluding approved private special education programs) declined slightly (less than one half of one percent) from 53,484 in 2014-15 to 53,225 in 2015-16, some districts evidenced modest increases. In the 10 lowest performing Alliance Districts (i.e., the Education Reform Districts), the total number of certified positions increased by 1.6 percent (173 positions) while in the Regional Education Service Centers (RESA) the corresponding increase was 2.6 percent (48 positions).
- The number of vacancies that districts sought to staff prior to the start of the school year decreased from 5,145 in fall of 2014 to 4,836 in fall of 2015 – a 6 percent decline. This is the first decline after several years of an increase in the number of vacancies.
- The number of vacancies declined for all districts except Other LEAs and Approved Private Special Education Programs.

The CSDE has taken several proactive measures to reduce vacancies in Connecticut's designated shortage areas since the May 2015 State Board of Education report. These actions include:

July 2015

- creating the Bureau of Leadership Development and tasking this bureau with, among other initiatives, identifying innovative strategies and policies that will increase the number of candidates prepared to teach in Connecticut's designated shortage areas;
- allocating additional staff resources to identify partnerships and programs to increase the number of candidates for Connecticut's designated shortage areas;

September 2015

- gaining approval from the United States Department of Education for the 2015 Connecticut Equity Plan which includes specific strategies for addressing designated shortage areas;
- facilitating an informational meeting with the eight districts named in the Equity Plan to communicate the Equity Plan strategies and establish a support network and an accountability mechanism;
- creating and communicating a meeting schedule and collaboratively designed support plan for the eight Equity Districts for the 2015-2016 school year;
- spurring innovation at the district-level by providing financial assistance to districts to create paths to certification for non-certified staff members with bachelor's and master's degrees in order to increase minority teacher representation and fill vacancies in designated shortage areas;

October 2015

- providing additional support to Alliance Districts to develop talent strategies that focus on attracting and retaining qualified teachers through:
 - facilitating breakout sessions at each Alliance District Convening dedicated to effective talent development strategies by Talent Office staff;

- developing and disseminating a needs assessment to guide districts through a reflection of talent development strategies employed at the district; and
- reviewing each district's self-assessment tool to identify areas for on-going support;
- meeting with the President of Math for America, a New York City based program designed to retain and attract math and science teachers by providing outstanding professional development opportunities and a network of support, in order to understand how this program could be replicated in Connecticut;

November 2015

- establishing a relationship with UTEACH, an innovative, university-based teacher preparation program working to increase the number of qualified science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) teachers to learn how to implement a UTEACH program in Connecticut;

December 2015

- establishing regular communication with the New England representative for Troops to Teachers, a program providing support for retired military seeking to become certified to teach in Connecticut;
- meeting with RELAY Graduate School of Education representative to begin the process of approval for new certification programs in middle grades math, secondary math, middle grades science, secondary science and elementary Grades 1-6;
- redesigning the TEAM program to offer additional support to teachers in Equity Districts that teach in designated shortage areas to increase retention rates;
- identifying new programs 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;

January 2016

- meeting with a panel of education majors representing two of Connecticut's educator preparation programs at a joint meeting of the Connecticut Councils of Teacher and Administrator Professional Standards to better understand how designated shortage area needs are communicated to prospective students;
- establishing communication with the 100K in 10 initiative, an organization committed to recruiting, training, and retaining 100,000 excellent science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) teachers to express the CSDE's interest in applying for membership in their network; and
- requesting a data report from the Performance Office to review retention rates of teachers in designated shortage areas in the eight Equity Districts in order to craft targeted strategies to increase retention.

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 a series of strategies including, but not limited to:

Continued Efforts

- continuing to allocate CSDE Title III monies to reduce tuition costs and increase the number of candidates who enroll in the Alternate Route to Certification for Teachers of English Language Learners (ARCTELL) program administered by Area Cooperative Education Services; currently, a total of 60 program completers have received tuition assistance in the ACES statewide cohorts. For the current program year ending June 2016, 42 participants are receiving tuition assistance from CSDE Title III funds;
- providing training, coaching and support resources for school principals serving in high-need schools and districts through LEAD CT;
- planning for additional fiscal resources directed towards scholarships for students who are enrolled in educator preparation programs in specified shortage areas. Students who receive the scholarships would be expected to work within the profession for a specified period of time or be expected to return a portion of the scholarship funds;

Communication

- increasing the avenues for the dissemination of information about existing teacher incentive programs, such as the Teacher Mortgage Assistance Program and loan forgiveness for teachers working in either a shortage area or a priority school district;
- creating a toolkit of a communication strategies to include information on traditional and non-traditional preparation programs, loan forgiveness programs and other financial incentives;
- redesigning the web page dedicated to designated shortage areas to more clearly communicate the pathways to certification and the incentives for prospective educators interested in teaching in a designated shortage area;

New Programming

- incentivizing the development of new preparation programs in shortage areas by allowing institutions of higher education to only submit new program proposals that address shortage areas during the next two years (July 2015 to July 2017);
- replicating successful programs such as allocating Title III monies to the ARCTELL program for other designated shortage areas; and
- working in close collaboration with the deans of education and executive directors of alternate routes to certification to explore strategies to address shortage areas and strongly encourage them to focus any new program development in the designated shortage areas.

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 2016-17 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 2016-17 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, Office of Higher Education, and the Deans/Directors of Educator Preparation Programs.

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