

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

TO BE PROPOSED:

May 13, 2020

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-145d-9(g)(2)(B) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, grants provisional approval for the period May 6, 2020 through October 31, 2021, to the Relay Graduate School of Education (Relay/GSE) for a Master of Arts (MAT) program, with ongoing continuing approval status to be determined based on evaluation findings from a September 16, 2020 on-site visit, for the purpose of recommending candidates from Relay/GSE in the following endorsement areas:

Program	Grade Level	Program Level	Program Type
Elementary Education	1-6	Initial	Graduate
Secondary Education:			
English	7-12	Initial	Graduate
Mathematics	7-12	Initial	Graduate
General Science	7-12	Initial	Graduate
Biology	7-12	Initial	Graduate
Chemistry	7-12	Initial	Graduate
Physics	7-12	Initial	Graduate

and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved by a vote of _____ on this thirteenth day of May, Two Thousand Twenty.

Signed: _____
Dr. Miguel A. Cardona, Secretary
State Board of Education

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Dr. Miguel A. Cardona, Commissioner of Education

DATE: May 13, 2020

SUBJECT: Approval of New Educator Preparation Program: Relay Graduate School of Education (Relay/GSE), Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) Program

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Relay Graduate School of Education (Relay/GSE) is approved by the State Board of Education (SBE) for an alternate route to certification (ARC) program in elementary education and the secondary areas of English language arts, mathematics, and science. Relay/GSE is now seeking SBE approval for a Master of Arts (MAT) program in these same licensure areas.

This report presents Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) evaluation findings for the review of the Relay/GSE proposal for a MAT program, including the program approval history for the Relay/GSE Connecticut-based ARC program (CT Relay/GSE ARC). Additionally, this report includes the Commissioner of Education's recommendation to the SBE regarding the approval of the Relay/GSE MAT program.

History/Background

Relay/GSE is a national, nonprofit institution of higher education initially granted a charter by the New York State Board of Regents in 2011. Since its inception, Relay/GSE has expanded to include educator preparation programs leading to initial teacher certification, master's degrees for teachers and teaching residents, and fellowships for experienced principals, with campuses now in 18 states across the country.

On November 2, 2016, the SBE granted approval to Relay/GSE for an alternate route to certification (ARC) program leading to recommendation for the Connecticut temporary 90-day teaching certificate in elementary education and the secondary areas of English language arts, mathematics, and science. CT Relay/GSE ARC, which focuses on creating partnerships with Connecticut priority districts to recruit and train minority educators, is a part time, non-degree, non-credit bearing program designed for non-certified staff members (e.g., paraprofessionals) employed with CT Relay/GSE ARC partner districts. Program candidates, who must hold an undergraduate degree from a regionally accredited institution of

higher education, receive on-the-job training while gradually building pedagogical knowledge and skills as a full-time teacher-in-residence supporting a lead classroom teacher. In addition to on-the-job training, candidates complete a combination of in-person class days (two to four per month) and on-line learning (approximately 40% of program coursework). After successful completion of the CT Relay/GSE ARC program and the 90-day certificate teaching period, candidates are eligible for Connecticut initial licensure.

Per Connecticut regulations (Attachment A), the maximum period of approval for new programs for institutions or organizations that have no other SBE-approved programs is two years. The SBE granted CT Relay/GSE ARC initial approval for the period November 2, 2016 to October 31, 2018, and required the program to host an on-site, continuing approval visit during spring 2018.

During a CSDE May 2, 2018 on-site visit, an evaluation team determined that CT Relay/GSE ARC is fulfilling its promise to recruit and train candidates of color for Connecticut schools. TABLE 1 below shows that since the beginning of the program, the majority (70%) of candidates have been and continue to be candidates of color (n=170):

TABLE 1. Cohort Race Breakdown, CT Relay/GSE ARC Program, 2016-2020

Race/Ethnicity	CT Relay/GSE ARC Cohort Year				TOTAL
	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	
African American	29 (64%)	37 (47%)	34 (64%)	28 (42%)	128
Hispanic/Latino	6 (13%)	11 (14%)	10 (19%)	15 (22%)	42
White/Not Reported	10 (22%)	31 (39%)	9 (17%)	24 (40%)	74
TOTAL	45	79	53	67	244

The team also determined that CT Relay/GSE ARC continues to meet state regulatory and statutory requirements, with two areas for improvement identified related to licensure pass rates and partnership school expansion.

Relative to licensure pass rates, at the point of the on-site visit, CT Relay/GSE ARC had a total of 45 program completers from the program’s first cohort (2016-2017), and of these 45, only 17 (38%) had passed all required licensure tests, specifically, Praxis II and Foundations of Reading (elementary education only) tests, which are measures of content knowledge. CT Relay/GSE ARC needs to ensure that program completers possess the content knowledge required to be an educator as measured by the Praxis II and Foundations of Reading tests.

Relative to partnership schools, twice as many candidates (n=30) from the 2016-2017 program cohort completed residency placements in Connecticut charter schools compared to non-charter schools (n=15); 51 (65%) completed residency placements in charter schools during 2017-2018, compared to 28 (35%) completing residency placements in non-charter schools. CT Relay/GSE ARC needs to increase the number of program candidates completing residency placements in Connecticut non-charter schools.

Based on these two areas for improvement, CT Relay/GSE ARC was granted provisional approval by the SBE for the period November 1, 2018, through October 31, 2021, with an on-site, focused visit required no later than October 2020, and annual progress reporting required up to the point of the on-site visit.

CT Relay/GSE ARC Progress Report, October 2019

During October 2019, CT Relay/GSE ARC submitted to the CSDE a comprehensive progress report detailing continuous improvement efforts relative to licensure testing and partner school expansion efforts, which the CSDE presented to the SBE during a December 2019 meeting. A summary is presented here:

- (1) Licensure Testing Pass Rates. Unlike some other Connecticut post-baccalaureate educator preparation programs, CT Relay/GSE ARC does not require applicants to pass licensure tests for content knowledge before acceptance into the program. Rather, program candidates receive content knowledge remediation and test preparation support from program faculty throughout the program and for up to five years after program completion, including access to all CT Relay/GSE ARC program resources.

TABLE 2 below shows licensure pass rates for CT Relay/GSE ARC candidates, 2016-2019. Since 2016, 177 candidates have successfully completed the CT Relay/GSE program, with 87 (49%) program completers passing licensure test requirements.

TABLE 2: Licensure Test Pass Rates, CT Relay/GSE ARC, 2016-2019

Cohort Year	# of Enrolled Candidates	# of Program Completers	#/% of Program Completers Passed Licensure Test(s)
2016-2017	57	45	26 (58%)
2017-2018	80	79	45 (57%)
2018-2019	59	53	16 (39%)
TOTALS	196	177	87 (49%)

In addition to program and post program faculty support, CT Relay/GSE ARC has developed and implemented several other initiatives to support candidates relative to content knowledge remediation. A major initiative, launched in October 2018, is a pre-program academy that provides tutoring, Praxis II test preparation support, and course work recommendations to candidates who do not have the necessary credit requirements and/or have not demonstrated that they possess the content knowledge required for teaching. CT Relay/GSE ARC has also implemented these initiatives to support candidates with Praxis II and Foundations of Reading test preparation:

- Developed a partnership with the Educational Testing Service (ETS) to explore differential performance on Praxis II testing by race/ethnicity.
- Hired content experts who provide Praxis II group tutoring at the beginning of each Praxis II testing window at no cost to candidates.
- Hired content area experts to provide support (e.g., workshops) to candidates preparing for the Foundations of Reading test at no cost to candidates.
- Established a partnership with Teachers Test Prep, a nationwide leader in credentialing exam preparation, to provide Praxis II diagnostic information and tutoring at a steep discount.
- Invested in making the Mometrix Test Preparation database available at no cost to candidates. Mometrix is a test preparation database that contains unofficial study guides and practice questions for a variety of tests, including Praxis II tests and the Foundations of Reading test. Access is available on demand through the CT Relay/GSE ARC library.

- (2) Partner School Expansion Efforts. In 2017-2018, CT Relay/GSE ARC expanded its partner district network to 16 districts and charter schools from seven, with the addition of East Haven Public Schools, Hartford Public Schools, New Britain Public Schools, and Middletown Public Schools. For the academic year 2019-2020, the number of partner districts and charter schools has increased to 19. The current list of CT Relay/GSE ARC partner districts and charter schools is shown in TABLE 3.

TABLE 3: CT Relay/GSE ARC Partner Districts and Charter Schools, 2019-2020

Achievement First Charter School	Common Ground High School	Great Oaks Charter School	New Britain Public Schools	Regional School District 12
Bloomfield Public Schools	Capital Region Education Council (CREC)	Greenwich Public Schools	New Haven Public Schools	Windham Public School
Bristol Public Schools	East Hartford Public Schools	Hartford Public Schools	New London Public Schools	Windsor Public Schools
Capital Prep Harbor	East Haven Public Schools	Middletown Public Schools	Norwalk Public Schools	

TABLE 4 below shows CT Relay/GSE ARC residency placement numbers and percentages for non-charter schools versus charter schools for 2016-2020. Although the placement numbers indicate slightly more charter school placements (n=129; 53%) compared to non-charter school placements (n=115; 47%) for the four years overall, data by year indicate an increase in non-charter school residency placements for the last two program cohorts. Beginning with the 2018-2019 CT Relay/GSE ARC cohort, more residency placements were in non-charter schools (57%) compared to charter schools (43%); and the 2019-2020 cohort shows a significant increase comparatively, with non-charter school placements at 63% and charter school placements at 37%.

TABLE 4: CT Relay/GSE ARC Residency Placements, Non-Charter Schools Versus Charter Schools, 2016-2020

Cohort Year	#!/% of Non-Charter School Residency Placements	#!/% of Charter School Residency Placements	Total # Placements
2016-2017	15 (33%)	30 (67%)	45
2017-2018	28 (35%)	51 (65%)	79
2018-2019	30 (57%)	23 (43%)	53
2019-2020	42 (63%)	25 (37%)	67
Totals # Placements	115	129	244

CT Relay/GSE ARC Progress Report, February 2019

Although recent in implementation, early data suggests that the CT Relay/GSE multi-pronged approach to identifying and remediating candidate content knowledge gaps is having impact. CT Relay/GSE ARC has reported to the CSDE that as of February 2020, 93 out of 177 (53%) program completers have passed all required licensure tests. CT Relay/GSE has also reported that the current ARC cohort (2019-2020) has demonstrated a higher pass rate earlier in the

programmatic year, in comparison to previous cohorts. To date, seventeen (n=17) of the currently enrolled candidates have passed all required licensure tests.

CT Relay/GSE also provided the CSDE with the most recent national Relay/GSE data showing that candidates in a two-year Relay/GSE program have higher licensure test pass rates than those attending a one-year program. As of February 2020, 81% of Relay/GSE candidates across the country in two-year MAT programs have passed all required licensure exams, compared to 59% of candidates enrolled in one-year programs.

Relay/GSE Program Proposal: Master of Arts (MAT) Program

Since approval in 2016 for a Connecticut-based ARC program, Relay/GSE has been working with the Connecticut Office of Higher Education (OHE) to become licensed in Connecticut as an out-of-state institution of higher learning in order to expand into a credit-bearing, MAT program in Connecticut. Based on evaluation findings from an on-site visit conducted by OHE on January 7, 2020, Relay is meeting OHE standards for operating in Connecticut as an out-of-state institution of higher learning. Next steps include approval by the SBE for a MAT program leading to teacher certification.

Relay/GSE is proposing for SBE consideration a two-year, 36-credit hour program that leads to a MAT and recommendation for teacher certification in the content areas for which Relay/GSE is approved currently by the SBE—elementary education and the secondary areas of English Language Arts, mathematics and science. The first year of the proposed MAT program consists of graduate-level coursework and training now approved by the SBE as an ARC program, focusing on the fundamentals of classroom management, lesson planning, student assessment, and building and sustaining relationships with students, families, and colleagues. The second year of the proposed MAT program both broadens and deepens candidate theoretical and applied, content-specific pedagogical knowledge and skills, including methods for incorporating literacy instruction across all content areas and training in culturally responsive pedagogy. This second year also culminates in a Master’s defense capstone project requiring candidates to create and orally defend a comprehensive teaching portfolio consisting of video examples of teaching, written reflections, and analyses of student assessment data for instructional planning.

Applicant requirements for this MAT would be the same as they are now for the currently approved Connecticut Relay/GSE ARC program. Program candidates must hold an undergraduate degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education. The delivery model will also be the same as the current ARC program, with candidates assigned as a full-time teacher of record in a partner district and receiving on-the-job training while completing a combination of in-person and on-line coursework. Candidates will serve under the two-year, Connecticut Resident Educator Certificate, with the option of pursuing certification upon passing edTPA and meeting all licensure testing requirements or continuing in the program to complete coursework and other programmatic requirements for the MAT degree. Because program candidates will have the option to pursue certification only in the MAT program, Relay/GSE will begin to phase out the Connecticut Relay/GSE ARC program if the MAT program is approved by the SBE.

For consistency, the Relay/GSE MAT proposal was reviewed by evaluation team members who reviewed the original Relay/GSE ARC program proposal. The team focused on the year two MAT coursework and other program requirements due to the year one programming

having been already reviewed and evaluated during the 2015-2016 CSDE Relay/GSE ARC review and evaluation process. The team determined that the MAT proposal meets graduate level programming and other CSDE requirements for new programs. The team also provided course-specific feedback to Relay/GSE regarding the MAT proposal to strengthen the training candidates receive in critical pedagogical areas, including ensuring that candidates receive adequate training related to Connecticut Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Relay/GSE revised MAT coursework to include all feedback from the evaluation team. The evaluation team unanimously recommended that the proposal move forward to the CSDE Review Committee for consideration, which is the SBE-appointed committee charged with making initial and continuing approval recommendations to the Commissioner of Education based on evaluation findings (Attachment B).

As discussed above, the SBE-approved CT Relay/GSE ARC program is on provisional approval for the period March 4, 2020 through October 31, 2021, due to two areas for improvement being monitored closely by the CSDE, with a SBE-required, on-site visit scheduled no later than October 2020. The CSDE has scheduled this on-site visit for September 16, 2020. Based on evaluation team findings, the CSDE Review Committee recommended to the Commissioner that the Relay/GSE MAT program be approved provisionally for the same timeframe, and that the ongoing continuing approval status be determined based on evaluation findings from the September 16, 2020 on-site visit.

Recommendation and Justification

Based upon the recommendation of the CSDE Review Committee, I recommend that the Relay/GSE MAT program be granted provisional approval for the period April 1, 2020 through October 31, 2021, and that the ongoing continuing approval status be determined based on evaluation findings from the CSDE September 16, 2020 on-site visit.

Follow-up Activity

If granted provisional approval by the SBE for the MAT program, Relay/GSE will be notified immediately so that they may start recruiting for the fall 2020 cohort. Additionally, Relay/GSE will begin to phase out the Connecticut Relay/GSE ARC program. A CSDE on-site visit will be conducted on September 16, 2020 to review and evaluate progress related to the two areas of improvement that have been identified for the Connecticut Relay/GSE ARC program, specifically, licensure test pass rates and partnership expansion efforts. Beginning fall 2020, the CSDE will also conduct annual progress monitoring of the Relay/GSE MAT program using program data from the Connecticut Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) Data Dashboard.

Prepared by: Katie Moirs, Ph.D., Program Approval Coordinator, Talent Office

Approved by: Shuana K. Tucker, Ph.D., Chief Talent Officer, Talent Office

**Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies for Educator Preparation Program Approval
Section 10-145d-9(g)**

Board Action

After reviewing the recommendation of the Review Committee, the Commissioner shall make one or more recommendations to the Board. Based on the Commissioner's recommendation, the Board shall take one of the following actions.

(1) For programs requesting continuing approval:

- (A) Grant full program approval for five years, or for a period of time to bring the program into alignment with the five year approval cycle. The Board may require that an interim report be submitted to the Department, on a date set by the Board, prior to the end of the approval period.
- (B) Grant provisional approval for a time period not to exceed three years, if substantial non-compliance with current standards is identified. The institution shall submit to the Review Committee, on a date set by the Board, a written report which addresses the professional education unit's progress in meeting the standards which were not fully met. The Board may require an on-site visit in addition to this report.
- (C) Grant probationary approval for a time period not to exceed three years, if significant and far-reaching non-compliance with current standards is identified. The institution shall submit to the Review Committee, on a date set by the Board, a written report which addresses the professional education unit's progress in meeting the standards which were not fully met. The Board shall require an on-site visit in addition to this report.
- (D) Deny approval.

(2) For new programs in institutions which have current approved programs:

- (A) Grant full program approval for a period of time to bring the new program into the five year approval cycle of all other programs offered by the institution. The Board may require that a written report be submitted to the Department, on a date set by the Board, prior to the end of the approval period.
- (B) Grant provisional approval for a time period not to exceed three years, if substantial non-compliance with current standards is identified. The institution shall submit to the Review Committee, on a date set by the

Board, a written report which addresses the professional education unit's progress in meeting the standards which were not fully met. The Board may require an on-site visit in addition to this report.

- (C) Grant probationary approval not to exceed three years, if significant and far-reaching non-compliance with current standards is identified. The institution shall submit to the Review Committee, on a date set by the Board, a written report which addresses the professional education unit's progress in meeting the standards which were not fully met. The Board shall require an on-site visit in addition to this report.
- (D) Deny approval.

(3) For new programs starting in institutions without other approved programs:

- (A) Grant program approval for two years. The institution shall submit to the Review Committee, after two semesters of operation, a written report which addresses the professional education unit's progress in implementing the new program. The Board shall require an on-site visit in addition to this report.
- (B) Following the on-site visit after two years of operation, grant full program approval for three years. The Board may require that a written report be submitted to the Department, on a date set by the Board, prior to the end of the approval period.
- (C) Following the on-site visit after two years of operation, grant provisional approval for a time period not to exceed three years, if substantial non-compliance with current standards is identified. The institution shall submit to the Review Committee, on a date set by the Board, a written report which addresses the professional education unit's progress in meeting the standards which were not fully met. The Board may require an on-site visit in addition to this report.
- (D) Following the on-site visit after two years of operation, grant probationary approval for up to three years, if significant and far-reaching non-compliance with current standards is identified. The institution shall submit to the Review Committee, on a date set by the Board, a written report which addresses the professional education unit's progress in meeting the standards which were not fully met. The Board shall require an on-site visit in addition to this report.
- (E) Deny approval.

Attachment B

**CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Educator Preparation Program Approval Review Committee**

Name	Affiliation	Representation	Term Ending
Stephanie Storms	Fairfield University	Higher Education	March 2, 2022
Megan Mackey	Central Connecticut State University	Higher Education	March 2, 2022
*Tamika La Salle	University of Connecticut	Higher Education	Jan. 3, 2020
*Catherine O’Callaghan	Western Connecticut State University	Higher Education	Jan. 3, 2020
*Julie Sochacki	University of Hartford	Higher Education	Jan. 3, 2020
Joseph Bonillo	Waterford Public Schools	K-12	March 2, 2022
*Thomas Danehy	Area Cooperative Educational Services	K-12	Jan. 3, 2020
*Ana Ortiz	Oxford Public Schools	K-12	Jan. 3, 2020
*Shuana Tucker	New Britain Public Schools	K-12	Jan. 3, 2020
*Evette Avila	Hartford Public Schools	K-12	Jan. 3, 2020
Michael Livingston	Capitol Region Education Council	Community	March 2, 2022
Shannon Marimon	Connecticut Council for Education Reform	Community	March 2, 2022

* New members will be appointed to fill committee vacancies due to term limitations in May 2020.