

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Hartford**

**TO:** State Board of Education

**FROM:** Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner Designate

**DATE:** May 6, 2015

**SUBJECT:** Designation of Certification Shortage Areas, 2015-16  
(Fall Hiring Report)

**Executive Summary**

**Background Information**

Each year in the fall, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) surveys public school districts and approved private special education programs to ascertain:

- the number of certified staff actively employed;
- the number of teaching and administrative vacancies that existed prior to the start of the school year;
- the quantity and quality of applications received for those vacancies; and
- the vacancies that remained after the start of school.

These data are used to establish the teacher shortage areas for the subsequent year. Educators working under an endorsement that is considered a shortage area may be eligible for certain benefits such as loan forgiveness and mortgage assistance, and being rehired without being subject to earnings limitations.

**Highlights from the Fall 2014 Data Collection**

The following shortage areas from 2014-15 remain difficult to fill and continue to be designated as shortage areas in 2015-16:

- Bilingual Education, PK-12;
- Comprehensive Special Education, K-12;
- Intermediate Administrator;
- Mathematics, 7-12;
- School Library and Media Specialist;
- Science, 7-12;
- Speech and Language Pathologist;
- Technology Education, PK-12;
- Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), PK-12; and
- World Languages, 7-12.

- The total number of certified positions statewide (excluding approved private special education programs) grew slightly from 52,872 in 2013-14 to 53,484 in 2014-15.\* The greatest rate of increase was among the Public Charter Schools (6.6 percent or 46 positions) and Regional Educational Service Centers (6.2 percent or 106 positions). The rate of increase was more modest in the Alliance Districts (1.7% or 333 positions).
- The number of vacancies that districts sought to staff prior to the start of the school year increased from 5,095 in fall of 2013 to 5,137 in fall of 2014 (0.8 percent). This is the highest number of vacancies in the last ten years.
- Public Charter Schools and State School Districts evidenced substantial increases in vacancies prior to the start of the school year of 53.1 percent and 76.6 percent respectively.

\* The one-year change regarding the data presented here should be interpreted with caution. In 2014-15, the CSDE implemented the Educator Data System (EDS), a new system to collect data about educator assignment. There are some differences in the data submission requirements for the EDS as compared to its predecessor. For example, EDS requires the unique educator identification number for all records, no longer collects data on short-term substitute teachers, changes the long-term substitute teacher length from 20 to 40 days, and allows for batch upload of data.

### **Conclusions/Recommendations**

Connecticut continues to experience challenges with attracting qualified, certified teachers in certain subject areas, and educational leaders, especially in the Alliance Districts. Therefore, the CSDE will continue to address these challenges through a series of strategies including, but not limited to:

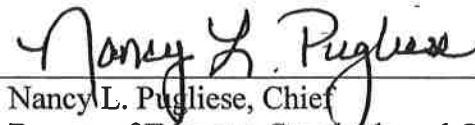
1. continue supporting Alliance Districts through the grant program to develop talent strategies that focus on attracting and retaining teachers;
2. provide financial support for mentoring programs, as well as other incentives and supports for beginning teachers in Alliance Districts and Commissioner's Network Schools;
3. strengthen recruitment, selection, training and program approval standards to ensure more rigorous selectivity and competency of future educators entering the profession through the Educator Preparation Advisory Council (EPAC); and
4. strengthen pipeline, preparation, selection, support and retention of school leaders in high-needs schools and districts through the LEAD CT initiative.

**Follow-up Activities**

The CSDE will complete the following activities to ensure that this information regarding the 2015-16 shortage areas is shared widely:

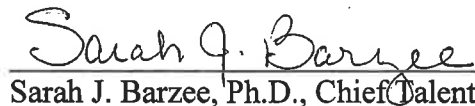
1. disseminate information about existing programs, such as the Teacher Mortgage Assistance Program, for teachers working in either a shortage area or a priority school district;
2. targeted focus on three (comprehensive special education, secondary mathematics and secondary science) of the 10 identified shortage areas as determined by data analysis in *Connecticut's Equitable Access to Excellent Educators Plan* (Equity Plan) to be submitted to the United States Department of Education on June 1, 2015;
3. established a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Consulate of Spain to increase the pool of Spanish world language teachers. Currently conducting a very small scale pilot (two teachers) using Spanish teachers with prior bilingual teaching experience to serve in a dual language school in one district and exploring extending the MOU to include Spanish speaking bilingual teachers;
4. exploring the development of a MOU with the Brazilian Consulate to bring in Portuguese speaking teachers for bilingual classrooms;
5. provided Title III monies to reduce tuition costs and increase the number of candidates who enroll in the Alternate Route to Certification for Teachers of English Language Learners program administered by Area Cooperative Education Services;
6. convene the deans of education, higher education staff and executive directors of alternative routes to certification in a workshop regarding the 2015-16 identified shortage areas; collaborate and explore strategies to address shortage areas and strongly encourage them to focus any new program development on these identified shortage areas;
7. explore, through EPAC, methods to incentivize higher education institutions to increase the number of teacher preparation completers in shortage areas; and
8. disseminate the shortage area list to superintendents of schools, RESC directors, Board of Regents, and the Connecticut Housing Authority.

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