

NEWS FROM THE CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION Talent Office

Welcome from Dr. Sarah Barzee, Chief Talent Officer

On behalf of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) Talent Office, I would like to wish all of Connecticut’s educators a happy new year. The new year is often a time for reflection and thoughts about improvement in the year ahead. In the year ahead, the Talent Office team will continue to reflect on our work, seeking opportunities for improvement and refinement, and developing strategies to address each of the components of our comprehensive Talent Management Framework. The three bureaus that make up the Talent Office—the Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification, the Bureau of Educator Effectiveness and Professional Learning, and the Bureau of Leadership Development—will continue to support Connecticut districts through strategies designed to prepare, develop, and support educators statewide so that every student in Connecticut has access to excellent teachers and school leaders who prepare them for college, career, and life.

In this issue, you can read about *Connecticut’s Equitable Access to Excellent Educators Plan*; efforts to increase the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of Connecticut’s workforce; and our commitment to expand the cultural consciousness and competence of educators throughout the career continuum.

We are also pleased to share the first ever Model Code of Ethics for Educators, developed by the



Dr. Sarah Barzee
Chief Talent Officer

National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC). This new document provides a set of professional principles to guide educators in ethical decision-making in practice. Most professions are guided by a code of ethics that holds their members accountable for high standards of professional and ethical conduct. Until now, our profession has not had such a code of ethics.

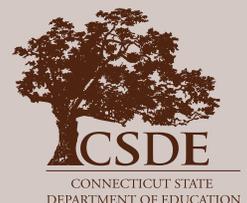
Once again, we highlight a district that is developing and implementing promising practices. Wolcott Public Schools is featured in this issue. We thank them for their willingness to share their work to develop their evaluators’ skills in delivering quality verbal and written feedback to teachers to help improve instruction. They are achieving this goal through their work with Revision Learning’s Collegial Calibrations process.

Finally, you will also find guidance for Professional Development and Evaluation Committees (PDECs), additional resources for student and educator support specialists, information on the newly formed Connecticut Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (CALAS), an overview on regional versus national accreditation programs for certification, as well as other updates.

Wishing you continued success in your school and district endeavors.

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TALENT OFFICE NEWSLETTER

Claudine Primack, Chief Editor

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Connecticut Teacher Named Finalist for 2016 National Teacher of the Year

Jahana Hayes, a social studies teacher at John F. Kennedy High School in Waterbury and Connecticut's 2016 Teacher of the Year, has been named a finalist for the 2016 National Teacher of the Year Award. She is one of four finalists announced Tuesday by the Council of Chief State School Officers, which administers the program.

"Connecticut's teachers are changing lives each and every day. When one of our finest educators is recognized on a national scale, it's exciting. It's a testament not just to what this one individual does through early mornings and late nights, but symbolizes the dedication of so many teachers across the state," Governor Dannel P. Malloy said. "If we are to be successful as a state tomorrow, it starts in our classrooms and schools today. I want to congratulate Jahana Hayes on this extraordinary recognition and for the young lives in Waterbury that she is touching."

"Jahana Hayes is the kind of teacher who transforms futures for students and shows them through her own example the powerful impact that people can have on their community and the world," said Commissioner of Education Dianna R. Wentzell. "We are so proud of Jahana. She is a true role model for educators across Connecticut—and across the nation—who seek to deliver on the promise of an outstanding education for every student."

The 2016 National Teacher of the Year will be announced in April and spend a year traveling the nation to represent educators and advocate on behalf of teachers and students. Mrs. Hayes was named Connecticut Teacher of the Year in October and was honored at an awards ceremony in November at the Bushnell in Hartford. She will undergo a final round of selection interviews as part of the National Teacher of the Year process.

Mrs. Hayes' career as an educator goes back 13 years with the most recent 11 years in Waterbury. Her role as a social studies teacher extends beyond the walls of her classroom and into the community where she encourages her students to be active in projects that help their neighbors and improve the world around them.



Jahana Hayes

"It is of no benefit to anyone if a student achieves high grades and tremendous academic success if they have no desire or knowledge of how to help others," she writes.

Hayes cites personal experiences as her reason for becoming a teacher. She is the first in her family to attend college, and gratefully recalls teachers in her life who let her borrow books to read at home. Today, she passes on this work by promoting cultural awareness and developing service learning curriculum for her school and community.

Hayes believes that, "Students need role models who are reflective of themselves." To that end, she has helped secure grants to promote education as a career, especially for black and Latino candidates.

"Jahana Hayes has made untold contributions to both her school and community. She is an exemplary educator who serves as a remarkable testimony to the concept that, through determination, perseverance, and the willingness to give and receive wise counsel, anything is achievable," Waterbury Superintendent Kathleen M. Ouellette said.

The National Teacher of the Year program, run by the Council of Chief State School Officers, identifies exceptional teachers in the country, recognizes their effective work in the classroom, amplifies their voices, and empowers them to participate in policy discussions at the state and national levels.

"Excellent teachers have an impact on students that extends beyond classroom walls," said Chris Minnich, executive director of the Council of Chief State School Officers. "They work to ensure every child receives a quality education that will set them on a course for success after graduation. These professionals are educators, engaged citizens, and role models."

"The finalists meet young people where they are, and help to guide them, enrich their lives, and build character," Minnich continued. "They are outstanding ambassadors for their profession."

President Barack Obama will recognize the National Teacher of the Year in a White House ceremony this spring.

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Connecticut's Equitable Access to Excellent Educators Plan 2015

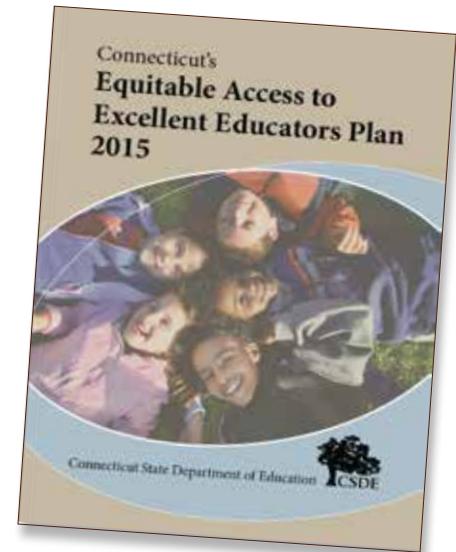
In July 2014, United States Secretary of Education Arne Duncan issued a letter to all chief state schools officers that required all states to submit a plan to the United States Department of Education (USED) outlining the steps the state will take to ensure that students from low-income families and students of color are not taught by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers and/or school leaders at higher rates than other children.

On September 10, 2015, *Connecticut's Equitable Access to Excellent Educators Plan (CT Equity Plan)* was one of 16 state plans approved by USED in its first round of approvals. To develop the five-year plan, the CSDE engaged a diverse set of stakeholders who reviewed a wide range of data, examined root-causes, and developed strategies to eliminate equity gaps.

The CT Equity Plan identifies eight local school districts to receive additional support and technical assistance in order to increase educator experience and retention rates. A key strategy of the CT Equity Plan focuses on leadership. Principals are the key to building a strong school culture focused on great teaching and learning. The CT Equity Plan prioritizes expanding and strengthening principal preparation, expanding voluntary induction programs, and redesigning ongoing professional learning programs for sitting principals.

Additional strategies included in the 2015 CT Equity Plan seek to work with the state's teacher preparation programs to ensure that pre-service candidates possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to be successful in Connecticut's high-poverty/high-minority schools. The CT Equity Plan also focuses efforts to increase the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of the workforce and expand cultural consciousness and competence training throughout the career development continuum. To support districts in enhancing working conditions, the CT Equity Plan includes strategies to support students experiencing emotional and mental health challenges and strategies to reduce chronic absenteeism.

If you would like more detailed information about the CT Equity Plan, please contact Anne McKernan, bureau chief for leadership development, at anne.mckernan@ct.gov. An Equity Plan Advisory group will meet two times per year to adjust strategies, monitor progress, and publicly report results. If you are interested in serving on the Equity Plan Advisory Group Committee, please contact Georgia Stathoulas at georgia.stathoulas@ct.gov.



Connecticut Teacher Named Finalist for 2016 National Teacher of the Year, continued from page 2

The three 2016 national finalists are:

- **Nathan Gibbs-Bowling**, 2016 Washington Teacher of the Year
- **Daniel Jocz**, 2016 California Teacher of the Year
- **Shawn Sheehan**, 2016 Oklahoma Teacher of the Year

The Connecticut Teacher of the Year and Teacher of the Year finalists serve as teacher-ambassadors for public education. They are appointed to various education advisory

committees and become consultants to the Commissioner of Education. They present workshops; speak at education conferences and meetings; address student, civic, college and university, and governmental groups; and operate special programs in accordance with their interests and expertise. The Connecticut Teacher of the Year also represents the state at the national level—participating in national educational forums, National State Teacher of the Year Program planning and networking sessions, and U.S. Department of Education meetings.

Model Code of Ethics for Educators Released

“Educators make thousands of decisions in a day that directly impact a highly vulnerable population; yet, they have never been prepared in ethical decision-making. Many educators are not aware of the professional risks and vulnerabilities that are inherent in the profession; yet, they are expected to address the academic, personal, and social needs of hundreds of students a day. Educators have in loco parentis responsibilities; yet, they have never received training in supervisory liability.”

(Building the Case of a Model Code of Ethics)

Throughout the country, concern has grown regarding the need for training current and future educators in ethical decision-making. They need to better understand how their professional decision-making can affect the safety and well-being of children, as well as the culture and mission of the school. “The time has come for the education profession to adopt a common set of professional principles that inform state policy and practice with regard to supporting practitioners and preparing candidates in ethical understanding, and to guide behaviors and decision making,” said Dr. Phillip S. Rogers, executive director of the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC). NASDTEC is the organization that represents professional standards boards and commissions and state departments of education in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and the U.S. Territories that are responsible for the preparation, licensure, and discipline of educational personnel.

In June 2014, NASDTEC convened a task force of 20 practicing teachers and administrators to examine research on professional ethics within and external to the field of education and determine what states were doing in relation to their codes of ethics. Based on that research, the task force identified the needs of states and local educational agencies (LEAs) and developed draft guidance, which was vetted across multiple organizational partners and posted for public comment.

On June 25, 2015, NASDTEC released a Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE).

Nancy L. Pugliese, J.D., chief, Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification, who served as an MCEE task force member said, “Yesterday was a momentous day—the model code of ethics for educators was publicly released in Washington, D.C. This is the first national code that the profession of education has ever had. I had the opportunity to work on the development of this code with a group of 30 committed educators from around the nation. It has been one of the best professional opportunities that I have experienced in my professional career.”

The following five MCEE principles broadly define critical dimensions of ethical practice expected of the professional educator:

Principle I: Responsibility to the Profession—This includes upholding the rules, policies, and regulations of the profession, maintaining mental and physical health, and engaging with professional associations.

Principle II: Responsibility for Professional Competence—This includes keeping up-to-date on content and pedagogy, disposing of student records, and working to provide all students with equal access to curriculum and resources.

Principle III: Responsibility to Students—This includes respecting their backgrounds, avoiding inappropriate relationships with students, and protecting student privacy.

Principle IV: Responsibility to the School Community—This includes working collaboratively with peers, supporting and mentoring new teachers, and communicating with parents in a timely and respectful way.

Principle V: Responsible and Ethical Use of Technology—This includes using social media in accordance with school and district policy, monitoring the potential for cyberbullying, and using technology to supplement teaching and learning.

The full code can be viewed at the following website: http://www.nasdtec.net/default.asp?page=MCEE_Doc#Top

Wolcott Public Schools: Collegial Calibrations

By Frank Purcaro,
Director of Student Learning
and Teaching,
Wolcott Public Schools



Frank Purcaro

As the Wolcott Public Schools enter their second full year of Collegial Calibrations with ReVision Learning Partnership LLC for the calibration of evaluators in our district, we have been invited to share our experiences. I was introduced to the program after attending a state-sponsored three-day Collegial Calibrations Facilitators Training offered at the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS). Our initial goal was to build the capacity of someone in the district to do the ongoing calibration of our evaluators. We were attracted to the Collegial Calibration model because we were convinced it was the best way for our evaluators to build a deeper knowledge of the *CCT Rubric for Effective Teaching 2014* while developing the skills to deliver quality, written feedback to the teacher to help improve instruction. A lot of our initial training was focused on the collection and documentation of evidence; however, effectively using that evidence to improve instruction was where we wanted to focus. After completing the training, I spent last year facilitating Collegial Calibration sessions with three cohorts of evaluators in Wolcott: building principals, assistant principals and central office administrators, and complementary evaluators. Feedback from the administrators who attended the in-district sessions overwhelmingly supported the new calibration method. Administrators especially appreciated the rich, in-depth debriefing conversations about teaching practice, observation practice, and the analysis of the *CCT Rubric for Effective Teaching 2014* that followed each classroom visit.

Another aspect of the Collegial Calibration process that was attractive to the Wolcott Schools was the use of the ReVision Learning Continuum (RVLC), a common rubric that is used to evaluate and provide feedback on the feedback that evaluators were giving to teachers. Essentially, I was using the RVLC to model to my administrators the same type of quality feedback that we expected them to give to the teachers

using a common rubric and common language. However, in this instance, the RVLC was being used rather than the *CCT Rubric for Effective Teaching 2014*. Ultimately, both administrators and teachers in Wolcott find themselves engaged in very similar processes.

A typical Collegial Calibration session includes an initial 90-minute pre-briefing focused on questions or concerns administrators may have with the *CCT Rubric for Effective Teaching 2014* in their own observation work. This is followed

by two 20-minute classroom observations and a one-hour debrief, which includes an in-depth collaborative discussion about the observation and how it relates to the language in the *CCT Rubric for Effective Teaching 2014*. The session ends with a final classroom visit, and evidence and feedback is keyed into ReVision's REFLECT System by the evaluators. Through the REFLECT system, I use the RVLC to rate and provide evaluators written feedback on their feedback to teachers.

As part of our goals moving forward, we intend to continue to build the internal capacity of our administrators to do calibration work on our own, with ReVision only there on occasion for coaching purposes. Last summer, four more administrators were trained as facilitators and will be working with their own cohorts of evaluators throughout the 2015–16 school year. We are committed to the notion of clearly communicating feedback to teachers to help them improve their instruction. At each layer of our evaluation model feedback is the key. Now evaluators are providing quality written and verbal feedback to teachers rooted in the *CCT Rubric for Effective Teaching 2014*. In turn, teachers are reflecting on their practice as it relates to the rubric and are pushing themselves to reach exemplar practice. In the end, students are reaping the benefit.

For more information on Collegial Calibrations, please contact Sharon Fuller in the Bureau of Educator Effectiveness and Professional Learning at the Connecticut State Department of Education at sharon.fuller@ct.gov or 860-713-6814.



Second Annual
Moving from Compliance to Coherence Conference
Aligning Student and Educator Goals and Practices

Thursday, February 25, 2016

(Snow Date: March 7, 2016)

8:30 am-3:30 pm

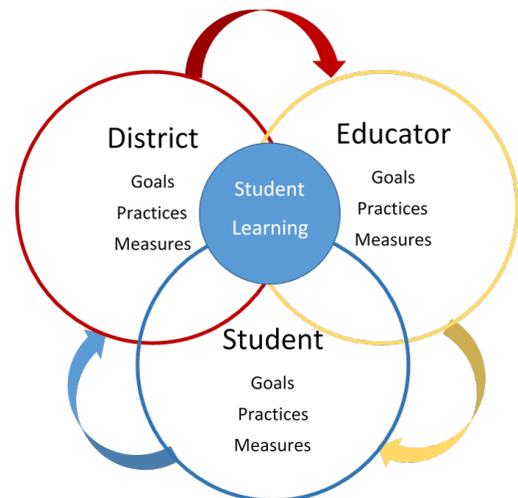
Registration begins at 7:45 am

Radisson Hotel, Cromwell, CT

Developing a shared vision of aligned educator and student goals, instructional practices, professional learning, and other supports is essential to building a system that can support on-going teacher effectiveness and improved student outcomes. This conference will provide districts with the opportunity to engage with one another in sharing successful practices for aligning educator and student goals that link effective instruction to rigorous student learning standards.

Conference Strands:

- **Student Improvement** - Sessions in this strand will focus on goal setting, instructional practices, strategies and measures that support student learning through increased rigor, higher-order thinking skills, student engagement in the learning process, and instruction aligned with CT Core Standards and other relevant academic standards.
- **Professional Improvement** - Sessions in this strand will focus on educator goals, practices, strategies and measures that support and enhance instructional quality. Special attention will be paid to specific professional learning strategies aligned with Connecticut's Standards for Professional Learning and designed to improve student outcomes.



Audience: Districts are encouraged to register a team, which may include the Superintendent, a central office administrator, Principal/Assistant Principal, Instructional Coaches/Teacher Leaders, teachers and a member of the Professional Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC). Please contact Deb Van Wyngaarden at dvanwyngaarden@crec.org or (860) 509-3687 with questions.

Registration Fee: \$85.00 per person or \$75.00 per person *for teams of three (3) or more from the same district/organization.*

Fee includes a light breakfast and lunch. Click [here](#) to register. [View conference schedule](#)

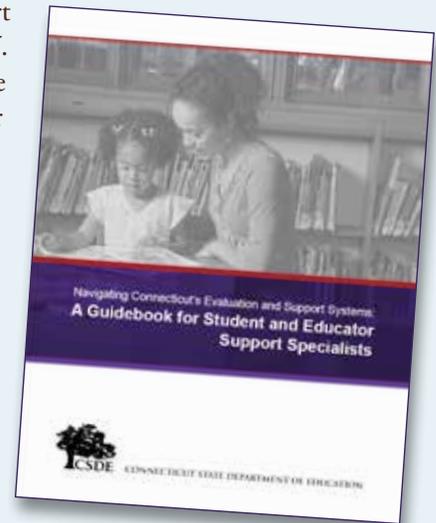
Sponsored by the Connecticut State Department of Education, in partnership with the RESC Alliance and the Connecticut Association of Schools.



Student and Educator Support Specialist Update

Additional resources are now available for student and educator support specialists, including the *CCT Rubric for Effective Service Delivery 2015*. This new and improved rubric, released last summer, recognizes that the practice of support specialists/service providers can vary depending on their assigned roles and responsibilities.

Another new resource, *Navigating Connecticut's Educator Evaluation and Support System: A Guidebook for Student and Educator Support Specialists*, is now available at www.connecticutseed.org. This guidebook is intended for use by both service providers and their evaluators. It provides suggestions for implementing a differentiated system for evaluation of professional practice, development of student learning goals/objectives, and opportunities for ongoing professional learning tied to a variety of learning environments. Guiding questions are included to assist both evaluators and service providers to create a plan of evaluation and support clearly connected to professional growth and improved student performance.



Nominations Are Now Open: Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST)

The Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) is the highest honor bestowed by the U.S. government specifically for K–12 mathematics and science (including computer science) teaching. Awardees serve as models for their colleagues, inspiration to their communities, and leaders in the improvement of mathematics and science education.

Anyone—principals, teachers, parents, students, or members of the general public—may nominate exceptional mathematics or science teachers who are **teaching grades K–6** for the 2015–16 school year. Secondary school teachers (grades 7–12) will be eligible to apply during a future cycle. Teachers may also apply directly at <http://www.paemst.org>.

Nominations are being accepted now through April 1, 2016. Completed **applications are due May 1, 2016**. Contact Charlene Tate Nichols at charlene.tate.nichols@ct.gov with any questions.

NOMINATIONS ARE NOW OPEN	TEACHERS: APPLY ONLINE
<p>The 2016 awards will honor mathematics and science (including computer science) teachers working in grades K–6. Nominations close on April 1, 2016.</p>	<p>Before logging in, please review the <u>2015–2016 Application Packet (Adobe PDF)</u>. Applications must be completed by May 1, 2016.</p>
<p>Nominate a Teacher</p>	<p>Begin or Resume an Application</p>

An Action Plan for Data Team Development

By Stephanie McKenna, English Teacher, Wethersfield High School

This past summer my colleague, Tom McKenna, and I were afforded the opportunity to attend a CSDE-sponsored professional learning event, Teachers Leading: Developing Teacher Leaders for Today's Schools, where we examined teacher leadership skills, strategies, and research. At this one-day summit, we were given the task of creating a plan to facilitate change with colleagues. Our goal at the summit was to create a data team form that would encourage teachers to collect data and perform research to improve instruction. Over the past few years, our school has worked on developing and using data teams. Teachers have requested to do more with these data teams, not just collect and discuss data. Administration has encouraged us to do more research and conduct classroom visits. An overarching goal of our data teams is to improve instruction. Because our evaluation is linked to Danielson's Framework for Teaching, we created an action plan that would align our school's data team form with the four domains of the framework rubric: Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, Instruction, and Professional Responsibility.

Since the initiation of data teams at our school, the paperwork documenting our progress has changed yearly. We have used various methods to document our meetings and data analysis, including checklists, summaries, and narratives. Often, teachers questioned the necessity of the documentation. Tom and I wanted to create a document that would help us connect our data team work to our year-long goals. At the summit, we decided to create a form that would align our data team work with the domains of the Danielson Rubric. By completing this new data team form, teachers and administrators would be able to document that the four domains were met. This would also encourage teachers to focus on improving instruction. Tom and I discussed the rationale for everything on the form. We wanted it to be focused and clear, as well as quick to complete. Teachers spend a great deal of time planning, preparing, and assessing. The resulting form is user-friendly and does not take a great deal of time to finish, which allows more time for teachers to work on their daily instructional needs.



Stephanie McKenna and Tom McKenna

Our previous data team forms focused on Common Formative Assessments (CFA), the rationale for the CFA, results of the CFA, and data analysis. One of the first changes we decided to make was to include the Student Learning Objectives (SLO) and/or Indicators for Academic Growth and Development (IAGD) right up front. By breaking down the data team process into three steps, Tom and I hoped to create a simpler process

that focused on specific domains of our evaluation rubric. Each step includes guiding questions to lead the data team through an analysis of its data. As the data team meets twice per month, it is expected that two steps can be completed each month. Step I focuses on the SLO/IAGD and formative assessments. Step II focuses on data analysis, planning and preparation, and instruction. Step III focuses on research and professional responsibility. Our administration encourages us to visit other teachers' classrooms to see what strategies and techniques are being used by our colleagues. The new form promotes teachers learning from one another, as well as conducting research on topics relevant to their goals. The three steps prompt us to remember that the student data, the research, and the instruction are all connected.

At the Teachers Leading: Developing Teacher Leaders for Today's Schools event, we learned strategies in presenting new initiatives to colleagues. Tom and I used one of these strategies to present our new data team form to our school's administrative team who gave us their approval in August. I then presented this new form to our school's departmental liaisons who also approved it. Next, they presented it to their individual departments for feedback from teachers. Although we asked for honest feedback and candid suggestions from all, no suggestions or criticism were made. Instead, we only got positive feedback from teachers, liaisons, and administrators; our initiative was put into effect at the start of this school year.

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An Action Plan for Data Team Development, continued from page 8

Since we started using this new data team form, teachers have expressed their approval of and their success with the new data team form. They see the clear connection between our data team work and our teaching goals. This initiative gives teachers the opportunity to seek new strategies, visit other classrooms, and apply our new learning to help our students find success. It also gives

administrators documentation showing all four domains of the Danielson's Framework for Teaching have been met. Thanks to the strategies we learned at the Teachers Leading Event, like creating, planning, and presenting an action plan, we were successful.

The new data form is below.

WETHERSFIELD HIGH SCHOOL DATA TEAM FORM

Your Name: _____ Date: _____

Data Team Members: _____

What is my goal? (Suggestion: SLO and/or IAGD) _____

STEP 1: Answer questions to the right	1. What is my formative assessment?	2. How does it connect to my goal (suggestion: SLO/IAGD)?	3. How can this formative assessment help my students?
STEP 2: Answer questions to the right	1. What are the results of the (above) formative assessment? Attach data.	2. What did I do to help my students find success?	3. What can I do to help my students find more success?
STEP 3: Answer questions to the right	1. What research and/or professional learning have I done to help me achieve my goal? (Suggestions: read journal articles, visit other classes, discuss with data team members.)	2. What new knowledge (i.e. strategies, assessments) did I gain from this activity?	3. Based on this new knowledge, how can I modify my instruction to help my students find success?

Stephanie McKenna and Thomas McKenna 2015

NEWS FROM THE CERTIFICATION OFFICE

Top 10 Certification Shortage Areas 2016–17

In accordance with Connecticut General Statutes, Section 10-8b, the Department of Education annually identifies the top 10 shortage areas for each school year. For the 2016–17 school year, the following certification endorsement areas have been officially identified as shortage areas:

- **Bilingual Education, PK–12**
- **Comprehensive Special Education, K–12**
- **Intermediate Administrator**
- **Mathematics, 7–12**
- **School Library Media Specialist**
- **School Psychologist**
- **Science, 7–12**
- **Speech and Language Pathologist**
- **Technology Education, PK–12**
- **World Languages, 7–12**

We need great teachers to fill these identified shortages areas. Great teachers can change students' lives. Students often look to their teachers as mentors. Those students who are inspired by their teachers can accomplish amazing things. Attaining an endorsement in one of these identified areas will offer you the opportunity to have an impact on students by helping them develop skills they need to compete in a challenging global market.

Many of these identified areas are shortages nationally, as well as internationally. Therefore, increasing the number of teachers certified to teach in these areas has been an ever-growing challenge over the years. In response, the CSDE is undertaking several initiatives to address these areas of chronic shortage.

Teachers who are willing to work in these identified shortage areas may benefit from the following state programs:

1. **Teachers' Mortgage Assistance Program**—The program offers 30-year mortgage rates that are generally at or below the rates found at banks and through mortgage brokers to teachers teaching in a priority or transitional school district and in a Connecticut technical high school system located within the boundaries of one of those districts, and who wish to purchase a home in that district.
2. **Rehiring of Retired Teachers**—Connecticut state law allows the rehiring of retired teachers to serve in these identified shortage areas without being subject to the statutory earnings limit. This allowance is for one year and may be extended for an additional year, subject to prior approval by the Teachers' Retirement Board.
3. **Federal Shortage Areas Programs**—Teachers holding certifications in these identified shortage areas may be eligible for:
 - a. targeted teacher deferment for borrowers under the Family Federal Education Loan (FFEL) and Federal Supplemental Loans for Students (SLS) programs;
 - b. cancellation of up to 100 percent of debt under the Federal Perkins Loan Program; or
 - c. reduction of teaching obligation for scholars under the Paul Douglas Teacher Scholarship Program.

Great teachers use their knowledge, creativity, imagination, and ingenuity to bring the subject matter to life and can inspire students to reach their fullest potential. Consider gaining a cross-endorsement in one of these identified areas and make a difference.

NEWS FROM THE CERTIFICATION OFFICE

Accreditation 101

The proliferation of alternate and online education is seen as a boon by busy educators trying to fit professional development into tightly packed schedules. But some find after much time and money spent that their hard work has not paid off in terms of certification requirements. To advance a certificate to the professional level or earn an additional endorsement, educators may be required to complete additional coursework. To meet any certification requirements, credit must be awarded on the official transcript of a *regionally accredited* college or university. What does this mean, and how can you determine if a college or university is appropriately accredited?

Here are some tips:

There are six major accrediting bodies in the United States, one in each region of the country (see box at right). These private agencies have developed criteria for evaluating postsecondary institutions to ensure they meet basic quality standards. To count toward certification, all required credit must be awarded from institutions accredited by one of these six agencies. Information about a school's accreditation status is usually found in the school catalog. Be sure the accrediting body is one of the *six main regional agencies*. ***Accreditation by any of the many national and/or state-level accrediting bodies accepted by the U.S. Department of Education is NOT sufficient.***

Several online resources can help you determine the status of a school. The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) maintains a searchable database of institutions accessible to the public at www.chea.org/search. Entering the name of a school delivers a list of all bodies accrediting the institution. You must then check that list to be sure the appropriate regional agency is listed. College Source Online maintains a similar online database at www.collegesource.org. Once you have pulled up the institution, click on the profile icon. This database includes a separate category for regional accreditation, making it easy to determine if the school holds appropriate accreditation.

Of course, if any question remains about the appropriateness of coursework to advance a certificate or earn an additional endorsement, please contact us at teacher.cert@ct.gov.

U.S. REGIONAL ACCREDITING AGENCIES

Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools

DE, DC, MD, NJ, NY, PA, PR,
US Virgin Islands

www.msche.org

New England Association of Schools and Colleges

CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT

www.neasc.org

The Higher Learning Commission (North Central Association of Colleges and Schools)

AZ, AR, CO, IL, IN, IA, KS, MI, MN, MO, NE,
NM, ND, OH, OK, SD, WV, WI, WY

www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

AK, ID, MT, NV, OR, UT, WA

www.nwccu.org

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, TX, VA

www.sacs.org

Western Association of Schools and Colleges

CA, HI, Guam, Samoa, Palau, Micronesia,
Mariana and Marshall Islands

www.wascweb.org

Connecticut Forms Connecticut Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (CALAS)

CALAS is the Connecticut state chapter of the national organization ALAS and was founded by a group of school leaders from New Haven who are dedicated to expanding resources and opportunities for Hispanic/Latino educators. They have partnered with CAS (Connecticut Association of Schools), as they seek to expand their membership and bring their mission to life in Connecticut.

The mission of CALAS “is to foster quality and equitable public education for Latino Connecticut students as we seek to inspire, cultivate, develop, and support Hispanic/Latino education leaders and talent. Acting with urgency, we are committed to supporting the professional growth of Hispanic/Latino talent through professional learning and networking opportunities.”

CALAS is working on three specific goals: (1) communicating the organization’s purpose and promoting collaboration among all stakeholders who support quality and equitable education for ALL students; (2) providing networking opportunities and sharing best educational practices for educating Latino students successfully in a global economy; and (3) developing pathways to increase leadership capacity among diverse educators and students.

CALAS welcomes all individuals/educators who are interested in supporting its mission. The full membership meets three times a year. Members of the organization’s executive board are Dr. Abie Benitez, president; Dr. Madeline Negron, president elect; Dr. Evelyn Robles, vice president; and Ms. Lillian Fontan, secretary. For more information, please contact CALAS executive board secretary Ms. Lillian Fontan at Lillian.fontan@gmail.com.



Guidance for Developing a High-Quality Professional Learning System

Local educational agencies (LEAs) and their Professional Development and Evaluation Committees (PDECs) may be at different places in the development of their high-quality professional learning systems.

To support LEAs as they develop and refine their vision and goals during this process, the Connecticut State Department of Education has developed *Connecticut Guidance for a Professional Learning System*.

This guidance document was created in collaboration

with various stakeholder groups, including both teachers’ unions, the administrators’ union, representatives from boards of education, superintendents, principals, and teachers.

It provides an opportunity for valuable professional learning as PDEC members work with one another to enhance their LEA’s professional learning system.

[Connecticut Guidance for a Professional Learning System, November 2015](#)

New Approach to Online Learning Connects Teachers from Around the Country

There's a challenge with many models of online learning: they can feel very impersonal, stale, and can limit the kinds of interactions and learning experiences students have. So when Megan M. Allen and Michael Flynn, directors of graduate programs at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts, were tasked with developing online models for their programs, they decided to break the mold.

Both distinguished educators have a strong sense of effective teaching practices that support active engagement in learning, so they worked to design a new model for online learning that would allow those practices to thrive in an online environment. This model allows teachers in the program to thrive as well.

Flynn, the 2008 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year, directs the Master of Arts in Mathematics Teaching (MAMT) program for K–8 educators and created what he coined the Dynamic Hybrid Learning model, where online and on-campus participants are blended for live, interactive class sessions. The classroom space on campus is set up like a TV studio, with cameras and microphones in place to capture the class session for the participants online. Additionally, a large screen with live video feeds of all the online participants is displayed, so both online and on-campus participants can interact in real time.

Allen, a National Board Certified Teacher and the 2010 Florida Teacher of the Year, directs the Master of Arts in

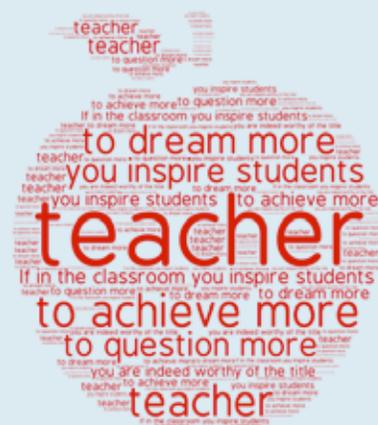
Teacher Leadership (MATL) and developed a fully online model that using video conferencing to connect teachers from around the country for live face-to-face classes using videoconferencing, where teachers can build their teacher leadership skills right from their home devices. This two-year program is built around the Teacher Leader Model Standards and includes a unique partnership with the National Network of State Teachers of the Year, with teacher leadership coaches and teacher leaders-in-residence.

The structure of both online models supports best practices that are effective in face-to-face settings because—essentially—the class sessions are still face-to-face. Participants work in whole group and small groups to create projects, engage in complex tasks, and have deep discussions about the course content. Kaneka Turner, a recent graduate from the MAMT program summed it up this way: “I felt very much apart of the class, even though I was all the way down in Charlotte. We learned together. We laughed together. We really were a strong community—I didn't think you could get that online.”

Both programs are accepting applications for the cohorts starting this summer and are offering significant scholarships to teachers accepted into the program. To learn more about their work or to find out about the scholarships visit: <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/professional-graduate/degree-programs>.

Call for Articles

The Talent Office newsletter regularly features articles written by educators. If you would like to contribute an article or have an idea for an article, please contact Claudine Primack at claudine.primack@ct.gov or 860-713-6826.



EMPOWERED TO LEAD 2016

Collaborate, Innovate, Elevate

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Radisson Hotel, Cromwell

This one-day event is designed to provide an opportunity for teacher-leaders, administrators, and other educators to engage in articulating and enhancing the power of innovation, collaboration, and leadership in our schools, districts, state, and nation. The symposium will include morning interactive sessions focusing on ideas, strategies, and models of innovation and collaboration that are elevating our profession. A series of solution-oriented, collaborative roundtable discussions focusing on leadership development and professional learning will conclude this exciting and transformative event.

#E2Lead2016 (Coming Soon!)

Registration now open: <https://empowered2lead2016.eventbrite.com>

Participants from the 2015 Empowered to Lead Conference said...

"This was an amazing day. The entire experience was worthwhile, beneficial, and I walked away feeling inspired and motivated to continue to grow in my own profession and influence others to do the same."



"It was a day filled with excitement!!! It was a day of learning!! It was a day filled with opportunity to collaborate with other teachers at all levels as well as administrators in a comfortable and open setting. This does not happen enough. Kudos to all of YOU!!! Thank you for this opportunity! I would like to be able to attend next year as well."

"What a superb opportunity to collaborate with other leaders who thrive to make a difference in our profession. I felt supported and validated. Days like this should happen more often."