

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

Meeting #2 (Virtual)

February 8, 2024

9:00-10:00 a.m.

Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Ryan Donlon, LEARN; Faith Sweeney, CEA; Hamish MacPhail, ConnCAN; Terrell Hill, Windsor Public Schools; Kevin Walton, ACES; Noha Abdel-Hady, Windsor Public Schools; Werner Oyandel, Connecticut Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity; Patrice McCarthy, CABA, Sal Escobales, Manchester Public Schools.

CSDE representatives: Dr. Shuana Tucker, Chief Talent Officer; Mary Glassman, Education Diversity Coordinator and Dr. Jessica Ocasio, Associate Education Consultant.

Guests: Cheyenne Walent, Regional Program Manager, TEACH Connecticut

The meeting convened at 9:04 a.m.

Welcome and Introductions – Dr. Shuana Tucker, CSDE Chief Talent Office provided welcoming remarks and asked the attendees to introduce themselves.

Review of Diversity Initiatives

Dr. Tucker introduced Cheyenne Walent, Regional Program Manager, TEACH Connecticut to give an overview of the TEACH Connecticut partnership with CSDE.

Ms. Walent said the website has supported more than 2,000 future teachers since October 2018 and supported 450 educator preparation applicants in year 5 of the program. She reviewed the 2023 STEM scholarship results and said there were 75 STEM applicants supported this year with 29 % identifying as diverse applicants. She said \$200,000 was awarded in scholarships to 30 scholarship winners.

She said this year's goals for 2024 include:

Partnerships with HBCUs; high school mentorship programs to inspire high school students of color to become teachers; paraprofessional recruitment; increased efforts to support future black and Latino teachers and to partner with sub agencies to offer financial incentives and mentoring for substitute teachers to become certified teachers.

Dr. Tucker said the Education Committee chairs have indicated an interest in providing funds to support TEACH Connecticut in next year's budget to keep the program going, which provides essential support to the Department.

Increasing Educator Diversity Plans Update – Dr. Jessica Ocasio, CSDE Associate Education Consultant reviewed Public Act 23-167 Section 10 which mandates the submission of Increasing Educator Diversity Plans by all school districts. She said the submissions are due March 15th, but

LEAs can request an extension to April 15, 2024. She said CSDE is required to provide feedback by May 10th and revised final plans are due May 31st.

She said there is a template available for districts to use and additional resources are available on the SDE website. Questions can be directed to SDE.IEDPlans@ct.gov

Aspiring Educators Diversity Scholarships – Mary Glassman reviewed the first grant awards for the Aspiring Educator Diversity Scholarship given for the Fall 2023 semester. She said the grant had a quick turnaround because the legislation went into effect in July 2023 and the Talent Office had to develop the application and create the program before making the application available.

She said a total of 29 students received scholarships and there were 8 educator preparation programs that were awarded the funds. The application for the Spring 2024 semester is now available with a March 15th deadline.

Hamish MacPhail said that the Governor’s budget reduced the Aspiring Educators Diversity Scholarship from \$10 million to \$4 million next year and is concerned about that reduction. Ms. Glassman said the department is aware of the reduction and will try to get more information about the reason for the reduction. She said the scholarship program went into effect July 1, 2023, so it has taken time to develop the specifics of the program and to award the scholarships so that might be the reason for the reduction next year.

Kevin Walton said he is in favor of expanding the program to increase eligibility beyond the required Priority School districts because the program is missing many students throughout the state.

Werner Oyanadel said he would like to see funds allocated to a marketing campaign about the program to reach more students. He said there should be money for marketing, particularly for the media reaching a diverse audience. He said he had a good experience using a Latino marketing firm for a Latino summit which was sold out.

Faith Sweeney said she shared Kevin Walton’s sentiments about expansion of the program.

Connecticut Educators Rising Symposium – Ms. Glassman invited members to attend the March 8, 2024, Connecticut Educators Rising Conference and Symposium at Central Connecticut State University. The conference gives middle and high school students a chance to highlight their teaching skills in a statewide performance-based competition with the winners going on to the National Educators Rising competition in June in Washington, D.C.

Ms. Glassman said there are 22 school districts offering Educators Rising Programs this year with support from CSDE and EdRising partner PDK International.

Enhanced Reciprocity Initiatives – Ms. Glassman said the department is working on expanding the number of states to offer enhanced reciprocity for teacher certification. She said there will be

an update at the next meeting after the recommendations are reviewed by the State Department of Education.

2024 Legislative Agenda - Ms. Glassman reviewed the Legislature is in a short session this year and will adjourn on Wednesday, May 8, 2024. She thanked the members for their past advocacy for contacting legislators to support increasing education diversity initiatives. She asked members to reach out to their contacts to support the expansion of the Aspiring Educator Diversity Scholarship to all districts and to maintain funding. She will forward any bills of interest to members.

2024 Meeting dates

- a. Thursday, April 11, 2024
- b. Thursday, June 13, 2024

There were no questions. The meeting adjourned at 9:58.