

Strategies to Increase the Racial, Ethnic, and Linguistic Diversity of the Educator Workforce

2020-23 Recap

EdKnowledge Online Repository

EdKnowledge hosts promising practices and models of success to attract, support, develop, and retain educators of color and is available on the CSDE website. Leadership and faculty at educator preparation institutions and local school districts can access the repository to seek potential ideas for replication across the stages of the educator continuum. Educators across CT are invited to submit promising practices to create a forum for sharing innovative ideas.

Creating a District Plan to Increase the Racial, Ethnic, and Linguistic Diversity of Your Educator Workforce: A Guidebook for Hiring and Selection and Creating an Action Plan and Sustaining Efforts to Increase Educator Diversity: A Toolkit for District & School Leaders

These resources – the Guidebook and the Toolkit which was designed to complement the Guidebook - are available on the CSDE website and have been promoted and piloted with several CT school districts. The Guidebook was developed as a result of a four-part workshop series created in collaboration with The Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (GTL), The Northeast Comprehensive Center (NCC), and several CT Opportunity Districts in 2018. The Guidebook, and companion resources, is intended to support districts in the development and implementation of a plan to attract, recruit, hire, and select educators of color per the requirements outlined in P.A. 18-34. This year, CSDE partnered with the RESC Alliance to train district school leaders on how to use the Guidebook to create local increasing educator diversity plans.

CSDE Talent Office Efforts to Develop Workforce Diversity Plans

The CSDE Talent Office and eleven district partners engaged in a seven-part series to develop workforce diversity plans as part of a REL-NEI pilot project. Each of the districts convened a small team of educators, school, and district leaders to utilize the resources available in the Hiring and Selection Guidebook distributed by the CSDE. Districts were asked to examine data using a provided demographic diversity profile and engage in a self-assessment during a guided consultancy. The diversity work continued in 2021-2022 with CSDE and WestEd offering a train the trainer series for representatives from the RESC Alliance to assist them in using the Guidebook. This year, the RESC Alliance trainers are working with local school districts in each of the six RESC regions to help local school leaders create the increasing educator diversity plans.

RESC/MTR Alliance Contract

Minority Teacher Virtual and In Person Recruitment Fairs

The CSDE and the RESC Alliance will host a series of virtual and in person recruitment fairs to assist districts in diversifying their educator workforce. A Virtual Recruitment Fair will be held on March 21, 2023 from 2:30-5:30 p.m. for prospective candidates and districts.

There will be two in-person Recruitment Fairs: One on May 4, 2023 from 2:30-5:30 at Central Connecticut State University in CCSU, New Britain, and another on May 11, 2023 from 2:30-5:30 p.m. at the Workspace CT, 16 Trowbridge Drive, Bethel, CT. During the pandemic, a virtual career fair was held on April 7, 2021, aimed at

increasing the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of Connecticut's educator workforce. Invitations were sent to certified teachers of color that were not appearing in our employment data system, recent graduates of CT educator preparation programs, Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic Serving Institutions on the East Coast. The fair attracted 63 districts to create virtual booths and 99 job-seeking candidates. Over the course of the one-day event more than 580 conversations took place via chat, audio, or video calls. Preliminary feedback was positive with suggestions to inform future events.

- **Regional Consortia**

Each of the six Regional Education Service Centers convened a diverse group of local educators to problem solve around attract, recruit, hiring, support, and retention strategies to develop workforce diversity plans. Each group met several times this past year with the opportunity to apply for a mini grant to design and implement a project to meet an identified goal.

- **District Project Proposals**

As part of the CSDE-RESC Alliance partnership, local school districts are invited to request grant funding for project proposals that help to promote diversification of their educator workforce. Previous project proposals were submitted by 34 districts as a result of the regional consortia meetings. Examples of project proposals include: a District Equity Team and Leadership Program for Students of Color, Strengthening Partnerships with Educator Preparation Programs, Re-design District External Diversity Recruitment to a Digital Marketing Approach, Increase Involvement with the Educators Rising and Future Educators Pathway Program, "Grow Your Own" efforts for non-certified staff, create MTR stipend positions, Develop an Educator Aspirant Program, Scholarships, Sponsorship for Educators of Color to participate in the CREC Teacher Residency Program, ARCTEL Cross-Endorsement Program, and Relay among others, and Professional Learning centered around Emotionally Responsive Practice, Implicit Bias, and Equity/Cultural Competence Training for district leadership, teachers, and paraeducators.

The RESC Alliance is currently reviewing local school district project proposals for this year's grant funding.

- **Minority Teacher Recruitment Candidate Support**

The CSDE and RESC Alliance included a new initiative in the contract to support minority teacher recruitment. Funds were set aside to provide direct financial relief to aspirant teachers to offset the cost of completing a Connecticut State Board of Education-approved educator preparation program. RESC representatives met to develop a mechanism for candidates of color to apply for tuition assistance grants and/or licensure assessment fee reimbursement. This was a non-competitive scholarship and fee reimbursement opportunity. Of the 73 aspirant teachers who applied for funding, 51 received scholarships, fee reimbursement or both. Ten aspirant teachers who applied for funding received \$2,000 scholarship awards while 26 received \$200 certification/assessment awards. Fifteen aspirant teachers received both awards at \$2,200. Applications are currently being reviewed for this year's scholarship awards.

TEACH CT

TEACH CT is a free online resource for anyone who is interested in becoming a teacher, including one-on-one coaching sessions, information on educator prep programs and financial aid. In the past two academic years, TEACH Connecticut supported about 400 EPP applicants total, 45% of whom are people of color and 48% are endeavoring to teach in a subject shortage area. Of those supported applicants already certified and employed, 42% are educators of color and 53% work in a high-needs location. This critical moment for digital recruitment has led to testing out new strategies and tactics to support future teachers of color that have yielded strong results to date. In the current academic year, TEACH Connecticut has supported about 40,000 website visitors and 6,000

subscribers exploring the teaching profession and is on track to yield close to 300 new EPP applicants. TEACH Connecticut launched in October 2018 and is made possible through a partnership between the CSDE Talent Office, TEACH (a national non-profit organization), and CT schools, districts and EPPs. Funding is currently provided by the PCLB Foundation. The CSDE is continuing to seek extended funding opportunities.

NextGen Educators Program

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. 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. This initiative address today's most pressing needs, it can serve as an innovative teacher pipeline for well-qualified educators — now and into the future.

Through partnership efforts between CSDE and the Connecticut State University, the NextGen Educator Program is being expanded from CSU to throughout the CSU system.

Educators Rising

Educators Rising is a network that cultivates highly skilled educators by guiding young people on a path to becoming accomplished teachers, beginning in high school and extending through college and into the profession. Since purposeful teacher recruitment and high-quality teacher preparation are urgent needs in virtually every community, Educators Rising supports, amplifies, and extends the impact of grow-your-own-teacher pipeline programs. Educators Rising has been awarded a grant from the Buck Foundation to implement the program in new school districts for the 2020-2021 school year in CT: Danbury, Hamden, Hartford, Groton, Meriden, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Waterbury, and Windsor. The grant also allows there to be a liaison of this statewide initiative who will be located at the CSDE to assist with implementation. The Talent Office held its first annual statewide Educators Rising Conference on March 31, 2021. In partnership with CCSU, the Conference afforded the opportunity for students currently enrolled in Educators Rising courses and clubs to compete in Educators Rising curriculum topics such as: Children's Literature Pre-K & K-3, Ethical Dilemma, Job Interview, Researching Learning Challenges, and Educator's Rising Moment. Ten students participated virtually at the Educator's Rising National Conference on June 24-27, 2021. For the 2021-22, the program has grown to include 17 districts and two pilot districts (East Hartford & New Britain) who will focus on the recruitment of Males and ELLs.

Statewide Approach to Developing and Supporting Equity-Driven, Antiracist School Leaders

With support from the Wallace Foundation University Principal Preparation Initiative (UPPI) grant, the CSDE provided multiple supports to contribute to the development and support of equity-driven, antiracist school leaders. Using an 'it takes a village' approach, in 2021, the CSDE provided professional learning opportunities, resources, and trainings to administrator preparation programs, including coaches, supervisors, and mentor principals of candidates' clinical internship experiences, candidates currently enrolled in administrator preparation programs, and new principals (Fall 2021). This approach supports the continuous improvement of the preparation programs, at the same time as building the capacity of current administrators to support new and aspiring administrators. With the Wallace Foundation UPPI grant coming to an end, we appreciate continued

support from the MTR Policy Oversight Council in sustaining the focus on developing and supporting equity-driven, antiracist school leaders in CT.

Strategies to Diminish Persistent Certification Shortage Area

On-going Efforts to Expand Certification Pathways

Enhanced Educator Certification Reciprocity

An Enhanced Educator Certification Reciprocity Policy has been newly developed by the CSDE for identified states within the Northeastern Region, going beyond the current National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) Interstate Agreement, to streamline the processing of Connecticut certifications for educators who hold valid and active out-of-state certifications. This will expedite Connecticut districts and schools recruiting diverse, high-quality educators from Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Virginia.

Teacher Certification and Regulation Review Report

As mandated by the state legislature, CSDE this year completed a review of education regulations relating to teacher certification in cooperation with WestEd. As a result of that work, CSDE created the Connecticut Regulation Workbook. The workbook was developed to support CSDE in identifying obsolete regulations and regulations that may create barriers for candidates. The main function of the workbook is to identify Public Acts and a description of the changes the Public Acts made to the 1998 certification regulations. The Commissioner submitted the Teacher Certification and Regulation Review Report to members of the General Assembly in January.

The Talent Office continued the work of the 2018-20 CCSSO Teacher Table initiative to make ongoing recommendations for statutory changes to educator certification regulations. As such, the Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification proposed two legislative recommendations which were adopted by both the SBE and the Connecticut General Assembly. The first legislative recommendation creates opportunities to expand candidate and educator preparation program provider access to the use of Connecticut's current Resident Educator Certificate (10-145m). The second legislative recommendation expands pathways for educators to obtain bilingual certification in Connecticut, reducing barriers of entry for the endorsement and creating more flexible options for both educators and districts to meet the needs of Connecticut students.

The Talent Office looks to build off of these efforts as the CSDE looks to partner with an external IHE to explore Multiple Measure pathways to demonstrate content area mastery in-lieu of Praxis II.

New England Secondary School Consortium/Great Schools Partnership Minority Teacher Recruitment Task Force Draft Position Paper

The CSDE and district partners (Windsor, Hartford, Bristol) collaborated with 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. The group provided its final round of feedback on a guidance document: *Increasing the Racial, Ethnic, and Linguistic Diversity of the Educator Workforce: A Call to*

Action for Leaders. This work is heavily influenced by the work of the CSDE Talent Office. The final document is now available at:

https://www.greatschoolspartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/DEW-FINAL-REPORT-12_20_r.pdf