

2014-15 Opening of School Update
Human Resources: Rick Ledwith

Recruitment Results – 2014-15 School Year

This school year 67 new contracted teachers and 21 interim teachers joined the professional staff of the West Hartford Public Schools. In addition, 12 new administrators joined our leadership team (5 Principals, 3 Assistant Principals, and 4 Department Supervisors).

The turnover rate was approximately 6.9%, compared to 6.4% last year and 4.4% the previous year. Exit interviews with teachers who resigned indicate a wide variety of reasons for leaving the district. Reasons are classified as follows:

	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12
Retirement	25	28	15
Relocation out of state	8	6	4
Family	2	2	4
Teaching in state	21	15	12
Left teaching/Misc.	5	6	3
Turnover	6.9%	6.4%	4.4%

Highly Qualified Candidates

These talented educators were selected from a candidate pool of approximately 3,700 applicants. Most of these candidates were the first choice of the hiring principal and department supervisor. 75% 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 (33 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 18th. Members of our district's leadership team, teaching and support staff, and students welcomed our new staff at an orientation workshop on August 21st. Individual school orientation programs were held prior to the opening of school on August 22nd.

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 16%, up from 12% last year, and though there remains a gap between the diversity of our teaching staff and students we continue to make strides as a district in terms of the diversity of our teacher and 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 2014-15 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 (Diversity Recruitment Partners in Education, 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.

Teacher Evaluation Update

The Teacher Evaluation Review and Advisory Steering Committee (TRAC) members, and in consort with a number of specialized work groups comprised of teachers and administrators from throughout our district, have worked tirelessly throughout the 2013-14 school year to make meaningful revisions to the *West Hartford Instructional Framework* and our *Teacher Evaluation and Development Program* for the 2014-2015 school year. This work was facilitated by Patrick Flynn of the ReVision Learning Partnership. The changes made to our plan were based upon the State’s revisions to the *2014 CT SEED Handbook*, and more importantly by the priorities expressed by our teachers in the survey that was administered during the 2013-14 school year.

The Steering Committee members, along with a large number of teacher and administrator volunteers, spent countless hours fine-tuning our plan and its related documents to more clearly articulate an agreed upon definition of effective teaching, and to embed into the document information and resources that will better support teachers and their evaluators throughout each required step of the teacher evaluation process. Each iteration of our document underwent the careful scrutiny of a range of professionals within our district in order to elicit the most meaningful and accurate changes for us to implement for the 2014-15 school year.

The State provided us with feedback about our plan in mid-June, requiring us to make one minor revision to our language in the section pertaining to the Observation Protocol, **[specifically, adding that one review of practice is completed annually for all teachers scoring at the “proficient” (i.e., “effective” per WHPS) or “exemplary” categories.]**

Revisions to the plan for 2014-15 include a streamlined reflection and goal setting process, options related to the number of Student Learning Objectives (SLO's) set each year, changes to the Instructional Framework (focus areas from 5 to 4, indicators from 26 to 11), changes to the observation protocol and schedule for tenured teachers who score in the proficient (effective) or exemplary range, revision and streamlining of forms used in the process, an alternative process for evaluating Student and Educator Support Specialists (aligned with the State's SEED model), and enhanced descriptions to support teachers with the various steps in the evaluation process, the use of surveys and survey data, and the selection and development of SLOs and Indicators of Academic Growth and Development (IAGD). Additionally, resources were added to the appendix to further support teachers and administrators.

The investment shared by our teachers and administrators in the rollout of this work last year and in making revisions to the process for this year was enormous. The time and energy devoted to this initiative, combined with the ongoing collaboration among our teacher and administrator colleagues has paved the way for a more relevant and meaningful process for the 2014-15 school year.