

Strategies to Address Teacher Shortages



Connecticut State Department of Education

In the wake of COVID-19, many states, including Connecticut, are suffering from acute teacher and educator personnel shortages. In many cases, the pandemic only exacerbated shortages that were already well-known to districts and states. Recently, the Comprehensive Center Network released a special issue brief titled *How Region 2 States Are Leveraging Innovative Strategies to Address Critical Shortages of Education Personnel*. The purpose of this brief was to provide an overview of national and Region 2 (CT, NY, RI) trends related to the educator workforce shortage. This flyer is meant to showcase innovative strategies in the state of Connecticut emphasized in that brief that districts can leverage to address shortages in both the short and long term.

Across the state of Connecticut, current teacher shortage areas are:

Certification Endorsement	Grades	Shortage Area Designation
Bilingual Education	PreK-12	Statewide
Mathematics	4-12	Statewide
Special Education*	PreK-12	Statewide
School Library and Media Specialist	PreK-12	Alliance Districts only**
School Psychologist	PreK-12	Statewide
Science	4-12	Statewide
Speech and Language Pathologist	PreK-12	Statewide
Technology Education	PreK-12	Alliance Districts only
Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)	PreK-12	Statewide
World Languages	7-12	Statewide

See highlighted strategies from *How Region 2 States Are Leveraging Innovative Strategies to Address Critical Shortages of Education Personnel* on the next page.

* The Special Education shortage area designation comprises Partially Sighted, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Blind, and Comprehensive Special Education teaching endorsement codes.

**The Alliance District program is a unique and targeted investment in Connecticut's 36 lowest-performing districts. Connecticut General Statute Section 10-262u establishes a process for identifying Alliance Districts and allocating increased Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funding to support district strategies to dramatically increase student outcomes and close achievement gaps by pursuing bold and innovative reforms.

Increasing Educator Diversity

• **NextGen Educators Program**

www.ccsu.edu/nextgen/index.html

Talent pipeline for schools and districts in partnership with the School of Education and Professional Studies at Central Connecticut State University.

Program contacts

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Participating districts

Newington	Waterbury	Southington
Bristol	Cheshire	Hartford
New Britain	Wolcott	New Haven
Manchester	Meriden	Norwalk

• **Educators Rising**

www.educatorsrising.org

Offers curriculum training, micro-credentials, and dual-credit courses for high school students to develop knowledge and skills to embark on teaching careers.

Male Educator Network

Connects students with education mentors and increases diversity of the teacher workforce

Program offerings

Program contact: June Thomas (jthomas@pdkintl.org)

• **TEACH Connecticut**

<https://connecticut.teach.org/>

Resources and supports for prospective teacher candidates. Promote teaching careers in CT, especially in shortage areas.

Program contact: Teresa Alexandru (Teresa.alexandru@ct.gov)

Approved Teacher Residency Programs***

– Relay	– Sacred Heart University
– CREC (“Connecticut Teacher Residency Program”)	– Southern CT State Univ.
– Quinnipiac University	– University of Bridgeport

*** Alliance districts have funding for these programs for new staff, current staff, and paraeducators.

• **CHESLA Loan Subsidies**

www.chesla.org/

Offers a 3% interest rate subsidy on Alliance District Teacher Refinance Loans (to refinance existing private student loan debt) to teachers employed by any of Connecticut’s 36 Alliance District public schools.

Program contact: Josh Hurlock (jhurlock@chesla.org)

• **Grants for Educator Preparation Programs (EPP)**

CSDE launched \$2 million initiative to cover the cost of licensure and fingerprinting for aspiring educators from EPPs for the next two years.

Program Contact: Lauren Tafarate (Lauren.Tafarate@ct.gov)

Additional Strategies in Connecticut

• **For Substitute Teachers**

Short-term substitutes

While not a new initiative, substitutes do not need to hold a bachelor’s degree to be hired by districts.

Alumni Outreach

Superintendents, such as at [Cheshire Public School District](#), have reached out to graduates of previous years to encourage them to apply for substitute positions in the district.

• **For Mental Health Staff**

Partnerships with Community Health Organizations

[Consolidated Schools District of New Britain](#) sourced mental health professionals from [Community Mental Health Affiliates](#), using federal funds.

WestEd Strategies/Best Practices

Flexible roles: Offer more flexible part-time instructional roles to attract more certified, non-employed educators back into the candidate pool.

“Job share” or other flexible work arrangements for retired teachers to split the workweek or workday between two certified teachers.

Offer “adjunct” teacher or substitute roles for retired teachers by having a teacher teach a section or two of a course without being expected to teach a full course load.

Temporary incentives: Leverage one-time ARP ESSER funds to provide “hazard pay” or one-time incentives.

Offer meaningful one-time incentives to teachers who commit to roles currently experiencing shortages.

Significantly increase pay for teachers, substitutes, and/or non-instructional staff on a temporary basis as a form of hazard pay.

Partnerships: Form new partnerships to meet short-term needs while attracting new talent to the profession in the long-term.

Form partnerships with after-school community organizations to supplement instructional support or expand substitute teaching pool.

- Train staff on these programs
- For example, East Hartford has programming in place to support paraeducators becoming licensed teachers

Create residencies for developing staff by forming partnerships with graduate schools of education, nursing, social work, counseling, or psychology.

For roles that do not require a postsecondary degree, identify students to fill noninstructional support roles by forming partnerships with career and technical education programs.



Are there strategies your district has been using with success? Share them with the CSDE! We would love to know what works for you and share your story with other districts.