

2018-19 Opening of School Update
Human Resources: Rick Ledwith

Recruitment Results – 2018-19 School Year

This school year 52 new contracted teachers and 20 interim teachers joined the professional staff of the West Hartford Public Schools. In addition, 3 new administrators joined our leadership team.

The turnover rate was approximately 5.4%, compared to 5.6% last year and 5.5% the previous year. Retirements remained consistent at 25 compared to 27 last year. Exit interviews with teachers who resigned indicate a wide variety of reasons for leaving the district. Reasons are classified as follows:

	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16
Retirement	25	27	19
Relocation out of state	3	5	5
Family	8	5	4
Teaching in state	6	10	15
Left teaching/Misc.	7	4	6
Turnover	5.4%	5.6%	5.5%

Highly Qualified Candidates

These talented educators were selected from a candidate pool of approximately 1,700 applicants. Most of these candidates were the first choice of the hiring principal and department supervisor. 78% 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 (19 of these teachers had prior experience in WH). Candidates include alternate route to certification participants and a wide range of college and university preparation programs. Again this year, a number of our new staff (15) are graduates of the West Hartford Public Schools.

Orientation Program

An orientation and staff induction program was held during the week of August 20th. Members of our district’s leadership team, teaching and support staff, and students welcomed our new staff at an orientation workshop on August 23rd. Individual school orientation programs were held prior to the opening of school on August 24th.

Agenda Item:
VI.A.1.d.

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 24%, following consecutive years at 22%. There remains a gap between the diversity of our teaching staff and students, however, 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 Director of Continuing Education and Diversity Advancement, district administrators and teaching staff will continue to collaborate on a variety of strategies to continue to enhance the diversity of our teaching staff including the Future Educators of Diversity Program started three years ago and our association with the Historically Black College and University (HBCU) Career Center. This fiscal year we have allocated funds to attend a recruitment fair at a HBCU.

Teacher Negotiations Update

The current collective bargaining agreement between the West Hartford Board of Education and the West Hartford Education Association (WHEA) expires on June 30, 2019. The Teacher Negotiation Act defines the duty to negotiate and provides specific timelines for conducting negotiations and assures that negotiations will result in a new contract before the existing contract expires.

According to state statute, negotiations must start by the 210th day prior to the budget submission date. The Teacher Negotiation Act then gives the parties only fifty days to negotiate a successor agreement before they must designate a mediator, so it is important that negotiating time be used efficiently and effectively.

Representatives of the Board of Education and the WHEA will meet to establish ground rules and future meeting dates in September. Negotiations will take place throughout the month of October. If an agreement is not reached during this step of the process the parties

will designate a mediator. Mediation will take place in early November. The last several teacher contracts have been settled utilizing the services of a mediator.

If the parties do not reach agreement during negotiations or mediation, the dispute is submitted to arbitration in accordance with the statutory timeline (135 days prior to budget submission). After hearing the evidence, the arbitrator (s) must issue an award within 20 days. If the process were to extend to arbitration we could expect a decision around the end of December, early January time period.