

# Memorandum

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**To:** David Sklarz  
**CC:** Executive Team  
**From:** Chip Ward  
**Date:** February 5, 2009  
**Re:** Certified Staffing Benchmarks

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At the February 4, 2009 Board meeting we discussed with the Board of Education how we have applied benchmarks to our budgeting process. This memo provides some additional detail and explanation of the certified staff benchmarking process.

Each district annually reports to the state of the Connecticut on the number and assignment of all certified staff that are employed by the district. Combining that staffing information with the student enrollments we can calculate the number of certified staff per 1,000 students and compare those staffing ratios across all the districts in DRG B. Table 1 on the next page provides a description of the various classification of staffing codes that are used in the analysis. Table 2 compares the staffing ratios in West Hartford to the average for DRG B as well as the specific ratios for surrounding DRG B towns.

Listed below are the areas where West Hartford's staffing levels differ significantly from the DRG averages:

**World Language:** We have 8 more teachers in World Language compared to the DRG Benchmark – this a reflection of our offering of World Language K-5 compared to most other districts where World Language starts at a higher grade level.

**Classroom teachers:** In total we have 3 more classroom teachers compared to the DRG B benchmark – but if you exclude the World Language teachers, we are down 5 teachers compared to the DRG B benchmark.

**Special Education:** We have 20 more teachers in special education compared to the DRG average. According to the 2007-08 strategic school profile, our special education prevalence rate is 11.6% compared to 10.4% for the DRG. Adjusting the staffing levels for the higher prevalence rate, we are about 5 staff over the DRG B benchmark.

**ESOL:** We have 11 more ESOL teachers than the DRG B benchmark. Our English Language Learner population is so different from the DRG as a whole that the benchmark is not really meaningful.

**Content Coach:** These are non-evaluative positions that coordinate and supervise the implementation of curriculum – primarily curriculum specialists in West Hartford. We have 5 more than the DRG B benchmark.

**Unified Arts:** This category includes all the specials at the elementary level, the unified arts teachers at the middle school level, and the performing arts teachers throughout the system. We have 12 more than the DRG B benchmark. This is both a reflection of our investment in the performing arts as well as the richness of our unified arts offerings in the middle school.

**Gifted and Talented:** We have 3 more teachers than the DRG B benchmark. This is a reflection of the broader offering of gifted and talented programs in West Hartford compared to the other towns in DRG B.

**Curriculum Leaders:** This group primarily encompasses department supervisors in West Hartford. We have 7 more curriculum leaders in West Hartford than the DRG B benchmark.

**Central Office Administrators:** For this group of employees we are 4 behind the DRG B benchmark. This report is based on certified staff – and neither the Executive Director of Human Resources nor the School Business administrator are certified. Though even including these two people would still leave us 2 behind the DRG B benchmark.

There are other areas listed in Table 2, where our staffing levels are very close in line to the DRG B benchmarks – including counselors, reading teachers, principals and assistant principals.

Comparisons to DRG B benchmarks are helpful in highlighting differences in the staffing patterns in West Hartford. Sometimes these differences are there for good reasons such as the higher special education prevalence rate in West Hartford or the higher number of ESL students in West Hartford. Other time the differences are there because of the policy decisions that the Board has made – World Language K-5, an extensive gifted and talented program, or a strong performing arts programs. And sometimes the differences cause us to look carefully at the staffing in an area and make recommendations for reductions – such as was proposed for curriculum administrators and specialists in group 1 of the Superintendent’s list of budget reductions.

The raw data for these benchmarks were compiled by the Greenwich school district from state data sources and greatly eased my analysis.

**Table 1: Grouping of Teaching Assignments**

<b>State Group</b>	<b>West Hartford Assignment</b>
Elementary Classroom	Pre-K, Kindergarten and Elementary Teacher,
World Language	Chinese, French, Greek Latin, and Spanish
English	English
Social Studies	Social Studies
Mathematics	Mathematics
Science	Science
Vocational Education	Business Education, Family and Consumer Science, Technology Education
Special Education	Pre -K, Kindergarten, Grades 1-12
Psychologists	School Psychologist
Social Worker	School Social Worker
Speech and Language	Hearing Impaired, Speech and Language Pathologist
Counselors	School Counselor/Guidance Counselor
English as a Second Language	English as a Second Language
Reading	Early intervention teacher, Reading specialist
Content Coach	Curriculum specialists
Media and Computers	Librarians, Media Specialists
Art	Art
General Music	General Music
Performing Arts	Band, Orchestra/Strings, Chorus/Voice, Theater Arts
Physical Education/Health	Health, Physical Education
Gifted	Gifted and talented
Teaching Other	Other teaching assignment
Principal	Building Principals
Assistant Principal	Assistant Principals
Curriculum Leaders	Director of Teaching and Assessment, Department Supervisors
Other Administrator	Other Administrator (certified), Athletic Director,
Central Office	Superintendent, Deputy or Assistant Superintendent, Pupil Services Director, School Business Administrator

## Summary of 2007-08 Certified Staff Ratios - Staff per 1000 students

	Avon	Farmington	Glastonbury	Simsbury	West Hartford	DRG B Ave (All Schools)	WH- DRG B	Staff Difference @10,000 students
Elementary Classroom	23.6	23.1	21.3	22.6	<b>22.4</b>	22.3	0.1	1
World Language	4.4	5.7	6.6	3.7	<b>5.4</b>	4.6	0.8	<b>8</b>
English	5.0	5.7	5.9	5.6	<b>5.1</b>	5.7	-0.6	-6
Social Studies	4.6	5.1	4.4	4.6	<b>5.0</b>	4.9	0.1	1
Math	4.7	5.7	5.4	4.8	<b>5.2</b>	5.1	0.1	1
Science	5.0	5.7	5.6	5.1	<b>5.3</b>	5.4	-0.1	-1
Voc Ed	1.1	2.2	2.7	2.7	<b>2.5</b>	2.6	-0.1	-1
Total Classroom	48.4	53.2	51.9	49.1	<b>50.9</b>	50.6	0.3	3
Special Ed	7.1	6.5	7.6	8.1	<b>9.7</b>	8.6	1.1	<b>11</b>
Psychologist	1.1	0.7	1.8	2.1	<b>1.5</b>	1.6	-0.1	-1
Social Work	1.0	1.4	0.0	0.6	<b>1.6</b>	1.0	0.6	<b>6</b>
Speech	2.4	1.3	1.4	2.3	<b>2.4</b>	2.0	0.4	<b>4</b>
Total Special Ed	11.6	9.9	10.8	13.1	<b>15.2</b>	13.2	2.0	<b>20</b>
Counselor	2.8	2.6	2.5	2.2	<b>2.6</b>	2.6	0.0	0
ESL	0.6	0.0	0.1	0.1	<b>1.6</b>	0.5	1.1	<b>11</b>
Reading	1.4	2.1	2.0	1.8	<b>2.0</b>	2.1	-0.1	-1
Coach	0.0	0.8	0.0	2.1	<b>1.3</b>	0.8	0.5	<b>5</b>
Media	1.1	2.5	1.5	1.5	<b>1.8</b>	1.9	-0.1	-1
Art	2.5	2.9	2.1	2.2	<b>2.4</b>	2.2	0.2	2
Genl Music	1.7	1.0	1.6	1.9	<b>2.7</b>	1.7	1.0	<b>10</b>
Perf Arts	1.6	3.9	1.1	1.7	<b>1.6</b>	1.9	-0.3	-3
PE/Health	3.4	4.5	3.4	3.3	<b>4.2</b>	3.9	0.3	<b>3</b>
Total Unified Arts	9.2	12.3	8.2	9.1	<b>10.9</b>	9.7	1.2	<b>12</b>
Gifted	0.3	0.1	0.6	0.0	<b>0.8</b>	0.5	0.3	<b>3</b>
Tch Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	<b>0.1</b>	0.1	0.0	0
Principals	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.4	<b>1.6</b>	1.5	0.1	1
Assistant Principals	1.7	1.0	1.4	1.2	<b>1.3</b>	1.4	-0.1	-1
Curriculum Leaders	0.3	1.2	1.7	2.0	<b>2.1</b>	1.4	0.7	<b>7</b>
Other Administrator	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.4	<b>0.3</b>	0.4	-0.1	-1
Central Office Administrators	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.8	<b>0.4</b>	0.8	-0.4	-4
Total Admin	4.5	4.9	5.4	5.8	<b>5.7</b>	5.5	0.2	2