

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION Hartford

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell
Commissioner of Education

DATE: March 7, 2018

SUBJECT: State Board of Education Comprehensive Plan – Goal 3 Update

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Connecticut State Board of Education’s five-year comprehensive plan, *Ensuring Equity and Excellence for All Connecticut Students*, adopted in July 2016, represents the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) commitment to Connecticut citizens, communities, and local school districts’ efforts to provide every student in our state an exceptional education in an outstanding school. The aspirational goals of the board’s comprehensive plan are:

1. Ensuring that students’ non-academic needs are met so that they are healthy, happy, and ready to learn;
2. Making sure all students learn what they need to know to succeed in college, career, and life;
3. Giving all students access to great teachers and school leaders; and
4. Supporting schools and districts in staying on target with learning goals.

Immediately following the adoption of the Board’s comprehensive plan, the CSDE began extensive planning using a system of performance management focused on achieving defined results. By operationalizing the Board’s aspirational goals into actionable steps, the CSDE will improve the quality of execution and systematically manage, monitor, and deliver on the Board’s five year comprehensive plan. For each Board goal, the CSDE developed delivery plans that include:

- Up to three strategies that are specific, measurable, ambitious, realistic, and time-limited;
- Specific activities affiliated with each strategy;
- “Delivery chains,” including the specific people and/or organizations necessary to deliver the activities affiliated with the strategies;
- Appropriate metrics with which to evaluate progress toward the goal; and
- Roles and routines to keep the CSDE focused on achieving the goal
 - Roles include goal owner, strategy lead, delivery plan facilitator
 - Routines include use of the assessment of progress tool, planning meetings, updates to the Commissioner and the State Board of Education

Background on Board Goal 3 and Strategy

Goal #3 of the State Board Comprehensive Plan is “giving all students access to great teachers and school leaders.” The team identified the following powerful strategy to increase diversity in the educator talent pool:

Strategy 1

Description: Expand the educator pipeline with specific focus on diversifying the workforce and filling vacancies in priority shortage areas with high-quality educators.

Definition of Success:

- Development and launch of a web-based repository of promising practices, specific to recruitment and retention of educators of color at critical points along the pipeline;
- Increased number of well-established partnerships between CT EPPs, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), and LEAs;
- Increased number of available and accessible cross-endorsement programs that address designated shortage areas; e.g. CT EPPs, additional Regional Educational Service Center (RESC) partnerships and district-embedded models;
- Increased enrollment/completion rates in “traditional” EPP programs for educators of color and candidates in designated/priority shortage areas; and
- Increased enrollment/completion rates in Alternative Route to Certification (ARC) programs or cross-endorsement programs for educators of color and candidates in designated/priority shortage areas.

Activities:

- Collaborate with the Center for Public Research and Policy (CPRL) at Columbia University to develop a robust repository of innovative recruitment and retention strategies and practices;
- Develop a comprehensive communications plan/campaign to appeal to aspirant educators;
- Develop and launch CTTEACH.org, a digital recruitment platform, aimed at attracting educators to the teaching profession;
- Collaborate with the RESC Alliance and EPPs to research and design new cross-endorsement programs in a shortage area responsive to the needs of the Connecticut workforce;
- Collaborate with the CT Education Association (CEA) and American Federation of Teachers-CT (AFT-CT) to expand student groups at institutions of higher education (IHEs) and/or identify additional key recruitment resources;
- Partner with the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (GTL) and the Northeast Comprehensive Center (NCC), federally funded national organizations positioned to support state education agencies, to examine unconscious bias in hiring and selection practices for an audience of district teams and education partners;
- Engage with Troops to Teachers, a national organization that supports veterans interested in a career as an educator, to obtain a database of CT veterans for specific outreach by the CSDE regarding educator pathways;
- Apply for a grant opportunity, through the Department of Defense and the National Troops to Teachers Program to create a multi-tiered approach to supporting veterans through successful completion of an EPP and employment in a CT school district;

Impact: The gap between educators of color and students of color will decrease and the percentage of certified educators teaching in priority shortage areas (math, science, special education, bilingual) will increase.

Metrics:

- By 2021, increase the statewide percentage of educators of color from **4,393** (8.3%) to **5,300** (10%).
- By 2021, increase the statewide percentage of administrators of color from **412** (12.24%) to **525** (15%).

Historical Data

Statewide Percentage of Educators of Color

October 2015 - 8.3%

October 2016 - 8.5%

October 2017 - 8.9%

Statewide Percentage of Administrators of Color

October 2015 - 12.24%

October 2016 - 12.84%

October 2017 - 12.94%

2017-18 Sub-Target(s):

- By October 2018, increase the statewide percentage of educators of color from 8.9% to 9.1%.
- By October 2018, increase the statewide percentage of administrators of color from 12.94% to 13.25%.

Goal Progress Update

Assessment Framework Ratings

Using a progress assessment framework and rubric to evaluate the likelihood of success on Goal #3, the goal leader and strategy lead rated the strategy for (1) quality of planning; (2) capacity to drive progress; (3) evidence of implementation progress; and (4) overall likelihood of success.

The ratings for progress on Goal 3 at the time of the Commissioner's Stock Take meeting on January 9, 2018, are below:

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| Quality of Planning | | Phase I - 1) Identify a lead to coordinate strategy activities; 2) Establish bi-weekly strategy check-in meetings; 3) Examine data (EPP enrollment, successful completion, certification area trends, hiring and retention of minority candidates) to better understand the problem, its root causes, and to generate a theory of action; 4) Communicate current gaps between educators and students of color and the CSDE goal to reduce those gaps; 5) Communicate priority certification shortage areas and targeted strategies to reduce vacancy rates in those areas; 6) Identify and engage partners who can assist the CSDE in achieving Goal Three by 2021. Phase II - Collaborate with identified partners to develop and implement high impact, feasible strategies to achieve Goal Three. |
| Capacity | | Roles within the Talent Office are clearly defined. Talent Office consultants have engaged external partners to expand our capacity to meet identified milestones. |
| Evidence of Progress | | The following has been accomplished: 1) Relevant data has been analyzed; 2) Key partners have been identified (Department of Labor, The Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, TEACH.org); 3) Lagging and leading indicators to measure progress have been determined and strategies have been appropriately differentiated to meet targets; 4) The Talent Office strategy and the CSDE goals have been communicated to a broad-based audience. |
| Overall Likelihood of Success | | Diversifying the workforce - The growth in the number of minority educators in the workforce from 8.3% to 8.9% (in 2 years) is encouraging and higher than our prediction of 8.6% for the October 1, 2017 data collection. The growth in the number of minority administrators from 12.24% to 12.94% is aligned with our prediction of a slow upward trend. Reducing vacancies in priority shortage areas - Shortage areas have been identified and a memo has been distributed to the CT Housing Authority, Institutions of Higher Education, Superintendents, Deans of EPPs, and RESC Directors. Activities to reduce vacancies are ongoing. The CSDE cross-divisional team structure will contribute to overall likelihood of success in that it provides direct access to Opportunity Districts and aligns us with intra-agency colleagues to support districts who have identified talent management as a priority goal. |

As seen in the rating summary above, significant progress has been made in Phase I of the work and a theory of action has emerged: **If** the CSDE takes deliberate action to focus efforts on attracting candidates of color through the development of a comprehensive communications campaign, strategic partnerships, and innovative pathways into the profession; **Then** the diversity of the talent pool/educator workforce will increase and the number of vacancies in priority certification shortage areas will decrease.

Phase II of the work is now underway as evidenced by the following partnerships in action:

- **The Center for Public Research and Leadership (CPRL)**, at Columbia University and the CSDE have developed a repository (known as *EdKnowledge*) of research, promising practices, and models of success across the educator pipeline specific to attracting, supporting, and retaining teachers of color.
- **The Connecticut Department of Labor** and the CSDE have collaborated, through a series of information sessions, to highlight education as a career option for clients who may be eligible and/or interested in becoming a teacher.
- **CT TEACH.org** is a national digital recruitment platform that will be customized for aspiring Connecticut teacher candidates. The site will serve as a hub of resources aimed at elevating and marketing the profession and is scheduled to launch in summer 2018.
- **Troops to Teachers (TTT)**, is a national organization that supports veterans interested in pursuing teacher certification. The National TTT Program has shared its database of Connecticut veterans interested in teaching for CSDE outreach.
- **The Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (GTL) and the Northeast Comprehensive Center (NCC)** are two federally funded technical assistance centers established to support state education agencies. The GTL/NCC centers and the CSDE have developed a series of six sessions to examine the potential for unconscious bias in hiring and selection practices. Several Opportunity Districts, parent groups and professional organizations are participating in the six part series.
- **The CSDE and the CEEDAR* Center in collaboration with CT Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs), and District Partners** through a continuation of grant funding, will focus on enhancing clinical experiences using the *Developing Quality Fieldwork Experience for Teacher Candidates Planning Guide*, created as a result of earlier CEEDAR grant funding. Seven institutions of higher education and five Alliance Districts will examine clinical experiences through the lens of culturally relevant pedagogy. In addition, the CSDE will support the implementation of **S.A. 16-10**, requiring Connecticut State Universities to offer at least one tuition free, credit bearing course to minority high school juniors and seniors that will promote interest in education as a profession.
- **University Principal Preparation Initiative (UPPI)** is a grant funded by the Wallace Foundation in partnership with the CSDE and the University of Connecticut. EPPs and district partners are convened with the goal of improving preparation of school leaders and developing a leader tracking system that will allow districts to identify and select high-quality principals to meet the needs of their school populations.

*CEEDAR-Collaboration for Effective Educator Development and Reform (a federal grant to states funded by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP))

The Talent Office is encouraged by progress on metrics to date and has catalyzed a shared commitment to goal success from all identified partners.

Following the stock take meeting with Commissioner Wentzell on January 9, 2018, actionable feedback was received to include the following:

- Continue efforts to engage education partners with a focus on principals' organizations;
- Engage the CSDE Director of Communications in the work of the Talent Office to facilitate broad-based communication about activities and progress toward goals; and
- Develop a guidance document for district leaders to serve as reference for re-examining recruitment, hiring, and selection practices.

Next Steps

The next update to the State Board of Education on Goal 3 will be in August 2018. The following actions are planned to be accomplished or in progress by the August meeting date:

- *EdKnowledge*, will be launched and accessible to the public through the CSDE website in February 2018.
- CT TEACH.org will be launched and accessible to the public in summer 2018.
- A Troops to Teachers (TTT) grant may be awarded to the CSDE in March 2018. If the grant application is funded, the strategy profile will be modified to accommodate the new scope of work.
- The GTL and NCC, in collaboration with the CSDE will have completed the design and delivery of three of the four sessions on examining unconscious bias in hiring and selection. The final session in September 2018 will culminate with inter-district sharing of shifts in practices and protocols for the 2018-2019 hiring season to include relevant data associated with changes made; and
- EPP/PK-12 district partnerships, established through the CEEDAR grant, will complete individual assessments of current clinical experiences and propose changes for implementation in the 2018-2019 school year.

Ongoing bi-weekly meetings with the Talent Office team of consultants and the Chief Talent Officer will continue in order to monitor progress toward targets and sub-targets. Modifications will be made to the strategy profile, as appropriate, to reflect potential changes necessary to meet our goals.

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