

Increasing Educator Diversity Policy Council Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 27, 2025
9 a.m. to 10 a.m.

In Attendance:

Ryan Donlon, LEARN
Werner Oyanadel, CGA
Hamish MacPhail, ConnCAN
Patrice McCarthy, CABE
Sal Escobales, Manchester
Nancy Sudhoff, Waterford
Kevin Walton, ACES

CSDE:

Dr. Shuana Tucker, CSDE
Jade Gopie, CSDE
Mary Glassman, CSDE
Victoria Malvey, CSDE
Kaylan Ricciardi, CSDE

Guests:

Leslie Carden, Level Data
Sheleena Clark, Level Data

1. Welcome – Dr. Shuana Tucker, Chief Talent Officer convened the meeting at 9:01 a.m. and thanked everyone for attending. She introduced Nancy Sudhoff, a new member of the Council and Jade Gopie who recently joined CSDE as Bureau Chief.
2. Connecticut Educator Preparation and Certification Board Update – Mary Glassman reported that Dr. Rebecca Good, IED Policy Oversight Council Representative was unavailable to attend the meeting but reported the next meeting date is April 21, 2025, at 450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, CT. She also said more information is on the CSDE website.
3. Aspiring Educator Scholarship Program – Glassman shared that applications are now available for the Fall 2025 semester. She said the deadline for applications is September 15, 2025, and asked Council members to share the information. She said the scholarship is available to any high school student graduating from an Alliance School District and enrolled in a Connecticut educator preparation program. A total of \$10,000 per year is available to undergraduate and graduate students.
4. Connecticut Educator's Rising Program – Update on 5th Annual Connecticut Educator's Rising Conference March 11, 2025. Glassman shared that more than 300 students, teachers and administrators attended the competition and conference held at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain, CT. Dr. Tucker said it was a great day for the students competing. She said a signing day will be held on May 6, 2025, for Educators Rising students who will be

enrolled in educator preparation programs in the fall. She said the location is yet to be determined but she will let the Council know where it will be. She said there are more than 800 students registered for the Connecticut Educators Rising Program this year, which is the largest number of students ever. She said one of the first Educator Rising students who graduated from New Britain High School has completed her degree from Eastern and is enrolled in the master's program at Southern Connecticut State University master's program in bilingual and special education.

6. 2025-2026 Legislative Session – The Council amended the agenda to discuss the legislative agenda prior to the teacher certification software update. Glassman reviewed the Council's legislative priorities but reported that none of the initiatives received funding during the 2025 legislative session so far with the session deadline of June 4, 2025. Hamish MacPhail said he was very concerned about the lack of funding and the ability of the Council to continue diversity efforts without funding. Dr. Tucker said the Talent Office is working to identify private funding to support the initiatives started because they are making a difference. MacPhail said without funding, diversity efforts will take a big step back.

Oyanadel said he is concerned that the Council was legislatively tasked with diversity initiatives and that the Council has a responsibility to let the Commissioner, the legislators and the Governor know that the diversity initiatives are in danger without funding. He proposed that a letter be sent by the Council members and go on the record that without funding, the Council's legislative responsibility of diversifying the educator workforce and addressing the teacher shortage cannot be met. Dr. Tucker clarified that the Council could send a letter if they chose but it cannot be sent by CSDE and CSDE cannot be involved. Oyanadel made a motion to draft a letter on behalf of the Council outlining their concerns to the Commissioner, the legislature and the Governor. Mr. Walton asked what is the state's investment and commitment to the diversity work if there are no funds allocated and will the diversity efforts go away? MacPhail seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Oyanadel said the letter can be written as a way of advising others about the needs of the Council, it's purpose and going on record that efforts can't move forward without funding. Ryan Donlon suggested the letter include information on the return on investment of the Council's efforts to diversify the workforce and to address the teacher shortage. He said the impact that the efforts have had on students is powerful.

7. Level Data Presentation: An introduction to the new educator certification application portal was made by Kaylan Ricciardi, CSDE Unit Coordinator/Education Consultant, Leslie Cardin and Sheleena Clark, both from Level Data

8. Next Meeting Date – Glassman said the next meeting is Thursday, June 12, 2025 – 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. virtually.

9. Adjourn- Dr. Tucker adjourned the meeting at 10:04 a.m.