



Connecticut State University System NEWS RELEASE

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Central, Eastern, Southern, Western Address Connecticut's Teacher Shortage with Innovative, Effective Programs

The Connecticut State University System (CSUS) has released a report highlighting initiatives at Central, Eastern, Southern and Western Connecticut State Universities designed to respond to Connecticut's teacher shortage. The report also recommended that Connecticut pursue a stronger focus on local school districts most impacted by teacher shortages, build stronger and more systemic partnerships, and better align resources, expertise and support.

The report, *"The Key to Enhancing Teacher Workforce Recruitment, Retention & Collaboration"* noted that in critical fields such as mathematics, science, world languages, and special education, school districts face a limited supply of candidates in efforts to recruit and hire first-rate teachers. This is particularly true at the high school level, in urban areas and in Connecticut's priority school districts, defined as having the greatest academic needs.

The CSUS universities, utilizing federal grant funds, collaborated with local school districts in developing four distinct, innovative, and pioneering initiatives that earned widespread support and endorsement, and directly benefited scores of teachers, both new and experienced, and an estimated 8,000 Connecticut students.

An independent evaluation concluded that the CSUS initiatives offer "the potential to foster significant systems change," having "created a network of personnel with the academic expertise, practical knowledge and commitment needed to face the difficult changes ahead."

The report also noted that the initiatives "provide meaningful guidance in the development of programs that address teacher preparation, recruitment and retention, adding that "if urban students – an increasing percentage of our overall student population – have a greater number of high quality teachers throughout their formative years, the benefits will...accrue."

Highlights of the teacher initiatives:

Southern Connecticut State University recruited early- and mid- career professionals to become teachers and sought to recruit, train and support non-certified paraprofessionals to become certified teachers. An intense 14-month program resulted in 23 of 24 participants achieving state certification, and development of a subsequent program that will help additional paraprofessionals in Connecticut's four largest urban school districts – New Haven, Hartford, Bridgeport and Waterbury – obtain their teaching certification.

Central Connecticut State University's collaboration with the Hartford Public Schools went to the heart of concerns about the high percentage (almost 50 percent nationally) of beginning teachers that leave the field after as little as a year of teaching, by providing in-class support and mentoring, University coursework and training, and a professional peer group. Of 14 new teachers participating, nine continued their university work towards a degree, half continued to teach in the Hartford schools, and others moved remained in other priority districts.

Eastern Connecticut State University collaborated with the Connecticut Alternative Route to Certification (ARC) program to permit individuals to more effectively pursue advanced teaching degrees, breaking new ground to bring mid-career professional into the teaching profession, and help them advance their education.

Western Connecticut State University worked with the Danbury schools to upgrade the effectiveness of elementary science education, strengthening the foundation for teachers to teach science and students to pursue scientific fields in later grades.

Teaching and teachers have been always been fundamental to the mission of the CSUS universities. In fact, two-thirds of the teachers in Connecticut classrooms today are graduates of one of the CSUS institutions. Overall, CSUS is the state's largest university system, with more than 35,000 students. Nearly nine in ten graduates of CSUS remain in Connecticut after graduation, contributing to Connecticut's workforce and quality of life.

"A short supply of well-qualified and highly effective teachers in Connecticut's public schools threatens both the education of our current school-age population and the future of our state's workforce," said CSUS Chancellor David G. Carter. "The result of these innovative programs is encouraging and instructive for Connecticut, and we are grateful for the guidance and teamwork at the universities and in the local districts."

With the leadership of Congresswoman Rosa L. DeLauro and the support of the entire Connecticut Congressional delegation, CSUS applied for and received a federal grant for \$744,000 through the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education which funded the initiatives between May 2005 and April 2007.

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