

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Hartford**

**TO BE PROPOSED:**

October 3, 2018

**RESOLVED**, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-145d-9(g)(1)(B) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, grants provisional approval for the period November 1, 2018, through October 31, 2021, with an annual progress report required and an on-site, focused visit required no later than October 2020, to the Connecticut Relay Graduate School of Education, Alternate Route to Certification program, for the purpose of recommending candidates for the Connecticut temporary 90-day teaching certificate in the following endorsement areas:

| <b>Program</b>       | <b>Grade Level</b> | <b>Program Level</b> | <b>Program Type</b>              |
|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Elementary Education | 1-6                | Initial              | Alternate Route to Certification |
| Secondary Education: |                    |                      |                                  |
| English              | 7-12               | Initial              | Alternate Route to Certification |
| Mathematics          | 7-12               | Initial              | Alternate Route to Certification |
| General Science      | 7-12               | Initial              | Alternate Route to Certification |
| Biology              | 7-12               | Initial              | Alternate Route to Certification |
| Chemistry            | 7-12               | Initial              | Alternate Route to Certification |
| Physics              | 7-12               | Initial              | Alternate Route to Certification |

and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved by a vote of \_\_\_\_\_ this third day of October, Two Thousand Eighteen.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Secretary  
State Board of Education

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Hartford**

**TO:** State Board of Education

**FROM:** Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner of Education

**DATE:** October 3, 2018

**SUBJECT:** Continuing Program Approval, Connecticut Relay Graduate School of Education Alternate Route to Certification Program

**Executive Summary**

**Introduction**

This report presents evaluation findings for the Connecticut Relay Graduate School of Education Alternate Route to Certification (CT Relay/GSE ARC) program continuing approval on-site visit conducted during May 2018. In addition, the Commissioner's recommendation for continuing approval of CT Relay/GSE ARC is presented.

**History/Background**

Relay Graduate School of Education (Relay/GSE), a New York based national institution of higher education, was granted approval through the Connecticut State Board of Education (SBE) on November 2, 2016 to offer an alternate route to certification program leading to a recommendation for the Connecticut temporary 90-day teaching certificate in elementary education and the secondary areas of English Language Arts, mathematics and science (general, biology, chemistry and physics). CT Relay/GSE ARC is a part-time, non-degree, non-credit bearing program designed for non-certified staff members (e.g., paraeducators) employed by Connecticut school districts that have partnered with CT Relay/GSE ARC. Additionally, the program has committed to the SBE to recruit candidates of color for Connecticut schools. Program candidates, who must hold an undergraduate degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education, receive job-embedded training and gradually build pedagogical knowledge and skills as a full-time teacher-in-residence supporting a lead classroom teacher. Additionally, candidates complete a combination of in-person (two-four class days per month) and on-line (approximately 40% of program coursework) learning. Upon successful completion of the residency program, CT Relay/GSE ARC candidates serve under a 90-day certificate, and are eligible for a Connecticut initial educator certificate once they have successfully completed the 90-day teaching period.

Per Connecticut regulations, the maximum period of SBE approval for new programs at Institutions of Higher Education or other organizations that have no other board-approved programs is two years (Attachment A). The SBE granted CT Relay/GSE ARC initial

approval for the period November 2, 2016 to October 31, 2018, and required CT Relay/GSE ARC to host an on-site, continuing approval visit during spring 2018.

On May 2, 2018, CT Relay/GSE ARC hosted an on-site, continuing approval visit in New Haven, Connecticut. During the one-day visit, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) visiting team evaluated progress made during the first two years of program implementation relative to the following program areas:

1. Program Curriculum and Key Assessments
2. Candidate Performance Data
3. Candidate Recruitment and Employment Data
4. Compliance with Regulatory and Statutory Requirements
5. Compliance with EdTPA and CAEP Requirements

Prior to the on-site visit, CT Relay/GSE ARC submitted an Institutional Report (IR) documenting progress the program has made relative to these categories. During the visit, team members heard a presentation by the Director of CT Relay/GSE ARC, during which she elaborated on work described in the IR, including plans for on-going continuous improvement and innovation. The team conducted two separate interview sessions of program candidates; one including the greater Hartford area CT Relay/GSE candidates and the other including the greater New Haven area CT Relay/GSE candidates. The team also interviewed program faculty and instructors. Finally, the team interviewed the supervisors of CT Relay/GSE ARC graduates who are currently employed as a teacher of record in a Connecticut school regarding their performance and efficacy in the classroom.

The visiting team determined that CT Relay/GSE ARC is meeting state requirements for program curriculum and key assessments (evaluation category #1); compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements (evaluation category #4); and compliance with edTPA and CAEP requirements (evaluation category #5).

However, the team determined that CT Relay/GSE ARC is not meeting state requirements for candidate performance data (evaluation category #2), specifically regarding Praxis II and Foundations of Reading (elementary education only) testing for content knowledge. At the point of the May 2nd continuing approval visit, CT Relay/GSE ARC had a total of 45 program completers from the program's first cohort (2016-2017), and of these 45, only 17 (38%) had passed all licensure tests designed to assess a candidate's content knowledge. As of August 16, 2018, 23 program completers from the original 45 have passed all licensure tests, increasing the pass percentage for the 2016-2017 cohort to 51%.

CT Relay/GSE ARC has developed and begun implementing content remediation and test preparation supports for program candidates. During October 2018, CT Relay/GSE ARC will launch a pre-program academy to provide counseling and course work recommendations to candidates who do not have the necessary credit requirements and/or have not demonstrated that they possess the required content knowledge for teaching, including Praxis II test preparation. Additionally, CT Relay/GSE ARC has initiated the following actions to further support candidates:

- Initiated a partnership with the Educational Testing Service (ETS) to explore differential performance on Praxis II testing by race/ethnicity.
- Hired content experts who provide Praxis II group tutoring at the beginning of each Praxis II testing window at no cost to candidates.
- Hired content area experts to provide support (i.e., workshops) to candidates preparing for the Foundations of Reading test at no cost to candidates.
- Established a partnership with Teachers Test Prep, a nationwide leader in credentialing exam preparation, to provide Praxis II diagnostic information and tutoring at a steep discount.
- Invested in making the Mometrix Test Preparation database available at no cost to candidates. Mometrix is a test preparation database that contains unofficial study guides and practice questions for a variety of tests, including Praxis II tests and the Foundations of Reading test. Access is available on demand through the CT Relay/GSE ARC library.

The visiting team also determined that CT Relay/GSE ARC is only partially meeting state requirements relative to candidate recruitment and employment data (evaluation category #3). The program is fulfilling its promise to recruit candidates of color into the teaching profession in Connecticut. The table below shows candidate numbers by race for the 2016-2017 program completers cohort and the 2017-2018 residency cohort (TABLE 1).

**TABLE 1: Program Demographics, CT Relay/GSE ARC Program Completers (2016-2017) and Residency Candidates (2017-2018)**

|                        | <b>2016-2017<br/>(Program Completers)</b> | <b>2017-2018<br/>(Currently Serving in Residency)</b> |
|------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Race</b>            |   |   |
| African American/Black | 21 (47%)                                  | 38 (42%)  |
| Asian                  | 1 (2%)                                    | 4 (4%)  |
| Hispanic or Latino     | 8 (18%)                                   | 13 (14%)  |
| White                  | 7 (15%)                                   | 7 (8%)  |
| More Than One Race     | 4 (9%)                                    | 1 (1%)  |
| Other                  | 3 (7%)                                    | 1 (1%)  |
| Not Reported           | 1 (2%)                                    | 27 (30%)  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>           | <b>45 (100%)</b>                          | <b>91 (100%)</b>                                      |

However, over half (58%) of the 2016-2017 CT Relay/GSE ARC program completers who passed all licensure tests and are currently employed as a teacher of record in Connecticut are teaching in Achievement First, a Connecticut charter school.

For the current 2017-2018 cohort, CT Relay/GSE ARC has expanded partner districts to sixteen (from six in 2016-2017), which is double the number of non-charter partnerships (from four to eight) with the addition of East Haven Public Schools, Hartford Public Schools, New Britain Public Schools and Middletown Public Schools. CT Relay/GSE ARC reports that during the 2018-19 academic year, the program has plans to add at least two additional non-charter public school districts to their network of partners.

During a meeting on May 24, 2018, the CSDE Review Committee (Attachment B) unanimously recommended provisional approval for three years for CT Relay/GSE ARC, with an annual progress report required and an on-site, focused visit required in two years to ascertain the program's progress toward meeting state requirements for these two program areas.

**Recommendation and Justification**

Based on visiting team findings and the recommendation of the CSDE Review Committee, I recommend that CT Relay/GSE ARC be granted provisional approval for the period November 1, 2018, through October 31, 2021, with an annual progress report required and an on-site, focused visit required no later than October 2020.

**Follow-up Activity**

If granted provisional approval by the CSBE for the period November 1, 2018, through October 31, 2021, CT Relay/GSE ARC will host an on-site, focused visit no later than October 31, 2020. Additionally, the CSDE will continue to monitor the progress made by CT Relay/GSE ARC regarding initiatives to support the remediation of candidate content knowledge through monthly on-site meetings with the program director.

Prepared by: Katie Moirs, Ph.D., Program Approval Coordinator  
Bureau of Educator Effectiveness

Approved by: Sarah J. Barzee, Ph.D., Chief Talent Officer  
Talent Office

**Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies for Educator Preparation Program  
Approval  
Section 10-145d-9(g)**

**Board Action**

After reviewing the recommendation of the Review Committee, the Commissioner shall make one or more recommendations to the Board. Based on the Commissioner's recommendation, the Board shall take one of the following actions.

**(1) For programs requesting continuing approval:**

- (A) Grant full program approval for five years, or for a period of time to bring the program into alignment with the five year approval cycle. The Board may require that an interim report be submitted to the Department, on a date set by the Board, prior to the end of the approval period.
- (B) Grant provisional approval for a time period not to exceed three years, if substantial non-compliance with current standards is identified. The institution shall submit to the Review Committee, on a date set by the Board, a written report which addresses the professional education unit's progress in meeting the standards which were not fully met. The Board may require an on-site visit in addition to this report.
- (C) Grant probationary approval for a time period not to exceed three years, if significant and far-reaching non-compliance with current standards is identified. The institution shall submit to the Review Committee, on a date set by the Board, a written report which addresses the professional education unit's progress in meeting the standards which were not fully met. The Board shall require an on-site visit in addition to this report.
- (D) Deny approval.

**(2) For new programs in institutions which have current approved programs:**

- (A) Grant full program approval for a period of time to bring the new program into the five year approval cycle of all other programs offered by the institution. The Board may require that a written report be submitted to the Department, on a date set by the Board, prior to the end of the approval period.

- (B) Grant provisional approval for a time period not to exceed three years, if substantial non-compliance with current standards is identified. The institution shall submit to the Review Committee, on a date set by the Board, a written report which addresses the professional education unit's progress in meeting the standards which were not fully met. The Board may require an on-site visit in addition to this report.
- (C) Grant probationary approval not to exceed three years, if significant and far-reaching non-compliance with current standards is identified. The institution shall submit to the Review Committee, on a date set by the Board, a written report which addresses the professional education unit's progress in meeting the standards which were not fully met. The Board shall require an on-site visit in addition to this report.
- (D) Deny approval.

**(3) For new programs starting in institutions without other approved programs:**

- (A) Grant program approval for two years. The institution shall submit to the Review Committee, after two semesters of operation, a written report which addresses the professional education unit's progress in implementing the new program. The Board shall require an on-site visit in addition to this report.
- (B) Following the on-site visit after two years of operation, grant full program approval for three years. The Board may require that a written report be submitted to the Department, on a date set by the Board, prior to the end of the approval period.
- (C) Following the on-site visit after two years of operation, grant provisional approval for a time period not to exceed three years, if substantial non-compliance with current standards is identified. The institution shall submit to the Review Committee, on a date set by the Board, a written report which addresses the professional education unit's progress in meeting the standards which were not fully met. The Board may require an on-site visit in addition to this report.
- (D) Following the on-site visit after two years of operation, grant probationary approval for up to three years, if significant and far-reaching non-compliance with current standards is identified. The institution shall submit to the Review Committee, on a date set by the Board, a written report which addresses the professional education unit's progress in meeting the standards which were not fully met. The Board shall require an on-site visit in addition to this report.
- (E) Deny approval.

**CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Educator Preparation Program Approval Review Committee**

| <b>Name</b>              | <b>Affiliation</b>                    | <b>Representation</b> | <b>Term Ending</b> |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Hari Koirala          | Eastern Connecticut State University  | Higher Education      | January 3, 2019    |
| 2. Tamika La Salle       | University of Connecticut             | Higher Education      | January 3, 2020    |
| 3. Catherine O'Callaghan | Western Connecticut State University  | Higher Education      | January 3, 2020    |
| 4. Julie Sochacki        | University of Hartford                | Higher Education      | January 3, 2020    |
| 5. Joseph Bonillo        | Waterford Public Schools              | K-12                  | January 3, 2019    |
| 6. Thomas Danehy         | Area Cooperative Educational Services | K-12                  | January 3, 2020    |
| 7. David Erwin           | Berlin Public Schools                 | K-12                  | January 3, 2019    |
| 8. Ana Ortiz             | Oxford Public Schools                 | K-12                  | January 3, 2020    |
| 9. Shuana Tucker         | New Britain Public Schools            | K-12                  | January 3, 2020    |
| 10. Evette Avila         | Connecticut Center for School Change  | Community             | January 3, 2020    |
| 11. A. Bates Lyons       | A. Bates Lyons Associates             | Community             | January 3, 2019    |