

IMPACT STORY

Preparing Connecticut's State and District Leaders to Recruit and Sustain Educators of Color

Educator Diversity Matters

Teachers of color positively impact the outcomes of students of color, and all students benefit from having teachers who have diverse backgrounds and experiences.ⁱ Yet, only **10 percent of Connecticut's K–12 educators identified as a race other than White, despite students of color making up nearly 50 percent of the state's K–12 student population.**ⁱⁱ And the National Center for Education Statistics estimates that the K–12 student population will continue to become less White and more diverse over the next decade.ⁱⁱⁱ Without evidence-based tools and implementation support in

place for local education agencies (LEAs) to further diversify the educator workforce, the gap between the racial makeup of students and educators may persist and even increase.

A Multi-Year Effort to Help Diversify the Educator Workforce

Since 2019, the Region 2 Comprehensive Center (R2CC) and the Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast and Islands (REL-NEI) have collaborated to support leaders at the Connecticut State Department of Education

(CSDE) and in districts across the state in their efforts to improve the recruitment and retention of educators of color:

- In 2019–20, the R2CC developed a plan to pilot the *Creating a District Plan to Increase the Racial, Ethnic, and Linguistic Diversity of Your Educator Workforce* (CSDE, 2019) guidebook (“the Guidebook”) in eight districts across the state. The Guidebook was initially developed by CSDE in collaboration with the Northeast Comprehensive Center and the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders to help school districts increase the diversity of their educator



workforce. Seven pilot districts^{iv} met both as a group and individually with the R2CC to review the Guidebook, discuss the available resources, and determine whether enhancements were needed to those resources.

- In 2020–21, the R2CC provided coaching support to a group of 11 district teams that volunteered to pilot the use of tools and resources in the Guidebook. As a result of the coaching series, the R2CC and CSDE developed a complement to the Guidebook, the *Creating an Action Plan and Sustaining Efforts to Increase Educator Diversity* toolkit (CSDE, 2022), which helps districts develop clear action plans to increase educator diversity.
- In 2021–22, the R2CC provided a train-the-trainer model of coaching support to Connecticut’s regional educational service centers (RESCs) so they, in turn, could work directly with districts to scale up educator diversity efforts across the state.

“The coaching series helped provide guidance in our reflection and self-assessment of our approach to hiring and retention practices. This was a critical step in moving forward in the development of a new vision for hiring a more diverse staff.”

–LEA Staff

Providing Timely Support Across the State

In all, this project has directly supported 11 Connecticut school districts—representing approximately 85,000 students—in improving their educator hiring and selection processes.

Project Reach:

- » **1** State Education Agency
- » **6** Regional Educational Service Centers
- » **11** Local Education Agencies
- » Representing **85,000** Students

Districts Are Now Better Supported to Increase Educator Diversity

A CSDE leader reported that, as a result of R2CC’s technical assistance (including the resources it helped develop), districts seem better prepared to effectively recruit and sustain diverse educators:

Even though we’re not where we want to be regarding the number of educators of color, I don’t think we would be where we are without the partnership, collaboration, and resources we’ve co-developed with the R2CC. We wouldn’t have [had] the ability to pour a foundation to support the work.

The CSDE leader also indicated that the agency is currently building out monitoring systems to track progress on this important work:

The R2CC team was a catalyst for what is now our [Educator Diversity Dashboard](#), which is a wonderful tool for districts to get a clearer sense of what is happening in their districts and how they compare statewide relevant to

other districts. It was an unplanned organic artifact that came out of this collaboration.

Lessons Learned Will Shape the Path Forward

R2CC and CSDE identified several lessons learned that influenced the course of the project and its outcomes.

- 1. Ensure that key leaders endorse the effort and are willing to help remove political or other obstacles.** For this project to succeed, leaders needed to prioritize efforts to advance educator diversity during project implementation. The leaders of CSDE supported this effort and helped create enabling conditions for the project.
- 2. Engage willing districts that want to push the work forward on a larger scale.** The R2CC and CSDE identified willing districts that wanted to be involved with the coaching series and aimed to build a foundation for the work.
- 3. Provide more intentional and immediate support and coaching to willing districts.** CSDE staff and the R2CC initially intended to develop the next iteration of resources to support RESCs in implementing coaching sessions statewide. Instead, the RESCs are pivoting their plans toward providing direct support and coaching to interested districts. The R2CC and the CSDE

are also planning to train diversity and equity directors at schools in another scale-up strategy, similar to what was done with the RESCs.

- 4. Establish accountability measures to scale the work.** The CSDE needs to continue considering how to monitor progress as the work is scaled. CSDE staff note that although districts are required to put together an Increasing Educator Diversity plan, there is a gap in plan monitoring, feedback, and implementation.
- 5. Use available political levers to advance the work.** The CSDE and the State Board of Education prioritized increasing educator diversity even before related legislation was enacted. Now that the legislation has been in place and the CSDE and the R2CC have three years of project experience from which to draw, they are taking steps to advance the work, including collecting additional research to support conversations with legislators and brainstorming steps that legislators can take to support these efforts beyond what is already in place.

“Another big success is [helping administrators] dig into data and training them on analyzing data for diversity hiring, interviewing, and cultural competency. The exercises on analyzing data brought to light our lack of data. We implemented a recommendation form that we used to start gathering data.”

—LEA Staff

Endnotes

- ⁱ Warner, S. (n.d.). *Going beyond the data in diversifying the teacher workforce*. Comprehensive Center Network. <https://compcenternetwork.org/resources/resource/7742/going-beyond-data-diversifying-teacher-workforce>
- ⁱⁱ EdSight, (2022). *Comparison of educator and student diversity, trend [Data set]*. Connecticut State Department of Education. https://public-edsight.ct.gov/educators/educator-diversity-dashboard?language=en_US
- ⁱⁱⁱ National Center for Education Statistics. (2022, May). *Racial/ethnic enrollment in public schools: Condition of Education*. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cge/racial-ethnic-enrollment>
- ^{iv} There were originally eight districts in this cohort, but one district did not finish the entire series.

For more information about the Region 2 Comprehensive Center, visit the [Center's webpage](#).