

RESC

#7344  
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## **Developing a Diverse Teaching Force in Connecticut** Minority Teacher Recruiting Symposium

### **Symposium on Minority Teacher Recruiting Recommendations for Action**

The 2006 Symposium on Minority Teacher Recruiting recommendations for action are as follow:

#### **Minority Teacher Recruitment**

##### Summary of Concerns:

This workshop took a close look at the reasons for the shortage of qualified teachers of color in the Connecticut public schools while examining ways to increase the pool of prospective teachers of color. The goal of this workshop was to develop both short-term and long-term strategies that examined ways to make the teaching profession more attractive to prospective candidates and ways to encourage prospective candidates to pursue teaching as a career choice.

##### Summary of Recommendations:

- The RESC MTR Alliance and allied partners should work with the State Department of Education and the legislature to review the role that the Praxis exams play in the certification process, especially for experienced teachers relocating to CT. The State should consider accepting a specified number of years experience in lieu of a predetermined number of points on the Praxis exam.
- In the event that an experienced teacher wants to get certified in the state of Connecticut and they fail to achieve the passing score on the Praxis exams by a few points (score can be determined), they will be given a Provisional Certification for a certain amount of time. This temporary certification will allow them to teach while they prepare to re-take the Praxis exam.
- Work with districts and legislature to develop a comprehensive future teacher program that will identify, recruit and nurture young people who aspire to become teachers. This approach will include funding that will allow financial considerations for current teachers to serve as mentors for future teacher clubs.
- Identify public relations firms that will work in collaboration with the Connecticut Education Association (CEA) to develop a public relations campaign that targets middle school, high school and college students to consider teaching as a career. This campaign could be similar in scope to the successful campaign that the NYC Police Department used to target and recruit minority candidates to join the police department.

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### **Minority Teacher Recruitment (Cont.)**

- When recruiting students to the teaching profession, we should target the best and brightest students, similar to other professions such as engineering, business and medical professions.
- Work with the legislature, departments of higher education and the Connecticut State University System to provide full scholarships to minority students who attend one of the state universities and agree to teach in CT for a specified amount of time.
- Work with the districts, the State Department of Education and the legislature to develop creative incentives to attract teachers to Connecticut. In particular, CT residents who graduate from out-of-state colleges and universities.

### **The Future Teacher Pipeline**

#### Summary of concerns:

- The number of students of color in teacher preparation programs across Connecticut has remained flat at 10% for the last ten years.
- Teaching is not seen as a viable career opportunity for many students and especially students of color who enter college; this is especially since these students of color are being aggressively recruited by the business and medical professions. Marketing of the teaching profession is almost non-existent.
- High school students are not always sure how to get into college, let alone teacher preparation programs.
- Many community college students, who tend to be of color, do not get adequate support in navigating the pathway to a degree in education.

#### Summary of Recommendations:

- Marketing of the teaching profession must be aggressive and coordinated across the state. From middle school on, teaching needs to be presented as a positive and reachable goal for students.
- At the local school level, teachers need to promote their profession whether personally, as future teacher club advisors or as identified mentors.
- Teacher prep programs across the state need to establish a centralized mechanism for advertising and promoting teaching and giving information on how to become a teacher in Connecticut (web site?).
- CEA needs to be involved in marketing the profession through the various media outlets and by the establishment of CEA chapters at colleges.

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### **The Future Teacher Pipeline (Cont.)**

- There needs to be a seamless, multi-faceted pathway for high school students to become teachers. It should include: mentoring at the high school and college level, preparation for SAT/Praxis, assistance in applying to college, credit classes in education for potential teachers, experience in teaching (as teacher assistants, tutors, etc.) during the school year and/or summer scholarship monies made available and assistance in navigating financial aid.

#### *Legislative:*

- Provide funding for a comprehensive teacher readiness program for high school students.
- Provide funding for a centralized college marketing and academic advisement center for students considering teaching.

### **The Alternate Route to Certification (ARC) Program**

#### Summary of Concerns:

- How can we outreach mid-careerists to enter the ARC program?
- How can we support these mid-careerists to enter the program and graduate?
- How can ARC collaborate with state-wide Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and RESCs to encourage and facilitate MTR efforts?
- Who can ARC collaborate with to strengthen advisement for potential minority candidates?
- In what ways can ARC expand its Urban Fellows program to reach more districts?

#### Summary of Recommendations:

- Update the Education Committee of the twenty-year record of success on the ARC program in Connecticut. Include both quantitative and qualitative supporting data (over 3,000 teachers prepared with 450 or 15 percent minorities).
- Request that the State Legislature expand ARC funding from the current \$27,000 level to \$600,000 – the funding level that existed in the late 1980's.
- Initiate MTR Scholarships as part of expanded state support.
- Increase ARC program marketing efforts with LEAs, RESCs, service, non-profit and business organizations, etc. Focus minority candidate recruiting efforts with in churches, social clubs, non-profits and community organizations.
- Request that the State Legislature expand the "Urban Fellows" program beyond the New Haven and Waterbury pilot efforts.
- Recommend that LEAs provide mentors and related supports for ARC program graduates to maximize successful inductions as beginning teachers.

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### **The Alternate Route to Certification (ARC) Program (Cont.)**

- Recommend that the SDE encourage LEAs to provide ARC program "transition subsidies" to ARC participation to support their student teaching activities while not employed. Subsidies could originate from single districts (e.g. Hartford Public Schools), or from pooled LEAs.

### **Support/Expansion of Teacher Preparation Opportunities for**

- **Career Changers**
- **Paraprofessionals**
- **Non-Traditional Students**

#### Summary of Concerns:

This workshop examined the steps that are needed to:

- Enable the Community Colleges of Connecticut to develop a common focus for their Teacher Preparation Programs.
- Improve the articulation between the Teacher Preparation Programs of Connecticut's Community Colleges and our 4 year colleges and universities.
- Ensure that businesses and schools offer flexible work schedules that support Paraprofessionals, Career Changers, and Students pursuing a Teacher Preparation Program.
- Ensure that Connecticut's System of Higher Education offers flexible course scheduling that supports Paraprofessionals, Career Changers, and Students pursuing a Teacher Preparation Program.

#### Summary of Recommendations:

Work to enable Connecticut's System of Higher Education to develop a common focus for its Teacher Preparation programs:

*Internally:* Increase counseling at the Community College level and in high schools to ensure that course of studies qualifies students for acceptance into a four-year college teacher preparation program.

*Internally:* Connecticut's System of Higher Education should cooperatively develop a "giant electronic Blue Book" enabling students and guidance counselors state-wide to access and understand course availability and equivalency.

*Legislatively:* Look to Massachusetts / Florida / New York models regarding guarantee of transfer of credits from the Community Colleges to the Universities. (Again, articulation can be accomplished on an individual agreement basis or required by statute or ordered by Governor.

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### **Support/Expansion of Teacher Preparation Opportunities (Cont.)**

*Long Term:* Increase number of slots in State University Teacher Preparation Programs.

Work to improve the articulation between Connecticut's Community Colleges and the Connecticut State University System:

*Internally:* Can be accomplished on an individual basis, one on one – between each Community College and the State University in their region. Similar agreements/models already exist in the fields of Nursing and Social Work in Connecticut and in other states.

*Legislatively:* Agreements/models mentioned above can be required by statute or ordered by Governor.

*Legislatively:* Look to Massachusetts / Florida / New York models regarding guarantee of transfer of credits from the Community Colleges to the Universities. (Again, articulation can be accomplished on an individual agreement basis or required by statute or ordered by Governor.

*Long Term:* Increase number of slots in State University Teacher Prep Programs.

Work to increase scholarship funds and release time/flexible work schedules that support Career Changers, Paraprofessionals and Non-Traditional Students teacher prep program participants:

*Internally:* Businesses/School Districts offer release time, allowing candidates to maintain health benefits, and scholarship dollars, to their employees of color pursuing teaching certification in shortage areas. Successful graduates can be required to commit a period of employment to their sponsoring district and financial incentives to stay.

*Legislatively:* Reinstate TOP (Teaching Opportunities for Paraprofessionals), a state-funded paraprofessional-to-teacher program, targeting certification shortage areas; Reinstate funding for PRAXIS support; develop alternative preparation programs for PRAXIS, for example Kaplan for PRAXIS.