

Increasing Educator Diversity Policy Oversight Council (formerly the Minority Teacher Recruitment Policy Oversight Council)

Meeting #1 (Virtual)

December 14, 2023

9:30-10:30 a.m.

Meeting Minutes

Attending were: Rebecca Good, Relay; Steven Hernandez, Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity; Werner Oyanadel, Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity; Ryan Donlon, LEARN; Sam Galloway, Somers; Noha Abdel-Hady, Windsor; Patrice McCarthy, CABE; Faith Sweeney, CEA; Eileen Gonzalez, University of St. Joseph; Kevin Walton, ACES.

CSDE: Dr. Shuana Tucker, Chief Talent Officer; Mary Glassman, Education Diversity Coordinator.

1. **Welcome and Introductions** – Dr. Shuana Tucker, CSDE Chief Talent Office thanked everyone for attending and shared the Department has several initiatives underway to diversify the educator workforce.
2. MTR Policy Oversight Council name change to Increasing Educator Diversity Policy Oversight Council - Mary Glassman, Education Diversity Coordinator, reviewed the legislative initiatives from last session that included changing the name of the Minority Teacher Recruitment Policy Oversight Council under Public Act 23-167 (Section 12). The change was to remove the term “minority” in state statutes and replace the language with the term “diverse.” Ms. Glassman thanked the Council members for their advocacy during the last legislative session to make the change.
3. Review of Diversity Initiatives
 - a. Increasing Educator Diversity Plans – Ms. Glassman explained the legislative change from last session that requires school districts to submit an Increasing Educator Diversity Plan no later than March 15, 2024, for review to the Commissioner of Education. Plans will be reviewed and approved or sent back to the district for revisions to be filed no later than May 15, 2024. Dr. Tucker said the requirement for a district plan is not new but there is now a deadline to file the plan and to post it on the district website. She said the department has held two webinars and plans to hold two more to assist districts and a template is on the department website. Council member Kevin Walton asked what the penalty will be for districts that do not comply. Dr. Tucker said the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner will also follow up with districts which do not comply. Council member Rebecca Good asked if the department will also post the plans. Dr.

Tucker said the department will post the plans and will list the districts that have not submitted plans.

- b. Adjunct Professor permit – Ms. Glassman reviewed legislation that allows adjunct professor permits to be issued to parttime and nontenured instructors to allow parttime employment in a school district to teach grades nine to twelve.
- c. Aspiring Educators Diversity Scholarships – Ms. Glassman reviewed the legislative details of the Aspiring Educators Diversity Scholarship. The first year of the scholarship is available for graduates from a priority school district who are enrolled and in good standing in an approved Educator Preparation Program in Connecticut. Up to \$10,000 is available annually. Applications have just closed, and more than 50 applications were received. The Scholarship application will reopen shortly for Spring 2024. Council member Kevin Walton asked is data will be collection on the applicants. Dr. Tucker indicated that data will be collected and shared with the Council. Council member Steven Hernandez asked what is being done to encourage middle and high school students. Ms. Glassman said that will be discussed next.
- d. Connecticut Educators Rising Programs – Dr. Tucker and Ms. Glassman reviewed the success of the third year of the Educators Rising Programs in Connecticut. There are currently 22 school districts participating and including more than 500 students. Additional funding provided mini grants to expand the program this year. The hope is that additional grants can be awarded in the spring. Students participating in the program will compete in a statewide competition on March 8, 2024, at Central Connecticut State University and will go on to the National Competition. Dr. Tucker shared that a professional development training was recently held at the University of Bridgeport and included students, teachers, and administrators. She said administrative support is essential for the success of the program. The first Connecticut Educators Rising student cabinet was also elected and made up of six diverse student leaders. She said the students will have leadership and advocacy training and are meeting with state Education Committee co-chair, Rep. Jeff Currey. Dr. Tucker said the department is working with districts to sustain the program beyond the mini-grant awards.
- e. Connecticut Teacher Registered Apprenticeship program – Dr. Tucker reviewed the Connecticut Teacher Apprenticeship that is pending approval by the state Department of Labor. She said CSDE has worked with all stakeholders to get the first statewide Teacher Apprenticeship program started including union partners, local boards of education and higher education partners. Council member Rebecca Good said it will be important to have clarity with all the different programs for residency programs. Council member Kevin Walton asked if the program has been rolled out yet. Dr. Tucker said the program will hopefully be approved and launched in January with two pilot districts – New Britain and Waterbury.

4. RESC Alliance partnership – Ms. Glassman reviewed the partnership with the RESC Alliance to promote diversity initiatives and said there will be more information at the next meeting.
 - a. School District IED grants to facilitate IED initiatives.
 - b. IED plan consultancy
 - c. IED Conference and Teacher Recruitment Fair
5. 2024 Legislative Agenda – Ms. Glassman said the 2024 legislative session will convene on February 7, 2024, and adjourn on May 8, 2024. She asked members to think about a legislative agenda for discussion at the next meeting. Council member Patrice McCarthy said CAFE is finalizing their legislative agenda and will be addressing resources for early childhood and increasing educator diversity. Dr. Tucker asked for feedback on whether the Aspiring Educators Diversity Scholarship should be expanded beyond priority school districts. There was consensus that the program should be expanded to diverse students from any public school districts. Council member Eileen Gonzalez said she is aware of two students who participated in Project Choice who were not eligible to apply. The consensus was those students should be included.
6. 2024 Meeting dates – The council reviewed the next meeting dates of:
 - a. Thursday, February 8, 2024
 - b. Thursday, April 11, 2024
 - c. Thursday, June 13, 2024
7. Questions – Council member Eileen Gonzalez asked if the Council should add any additional members. Ms. Glassman said Council members should consider anyone who should be included and forward their names to the group.
8. Adjourn – The meeting adjourned at 10:16 a.m.