

2013 – 2014 Opening of School Update
Human Resources: Rick Ledwith

Recruitment Results – 2013-14 School Year

This school year 66 new contracted teachers and 29 interim teachers joined the professional staff of the West Hartford Public Schools. In addition, 16 new administrators joined our leadership team (8 from outside the district, though two had previous experience in West Hartford).

The turnover rate was approximately 6.4%, compared to 4.4% last year and 6.4% the previous year. Exit interviews with teachers who resigned indicate a wide variety of reasons for leaving the district. Reasons are classified as follows:

	2012-13	2011-12	2010-11
Retirement	28	15	26
Relocation out of state	6	4	6
Family	2	4	8
Teaching in state	15	12	10
Left teaching/Misc.	6	3	6
Turnover	6.4%	4.4%	6.4%

Highly Qualified Candidates

These talented educators were selected from a candidate pool of approximately 3,500 applicants. Most of these candidates were the first choice of the hiring principal and department supervisor. 70% of these educators have a Master's Degree or higher.

Our new colleagues bring a wide range of professional experiences and come from varied training and preparation programs. This talented group includes individuals with extensive teaching experiences in a variety of educational settings. Including prior experience in our district (42 of these teachers had prior experience in WH). Candidates include alternate route to certification participants and from a wide range of college and university preparation programs. Again this year, a number of our new staff are graduates of the West Hartford Public Schools.

Orientation Program

An orientation and staff induction program was held during the week of August 19th. Members of our district's leadership team, teaching and support staff, and students welcomed our new staff at an orientation workshop on August 22nd. Individual school orientation programs were held prior to the opening of school on August 23rd.

Agenda Item:
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Diversity of Professional Staff

West Hartford Public Schools is sensitive and supportive of the need for diversity among our staff. The National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force found that increasing the percentage of teachers of color in classrooms:

- Is directly connected to closing the achievement gap
- Increases the number of diverse role models within the school
- Affords all students with the opportunity to learn about racial, ethnic and cultural diversity
- Enriches the learning of diverse students due to shared racial, ethnic and cultural identities
- Provides “cultural brokers” who help diverse students to navigate the school environment and culture while also increasing the involvement of other teachers and their students’ parents

The diversity of our new staff is approximately 12% and though there remains a gap between the diversity of our teaching staff and students we have made tremendous strides as a district in terms of the diversity of our leadership team. We are confident that this will help us recruit a larger percentage of minority teachers over the next few years. The Human Resources Department, in collaboration with our administrator’s and teaching staff will continue to aggressively implement our Strategic Recruitment and Retention Action Plan for 2013-2014 and beyond. Key components of this plan include the following:

- Continued partnerships with CREC Minority Teacher Recruiting Council, Alternate Route Programs and expanded partnerships with Higher Education Institutions
- National recruiting efforts (Teachers of Color, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Latino serving Colleges and Universities)
- Develop a Minority Staff Advisory Committee whose mission would be to work on ways that we may better provide welcoming, visible and tangible support to our staff.

Educator Evaluation Update

In April 2013, the Board of Education approved our Teacher and Administrator Evaluation Plans. Both plans were submitted to the Connecticut State Department of Education. On June 24, 2013 we submitted an implementation waiver request to the Commissioner of Education requesting that we implement our plan over two years. Our focus during the first year would have been on Teacher Performance and Practice and Parent Feedback. During the second year we would have implemented the Student Learning Measures and Student Feedback. Two weeks ago we were told that the waiver request was denied, therefore we will roll out the full plan for the upcoming school year. As this goes to press we are still awaiting a written response to our waiver request delineating the reasons for the denial and formal approval of the plans we submitted in May.

Despite the waiver denial, we have continued to approach the revision of our teacher and administrator plans in a very systemic and comprehensive approach to lay the groundwork for successful implementation during the upcoming school year, a year we will refer to as a “field study” or “pilot” year.

Administrators spent the first two days of their summer break and two days this past August understanding and operationalizing our Instructional Framework as well as participating in Administrator Calibration Training. During these activities we viewed and dissected instruction and then aligned observations with our Instructional Framework. In addition we spent a half-day helping all of our administrators understand how their leadership styles play a role in supervision and evaluation work with teachers.

This training will continue throughout the 2013-14 school year with a focus on the following areas:

- Teacher Evaluation Support and Feedback
- Methods of Evidence Based Observation
- Recognizing Rater Bias in Performance Appraisal
- Coaching for Change
- Observing for Common Core State Standards
- Writing, Reviewing and Monitoring Student Learning Outcomes

To support our work together, we have secured the services of Patrick Flynn, a consultant from the ReVision Learning Partnership, for the upcoming school year. Patrick has been working with West Hartford Public Schools since February, 2012 and has been instrumental in guiding us through the development and implantation of our Teacher Evaluation and Development Plan.