

Minority Teacher Recruitment Policy Oversight Council
Minutes
January 21, 2021

Present: Denise Drummond (for Steven Hernandez)
Sal Escobales
Sam Galloway
Jane Gates
Rebecca Good
Sheila Kearney
Gladis Kersaint
Robert Radar
Werner Oyanadel (for Steven Hernandez)
Kevin Walton

Absent: Lauren Anderson
Katherine Atkins
Arlene Arias
Mia Dimbo
Terrell Hill
Madelin Negrón
Elsa Nuñez

CSDE Staff: Shuana Tucker
Christopher Todd
Cynthia Cassada
Charlene Russell Tucker
Claudine Primack
Teresa Alexandru

Meeting came to order at 9:02 a.m. 1/21/21

Dr. Shuana Tucker, Chief Talent Officer opened the meeting with a warm welcome to all and asked all members of the council to introduce themselves as we have a new member in the Talent Office, Mrs. Cynthia Cassada.

Charlene Russell Tucker, Deputy Commissioner thanked the council on behalf of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) on the important and critical work that members of the council and CSDE team will continue to do. She looks forward to listening to the conversation of this meeting.

Christopher Todd, Bureau Chief started with providing the council with updates with specific to recommendations that the council had made in the spring and what the next steps are.

Marketing Update

Dr. Shuana Tucker stated that the Talent Office is working with a community organization to market the teaching profession from a grass roots level and take advantage of the current situation. Hoping to appeal to youth and those that might be unemployed and seeking another career. Our goal is to align all efforts and not be duplicative.

TEACH CT

Claudine Primack and Teresa Alexandru provided an update on TEACH Connecticut: two-year implementation and impact plan including their work with EPP's to increase the quantity, quality and diversity of applicants to program. Working with 75 LEA's, they identify potential future teachers within their community and promote their schools and districts. They reviewed the use of data driven strategies with a focus on digital recruitment. Claudine and Teresa shared four teacher testimonials. A three-year cost-effective investment in CT's educator workforce was presented while supporting and sourcing more CT EPP applicants and consistently diversifying EPP applicant pools. Securing TEACH Connecticut's future is currently being funded by Peter & Carmen Lucia Buck Foundation through November 2021. TEACH is working to extend funding into Year 4.

Next-Generation Educators

Dr. Shuana Tucker introduced the Next-Generation Educators Initiative. The purpose is to make a commitment to student success and student-focused teaching and learning. The School of Education and Professional Studies at Central Connecticut State University in partnering with the Connecticut State Department of Education to create the "Teacher Fellowship Program". The goal of the program is to enhance teaching innovation and teaching quality by bringing together a cohort of outstanding Teaching Fellows to foster excellence and rigor in the next generation of teachers, while supporting K-12 student learning in Connecticut.

The Teacher Fellowship Program is currently open to undergraduate teacher candidates within the School of Education and Professional studies; however, priority will be given to teacher candidates from underrepresented groups and students enrolled in shortage areas.

The Teacher Fellowship Program is designed to create enhanced learning environments for both the CCSU Teacher Candidates, as well as K-12 students. Providing opportunities for our Teacher Candidates to work within school districts will enhance their own professional growth, as well as positively impact student learning and achievement of all students. CCSU will provide students with several resources. The CSDE will provide funding to cover the cost of student background checks and fingerprinting and provide professional mentors. Collaboration with organizations such as BLAC (Black Leaders & Administrators Consortium) and CALAS will assist with providing mentors. The Talent office is still in the planning phases of this program but seek to implement a pilot prior to the end of the school year. The goal is for this program to be replicated by other universities in CT to provide experiential learning to students earlier in their career.

The Talent Office is currently collaborating with St. Joseph's University and the Waterbury School District to expand our NextGen Educators Program.

Educator's Rising

Dr. Tucker presented the goals of PDK: Data Collection, partnering with IHE's to offer college credit courses to our EdRising students, weekly professional learning being offered our district advisors, so they fully understand what Erasing has to offer and the best approach for them as a district, and the creation of the EdRising Advisory Group.

Cynthia Cassada, Educational Consultant, discussed the development of pre/post/exit surveys for students in EdRising classes/clubs in partnership with the Performance Office. The purpose of the data collection is to disaggregate data to monitor program effectiveness, connect students in grade 11 and 12 to TEACH CT, and monitor enrollment in state EPP's to provide continuous wraparound support.

Dr. Tucker and Cynthia Cassada presented the launch of our statewide EdRising Initiative at New Britain High School with Governor Lamont and Commissioner Cardona. This initiative was developed by teachers for teachers, with the generous support of the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Phi Delta Kappa (PDK) International's Educators Rising program emphasizes fundamental professional practices that are critical for the next generation of aspiring teachers to develop and take their first steps on the path to realizing their full potential.

The program, which includes curriculum, teacher training, and "Beginning to Teach" micro-credentials for students, is a centerpiece of a "grow your own" teacher recruitment strategy. In-service teachers who aim to mentor and inspire high school students to teach in their own communities are critical to the program's success. Ed Rising has been awarded a grant from the Buck Foundation to implement the program in the 8 school districts listed for the 2020-21 school year in CT. The eight school districts are Stamford, Danbury, New Haven, Hamden, Meriden, Hamden, Windsor, and New London. Bristol and Hartford will partner in the fall of 2021. The grant has also allowed the Talent Office to hire a part-time Teacher Leader in Residence to assist with site management. Our TLIR is Sandy Fraioli and hails from New Britain. New Britain was the first site in CT signing on three years ago and Waterbury is a new site that signed on this year. All districts will have access, resources and weekly professional learning for all to take advantage of.

**Proposed Legislation: Talent Office
Resident Educator Certificate (REC) C.G.S.10-145m**

Christopher Todd provided an overview of the Connecticut Resident Educator Certificate, as prescribed in 10-145m. Chris indicated it is a pathway into the profession for many aspiring educators. Under the supervision and mentorship of a veteran educator or building administrator, the Resident Educator Certificate authorizes an aspiring educator to be gainfully employed as the teacher of record while simultaneously enrolled in a State Board of Education approved preparation program leading to certification. This proposal expands both access to and the possible expansion of utilization of Connecticut's Resident Educator Certificate as a viable pathway to the profession for candidates enrolled in both Alternate Route to Certification (ARC) and traditional Master of Teaching (MAT) certification programs. (b) Each such resident teacher certificate shall be valid for two years and may be extended by the Commissioner of Education for an additional one year for good cause upon the request of the superintendent of schools for the school district employing such person.

Bilingual Educator Endorsement (REC): Sec. 10-145h. Requirements for certification as a Bilingual Education Teacher.

Dr. Shuana Tucker reviewed the reason for proposal: Bilingual certification authorizes educators to teach academic content in two languages. Educators must be fully proficient in both languages of instruction. Eligibility for a bilingual endorsement requires educators to demonstrate oral proficiency in English and oral and written proficiency in the second language of instruction, by passing national proficiency tests. However, most educators have demonstrated oral and written proficiency in at least one of these languages by earning a degree from an institution that provides instruction in that language. Accepting an earned degree from an institution where the language of instruction is English to demonstrate written English proficiency, and an earned degree from an institution where the language of instruction is the second language sought, to demonstrate oral and written proficiency in that language would eliminate time consuming, expensive testing without lowering standards. Authorizing elementary bilingual teachers to serve students in grades K through 9 and middle grades bilingual teachers in grades 4 through 9 improves district flexibility to create multi-age groups that better serve the academic needs of these students. Over 92% of students in mandated bilingual education programs are in grades K-9. Eligibility for secondary bilingual certification requires teachers to meet coursework requirements for a specific content area, as well as coursework and testing for bilingual certification. This is an expensive and time-consuming burden, which creates a barrier. Many bilingual certified educators could teach additional

secondary subject areas but are not able to complete the number of courses required in the content area. Similarly, there are special subjects and world language teachers who have the language skills but cannot earn a bilingual endorsement without completing many additional content courses in an academic area. This proposal addresses the severe shortage of bilingual teachers by reducing the number of credits required to teach in secondary bilingual programs. It seeks to create secondary level bilingual STEM and bilingual humanities endorsements, aligned with the new High School graduation requirements. These bilingual STEM and humanities endorsements would permit the holders to teach any bilingual content that falls within these broader content area categories, allowing more flexibility for districts and reducing barriers for teachers while maintaining content knowledge standards, so that bilingual students would continue to be served by competent and knowledgeable teachers.

Creating a District Plan to Increase the Racial, Ethnic, and Linguistic Diversity of Your Workforce

Cynthia Cassada provided an overview of the work that has been implemented in order to support to districts and LEAs. The Talent Office has partnered with a numerous statewide, regional and national education organizations to develop needed resources to support districts and LEAs specifically around attracting, recruiting, hiring and retaining a diverse educator workforce. They include:

- EdKnowledge Online Respository – EdKnowledge hosts promising practices and models of success and models of success to attract, support, develop and retain educators of color and is available on the CSDE website.
- The Guidebook for Hiring & Selection –is available on the CSDE website and has been promoted and piloted this year with several CT school districts.
- The CSDE Talent Office and district partners from Windsor, Hartford and Bristol (including several members of the policy oversight committee) collaborated with a group of diverse educators from each of the New England states in a series of in-person and virtual convenings to discuss the need and value of increasing workforce diversity in each of the New England states.
- As a result of the work, the group produced a regional guidance document: Increasing the Racial, Ethnic, and Linguistic Diversity of the Educator Workforce: A Call to Action for Leaders. This work not only provided meaningful opportunities to engage as a region in dialogue and sharing of best practices, but also served as an acknowledgment that Connecticut has been a leader in this work across the region. The work group was so impressed with the CSDE Talent Office framework as an approach to this work, the group chose to adapt and build from the previous work of the CSDE Talent Office.

The Talent Office is partnering with REL/NEI Pilot Project to develop Workforce Diversity Plans – The CSDE Talent Office and 8 district partners have been engaged in a four-part series to develop workforce diversity plans. Work continues with these 8 districts with the possibility of engaging a second cohort in 2020-21. The following districts, Colchester, East Hartford, Greenwich, Hamden, and Waterbury, Cohort #2 is expected to participate and begin the coaching series at the end of this month. If any of school districts are interested in this work, please contact Dr. Tucker or me at the CSDE.

2020-2021 RESC Alliance Contract Recommendation #3 Expand scholarship & other incentives for candidates of color interested in the teaching profession by:

Christopher Todd reviewed the purpose of recommendation #3 with priorities and allocations.

- a. Reallocating a portion of the annual RESC MTR Alliance Grant funding to support scholarship opportunities for candidates of color seeking to enroll in an educator preparation program leading to certification.
- b. Reallocating a portion of the annual RESC MTR Alliance Grant funding to support application and assessment fees for candidate of color.
- c. Reallocating a portion of the annual RESC MTR Alliance Grant funding to support loan forgiveness

for candidates of color who are currently enrolled in or have recently completed an educator preparation program leading to certification.

CHESLA

Dr. Shuana Tucker reviewed recommendation #4, to advocate for increased funding of scholarship and loan forgiveness opportunities currently provided by the Minority Teacher Incentive Program (MTIP) offered by the Office of Higher Education. In addition, she provided a brief overview of the CHESLA Teacher Recruitment Program Proposal.

Question/Answer

Q-Robert Radar and Sheila Kearney asked if there was any current data on the statewide percentage of educators of color.

R- Christopher response-we can provide updated data and numbers where we can. Cynthia will update the slide deck to reflect the 2019-2020 school year that represent the most up-to-date figures the CSDE can provide. We will not have updated numbers for the 2020-2021 school year until late spring 2021 when the Performance Office runs their reports. The Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification has begun the compliance report process for districts, which will run through early spring. Once compliance is processed, the Performance Office works with the Talent Office to verify EDS and CECS to update their EdSight numbers.

Q- Werner Oyanadel (for Steven Hernandez) inquired about the bilingual certification proposal and requested a copy to share with his district.

R- Dr. Shuana Tucker, stated although it is in the proposal stages, she would email him with information.

Next Steps

Cynthia will send to council a copy of the slide deck with updated data along with a TEACH CT overview handout.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.