

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

TO: State Board of Education

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

DATE: October 7, 2020

SUBJECT: Increasing the Racial, Ethnic, and Linguistic Diversity of the Connecticut Educator Workforce Update and Next Steps

Executive Summary

Introduction

The mission of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), Talent Office is to develop and deploy talent management strategies to schools and districts statewide in order to ensure that each and every student in the state has access to great teachers and leaders to prepare for success in college, careers, and life. This is done in close collaboration with numerous education organizations including the state teachers' and administrators' unions, the Regional Educational Service Center (RESC) Alliance, State Education Resource Center (SERC), the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE), the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS), the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS), and Connecticut's 24 Educator Preparation Programs (EPP).

Since 2016, with the development of the State Board of Education's five-year comprehensive plan, the Talent Office has amplified efforts to increase the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of Connecticut's educator workforce and address persistent shortage areas (e.g., math, science, comprehensive special education, bilingual etc.).

History/Background

In 2016, the U.S. Department of Education released *The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce* which addresses the need to increase diversity in the nationwide educator workforce. The study reports that students of color are expected to comprise 56% of the student population by 2024, yet currently only 18% of educators are of color nationwide.

Also in 2016, the Connecticut State Board of Education (SBE) adopted a Five-Year Comprehensive Plan, *Ensuring Equity and Excellence for All Connecticut Students*, initiating the development of strategies to increase the number of educators of color from 8.3% to 10% by 2021 (1,000 certified educators of color within 5 years). The CSDE Talent Office has implemented several strategies designed to reach the goal outlined in the SBE plan to attract, support, and retain *Great Teachers and Leaders* with an intentional focus on increasing the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of Connecticut's educator workforce.

Historical Data**

Statewide Percentage of Educators of Color (EdSight.ct.gov)	Statewide Percentage of Administrators of Color (CSDE Employment Data System)
October 2015 - 8.3%	October 2015 - 12.24%
October 2016 - 8.5%	October 2016 - 12.84%
October 2017 - 8.7%	October 2017 - 12.94%
October 2018 - 8.9%	October 2018 - 13.5%
October 2019 - 9.6%*	October 2019 - 13.77%*

*Percentages were reported out in spring 2020 but are reflective of the 2019-2020 school year.

Connecticut statewide data indicates an increase in the percentage of educators of color for the 2019-20 school year from 8.9% to 9.6%. Of those, 13.77% are administrators. Although this increase is on target with the goal of reaching 10% educators of color by 2021, 47% of Connecticut's students are students of color (inclusive of students reported in the category of "more than one race") and the gap continues to widen. The percentage of educators of color in Connecticut is on the rise, however, the CSDE remains committed to increasing the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of the educator workforce and diminishing the gap between educators and students of color beyond the established goal.

Goal #3 of the State Board Comprehensive Plan states, "All students deserve access to great teachers and school leaders." The CSDE Talent Office is implementing a variety of strategies to 1) increase the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of the educator workforce and; 2) diminish vacancies in persistent certification shortage areas. These strategies can be broken down into three primary focus areas; 1) Increasing Pathways to Certification; 2) Supporting Districts and Local Education Agencies; and 3) Supporting Candidates.

Strategy 1 – Increasing Pathways to Certification

The CSDE Talent Office continues to provide ongoing support to both traditional and alternate route educator preparation programs specific to persistent shortage areas and/or align with the CSDE/SBE goal to increase the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of Connecticut's educator workforce. Since 2018, the State Board of Education granted full approval to new educator preparation programs to prepare certified educators including:

- the University of Hartford (UHART): initial certification program in special education;
- Southern Connecticut State University: integrated elementary/bilingual program at the graduate level;
- Teach For America: bilingual education, cross endorsement with Elementary Education, alternate route to certification program;
- Fairfield University: comprehensive special education, K-12, undergraduate level (initial certificate) program to create a 5-year integrated bachelor's/master's degree;
- Capitol Region Education Council (CREC): alternate route to certification (ARC) residency program leading to an endorsement in elementary education with a specific focus on recruiting and preparing candidates of color; and

- RELAY CT Master’s Program: The Relay/Graduate School of Education (GSE) Masters of Art in Teaching (MAT) program was granted provisional approval for the period April 1, 2020 through October 31, 2021.

The approval of new programs including the expansion of pathways for paraeducators and non-certified staff members through RELAY CT and CREC ARC programs, augmented by ongoing work within each of our Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) have produced an upward trend in enrollment of candidates of color across Connecticut’s EPPs as reported by Title II Data.

Individuals Enrolled in Teacher Preparation Programs, by Race/Ethnicity				
Title II Reporting Data https://title2.ed.gov/Public/Report/StateHome.aspx				
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19*
American Indian or Alaska Native	8	7	3	1
Asian	64	77	101	134
Black or African American	94	157	231	287
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	3	10	2	9
White	2,115	2,081	2,497	3,402
Two or more races	86	58	94	120
Hispanic/Latino of any race	218	228	313	448

**Projected figures as Title II data lags 2 years*

Strategy 2 – Supporting Districts and Local Education Agencies (LEAs)

The Talent Office has worked in partnership with numerous state, regional and national education organizations to develop resources and strategies intended to support districts and LEAs attract, recruit, hire and retain a diverse educator workforce. This work continues to transcend all points of an educator’s career continuum, from ensuring strong preparation within Connecticut Educator Preparation Programs to supporting early career educators with induction through the Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) program. The large part of the Talent Office efforts have been focused on providing resources to districts and LEAs to continuously improve practice through high quality professional learning and effective evaluation and support systems which help create supportive school and district cultures to reduce attrition and increase retention. Much of the work around efforts to diversify the educator workforce have been aimed at raising awareness and elevating strategic engagement around the importance of a racially, ethnically and linguistically diverse workforce for all Connecticut students. As such, the Talent Office has been intentionally focused on providing districts and LEAs with professional learning opportunities, tools and resources required to inform, evaluate and adjust their own practices. Several key high leverage strategies include:

EdKnowledge Online Repository

EdKnowledge is an online repository which hosts promising practices and models of success to attract, support, develop, and retain educators of color and is available on the CSDE website. Leadership and faculty at educator preparation institutions and local school districts can access

the repository to seek potential ideas for replication across the stages of the educator continuum. Educators across CT are invited to submit promising practices to create a forum for sharing innovative ideas.

Creating a District Plan to Increase the Racial, Ethnic, and Linguistic Diversity of Your Educator Workforce: A Guidebook for Hiring and Selection

Released in the summer 2019, the guidebook, and companion resources, is intended to support districts in the development and implementation of a plan to attract, recruit, hire, and select educators of color per the requirements outlined in P.A. 18-34. It is available on the CSDE website and has been promoted and piloted this past year with several CT school districts. The guidebook was developed as a result of a four-part workshop series created in collaboration with The Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (GTL), The Northeast Comprehensive Center (NCC), and several CT Opportunity Districts in 2018.

CSDE Talent Office/REL-NEI Pilot Project to Develop Workforce Diversity Plans

The CSDE Talent Office and eight district partners have been engaged in a four part series to develop workforce diversity plans. Each of the districts convened a small team of educators, school, and district leaders to utilize the resources available in the Hiring and Selection Guidebook distributed by the CSDE this past fall and described above. Districts were asked to examine data using a provided demographic diversity profile and engage in a self-assessment during a guided consultancy. Work will continue with these eight districts with the possibility of engaging a second cohort in Fall 2020.

New England Secondary School Consortium/Great Schools Partnership Minority Teacher Recruitment Task Force Draft Position Paper

The CSDE and district partners (Windsor, Hartford, Bristol) collaborated with a group of diverse educators from each of the New England states in a series of in-person and virtual convenings to discuss the need and value of increasing workforce diversity in each of the New England states. The group has provided its final round of feedback on a guidance document: *Increasing the Racial, Ethnic, and Linguistic Diversity of the Educator Workforce: A Call to Action for Leaders*. This work has been heavily influenced by the previous work of the CSDE Talent Office. The final document was released in September 2020.

RESC/MTR Alliance Contract

The CSDE, working in partnership with the RESC Alliance utilized part of the annual MTR RESC Alliance grant allocation to directly support school districts through 1) Regional Consortia; and 2) District Project Proposals. With regard to the Regional Consortia, each of the six Regional Educational Service Centers convened a diverse group of local educators to problem solve around attract, recruit, hiring, support, and retention strategies to develop workforce diversity plans. Each group met several times this past year with the opportunity to apply for a mini-grant to design and implement a project to meet an identified goal. Additionally, project proposals were submitted by 34 districts as a result of the regional consortia meetings. Examples of project proposals include: a District Equity Team and Leadership Program for Students of Color, Strengthening Partnerships with Educator Preparation Programs, Re-design of District Marketing Materials, Increase Involvement with the Educators Rising Program, Develop

an Educator Aspirant Program, Scholarships, Sponsorship for Educators of Color to participate in ARCTEL Cross-Endorsement Program among others.

Leading for Equity-CSDE/ New York City Leadership Academy (NYCLA) Partnership

With support from the Wallace Foundation University Principal Preparation Initiative (UPPI) grant, the CSDE designed a 2020 Professional Learning Series with content aligned to preparing and supporting Equity-Driven Leadership. The CSDE partnered with the (NYCLA to provide a 3-day training on Coaching to Advance Equity. This training focused on NYCLA’s Equity Dispositions© and Coaching Competencies©. Representatives from CSDE professional and technical assistance partner organizations also participated in this training, and subsequently met to discuss how to build upon and sustain the focus on Equity-Driven Leadership in CT’s schools and districts. A professional learning session on Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading, facilitated by Westat, was postponed due to the pandemic but will convene virtually this fall.

As many of the CSDE efforts for supporting districts and LEAs are focused on shifting cultures, internal structures and creating a mindset for open, honest and reflective dialogue; clearly defined metrics of success do not exist across all aspects of the work. However, looking at first time hiring data for certified staff supports the conclusion that CSDE efforts are creating dialogue across the state and elevating the importance of supporting a diverse educator workforce. This conclusion is supported by the new hiring data which shows the percentage of new educators of color hired annually has trended upward from approximately 10.42% in 2014-15 to 16.51% in 2019-20.

First Time Hired Certified Staff, Race/Ethnicity Educator Database System (EDS)					
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
N/A*	278	271	321	306	397
Native American	2	8	4	6	6
Asian	46	69	59	55	59
African American	126	148	152	145	179
White	2,064	2,059	1,579	1,672	1,950
Hispanic	131	165	150	183	220
Educators of Color	305	390	365	389	464
Total Newly Hired Staff	2,647	2,720	2,265	2,367	2,811

*Race/Ethnicity are self-reported in Connecticut Educator Certification System (CECS)

Strategy 3 – Supporting Candidates

The CSDE Talent Office is acutely aware of the necessity to attract and recruit the next generation of Connecticut educators. As such, the CSDE has worked in partnership with several regional and national organizations through grants to develop critical resources and support for candidates looking to join Connecticut’s educator workforce. Three critical strategies for this work include:

TEACH CT

TEACH Connecticut, the CSDE's online platform for recruiting teachers and elevating the profession, has a goal to support 175 future teachers in applying to an educator preparation program (EPP) between September 2019 and August 2020. On many leading performance metrics, the initiative is on track to meet this goal and surpass results from 2018-2019. For example, TEACH Connecticut has already hosted about three times the number of one-on-one advising calls this year compared to last. More than 50% of advising call participants are people of color, and this service is one of the most impactful of those offered. From March 2020 to present, TEACH Connecticut is continually seeing record-breaking interest and engagement from potential future teachers on several key metrics. This critical moment for digital recruitment has led to testing out new strategies and tactics to support future teachers of color. For example, TEACH Connecticut has supported more than 100 individuals through online information sessions on multiple topics in May and June, such as open office hours for ARC program applicants and an introduction to selecting an EPP for non-certified school/district staff members.

RESC/MTR Alliance Contract

The CSDE, working in partnership with the RESC Alliance utilized part of the annual MTR RESC Alliance grant allocation to directly support candidates and applicants through a Virtual Career Fair. The CSDE and the RESC Alliance hosted two virtual career fairs on June 2 and 3, 2020 aimed at increasing the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of Connecticut's educator workforce. Invitations were sent to certified teachers of color who were not appearing in our employment data system, recent graduates of CT educator preparation programs, and Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic Serving Institutions on the East Coast. The fair attracted 33 districts to create virtual booths and 137 job-seeking candidates. Over the course of the two-day event more than 500 conversations took place via chat, audio, or video calls. Preliminary feedback was positive with suggestions to inform future events.

The Connecticut Troops to Teachers Program

The Connecticut Troops to Teachers (CTTT) Program closed out year two of a five-year grant period. The goals of the program are to 1) reduce veteran unemployment, 2) address teacher shortage areas, and 3) increase the number of male teachers of color in Connecticut classrooms. Program Coordinators are in place for the four Connecticut State Universities identified in the grant proposal. The CTTT Program expanded this year with an additional Program Coordinator selected at the University of Connecticut to begin in fall 2020. Two Communities of Practice (CoPs) were hosted by our partner districts (Groton and New Britain) in the fall and early spring. A third CoP, in the New Haven area, was scheduled to meet this past spring, however, the COVID-19 pandemic prohibited that from happening this year.

Moving Forward

While the Talent Office is proud of the work that has been accomplished since 2015 and is pleased to see upward trends across all metrics available, the Talent Office recognizes that significant work lays ahead to build upon and accelerate early success. The three focus areas and corresponding strategies previously discussed have yielded positive results. Moving forward, those strategies which continue to demonstrate the greatest leverage will be maintained,

however, we are also expanding our efforts by implementing new initiatives in 2020-2023 as part of the Talent Office Continuum. They are:

Educators Rising

Developed by Phi Delta Kappa International's Educators Rising division, this program is fully supported by Phi Delta Kappa and the National Education Association. This program introduces high school students early on to careers in education and diversifies pipelines to the state's teacher workforce. Research shows that pre-college engagement that includes supplemental support, financial incentives, and targeted exposure for young, prospective teachers allows districts to invest in current students of color while also cultivating future educators. In-service teachers who aim to mentor and inspire high school students to teach in their own communities are critical to the program's success. It also emphasizes fundamental professional practices that are critical for the next generation of aspiring teachers to develop and take their first steps on the path to realizing their full potential.

Connecticut received a grant through the Buck Foundation to introduce school districts throughout the state to the Educators Rising program and, despite COVID-19, will move forward with implementation during this first year. The program includes curriculum, teacher training, and "Beginning to Teach" micro-credentials for students, is a proven "grow your own" teacher recruitment model.

The following 8 districts will be included in this year's pilot: Stamford, Danbury, New Haven, Hamden, Meriden, Hartford, Windsor and New London. Two existing sites within the state will also be included and will have access to professional development and resources. Those districts include New Britain and Waterbury.

Teaching Fellowship Program

In an effort to make a commitment to student success and student-focused teaching and learning, the School of Education and Professional Studies at Central Connecticut State University is collaborating with the Connecticut State Department of Education to create the "**Teacher Fellowship Program.**" The goal of the program is to enhance teaching innovation and teaching quality by bringing together a cohort of outstanding Teaching Fellows to foster excellence and rigor in the next generation of teachers, while supporting K-12 student learning in Connecticut. The Teacher Fellowship Program is currently open to undergraduate teacher candidates within the School of Education and Professional studies; however, priority will be given to teacher candidates from underrepresented groups and students enrolled in shortage areas. The Teacher Fellowship Program is designed to create enhanced learning environments for both the CCSU Teacher Candidates, as well as K-12 students. Providing opportunities for our Teacher Candidates to work within school districts will enhance their own professional growth, as well as positively impact student learning and achievement of all students.

The Teacher Fellowship Program will provide the platform to encourage, motivate, and foster the development of outstanding teacher candidates who can and will make a difference for future generations of learners. Fellows will receive support and resources from both CCSU and the CSDE, including professional development and mentors.

Conclusion

In summary, this review of the past five years of work indicates progress made to date. While these initiatives will be sustained, our goal will be continued program enhancement while exploring new initiatives that will diversify the educator pipeline in Connecticut focusing on the PK-16 education continuum for years to come.

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