

IX.B.

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION Hartford

TO: State Board of Education

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

DATE: December 4, 2019

SUBJECT: Progress Report, Connecticut Relay Graduate School of Education, Alternate Route to Certification Program

Executive Summary

Introduction

This report presents a summary of continuous improvement efforts for the Connecticut Relay Graduate School of Education, Alternate Route to Certification program (CT Relay/GSE ARC), currently on provisional approval for the period November 1, 2018 to October 31, 2021.

CT Relay/GSE ARC

CT Relay/GSE ARC is an alternate route to certification program leading to a recommendation for the Connecticut temporary 90-day teaching certificate in elementary education and the secondary areas of English Language Arts, mathematics and science (general, biology, chemistry and physics). The program, which focuses on creating partnerships with Connecticut high need and 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, 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 (2-4 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.

CT Relay/GSE ARC Program Approval History

Institutions or organizations seeking approval for new educator preparation programs through the Connecticut State Board of Education (CSBE) are required to participate in a Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) evaluation process designed to guide and support new program proposal efforts. The proposal then moves forward to the CSDE Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) Review Committee (Attachment A), which reviews proposal evaluation findings and makes a recommendation to the Commissioner of Education

regarding approval. In turn, the Commissioner presents the recommendation to the CSBE for a final determination regarding approval status.

Per Connecticut regulations (Attachment B), the maximum period of approval for new programs for institutions or organizations that have no other board-approved programs is two years. Based on a recommendation from the EPP Review Committee, on November 2, 2016, the CSBE 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.

On May 2, 2018, CT Relay/GSE ARC hosted the required on-site visit, during which a CSDE evaluation team evaluated progress CT Relay/GSE ARC had made during the first two years of program implementation relative to these evaluation categories:

1. Program Curriculum and Key Assessments
2. Candidate Licensure Testing Pass Rates
3. Candidate Recruitment and Employment Data
4. Compliance with Regulatory and Statutory Requirements
5. Compliance with edTPA Implementation and CAEP Requirements

The evaluation team determined that CT Relay/GSE ARC continues to meet state requirements for program curriculum and key assessments; compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements; and compliance with edTPA implementation and CAEP requirements. However, the team determined that CT Relay/GSE ARC is not meeting state requirements relative to licensure testing pass rates, specifically Praxis II and Foundations of Reading (elementary education only) testing, which are measures of content knowledge. 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. 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.

Additionally, the evaluation team determined that CT Relay/GSE ARC is only partially meeting state requirements regarding candidate recruitment and employment. For the 2016-2017 program cohort, twice as many candidates (n=30) completed residency placements in Connecticut charter schools compared to non-charter schools (n=15). During the academic year of the on-site visit (2017-2018), 51 (65%) program candidates were completing residency placements in charter schools, 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 evaluation findings and the recommendation of the CSDE Review Committee, CT Relay/GSE ARC was granted provisional approval by the CSBE for the period November 1, 2018, through October 31, 2021, with an annual progress report required and an on-site, focused visit required no later than October 2020.

CT Relay/GSE ARC Progress Report

During October 2019, CT Relay/GSE ARC submitted to the CSDE a progress report detailing continuous improvement efforts relative to the two areas for which the program was cited based on the May 2, 2018 continuing approval visit: (1) licensure testing pass rates and (2) partner school expansion efforts.

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 they are accepted into the program. Rather, program completers 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 1 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 testing requirements.

TABLE 1: Licensure Test Pass Rates, CT Relay/GSE ARC Program Completers, 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.

Given the recency of these initiatives, the impact of these efforts cannot yet be determined through a review of current licensure testing data. However, anecdotal evidence to date suggests that this multi-pronged approach to identifying and remediating candidate content knowledge gaps is having impact.

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 2.

TABLE 2: 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 3 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 3: 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 On-Site Visit

The CSBE-required CT Relay/GSE ARC on-site visit is scheduled for May 20, 2020, during which the CSDE will document continuous improvement efforts related to licensure testing pass rates, partner school expansion efforts, and other program data, and provide a full report to the CSBE.

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

Approved by: Christopher M. Todd, Bureau Chief, Talent Office

Attachment A

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

Name	Affiliation	Representation	Term Ending
1. Stephanie Storms	Fairfield University	Higher Education	March 2, 2022
2. Tamika La Salle	University of Connecticut	Higher Education	Jan. 3, 2020
3. Catherine O'Callaghan	Western Connecticut State University	Higher Education	Jan. 3, 2020
4. Julie Sochacki	University of Hartford	Higher Education	Jan. 3, 2020
5. Megan Mackey	Central Connecticut State University	Higher Education	March 2, 2022
6. Joseph Bonillo	Waterford Public Schools	K-12	Jan. 3, 2019
7. Thomas Danehy	Area Cooperative Educational Services	K-12	Jan. 3, 2020
8. Ana Ortiz	Oxford Public Schools	K-12	Jan. 3, 2020
9. Shuana Tucker	New Britain Public Schools	K-12	Jan. 3, 2020
10. Evette Avila	Hartford Public Schools	K-12	Jan. 3, 2020
11. Michael Livingston	Capitol Region Education Council	Community	March 2, 2022
12. Shannon Marimon	Connecticut Council for Education Reform	Community	March 2, 2022

**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.