



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
GOVERNOR DANIEL P. MALLOY

**GOV. MALLOY SAYS NEW STATE LAW WILL BOLSTER EFFORTS TO
INCREASE DIVERSITY AND MAINTAIN THE HIGH QUALITY EXPERTISE
AMONG CONNECTICUT'S TEACHERS**



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(HARTFORD, CT) – Governor Daniel P. Malloy today announced that a new state law he signed will advance the state’s efforts to improve in the recruitment and retention of minority teachers in an effort to increase diversity in the classroom and ensure the state can continue to provide high-quality education for all of its students. The Governor and State Department of Education (SDE) Commissioner Dianna Wentzell held a roundtable discussion on the topic this morning at Carmen Arace Middle School in Bloomfield to highlight these efforts.

“In every sector, diversity leads to better decisions and improved outcomes. In the context of education, better decisions lead to improves out comes for children, which is necessary in order to sustain our growing economy,” **Governor Malloy said**. “This legislation is a significant step toward ensuring every child in our state has equitable access to excellent teachers whose diversity reflects that of our student population. We are proud of Connecticut’s diverse population – it is a source of strength for our state.”

“Our increasingly diverse student population not only needs access to the best teachers, but also to teachers who reflect their backgrounds and cultures,” **Commissioner Wentzell said**. “Our strength, as a community, stems from our willingness to embrace the cultural diversity within our

state. Increasing our capacity to ensure that Connecticut’s cultural diversity is represented in the classroom will only make our community better, and the State Department of Education is committed to ensuring this legislation is implemented well.”

According to the most recent data available on [EdSight](#) – the state’s interactive education data portal – approximately 44 percent of Connecticut students are minorities, while only 8.3 percent of educators are minorities.

The legislation, [Public Act 16-41](#) – *An Act Concerning the Recommendations of the Minority Teacher Recruitment Task Force*, includes several provisions aimed at increasing diversity, including:

- The establishment of the Minority Teacher Recruitment Policy Oversight Committee within SDE
- The requirement of SDE to conduct an annual survey of students on the effectiveness of minority teacher recruitment programs in the state
- The requirement of SDE to report annually on the effectiveness of minority teacher recruitment programs using results-based accountability methods
- The elimination of a satisfactory score on the Praxis exam as a licensure requirement for educators and instead requires the score be used as an entry requirement into preparation programs, as determined by the preparing institution
- The requirement of SDE to review and approve proposals to create alternative route to certification programs for school support staff and to award educator certificates to qualified applicants who complete the programs
- The removal of barriers for awarding an educator certificate to out-of-state teachers
- The modification of criteria for teacher certification interstate agreements

The legislation is part of a larger, long-term effort to increase the diversity and maintain the high quality of Connecticut’s teaching population, and in the recent past, the state has taken concrete steps to ensure every student has equitable access to excellent teachers whose diversity reflects their own.

For example, SDE has collaborated with several community organizations, including the Connecticut NAACP, the Office of Higher Education, and Regional Education Service Centers, to raise awareness, provide scholarships, and assist with test preparation to help the best and brightest candidates make it into the classroom. SDE has also awarded planning grants to several districts in the state in order to begin laying the groundwork for more robust recruitment efforts during the coming years. Additionally, last summer the State Board of Education released its five-year Comprehensive Plan to Ensure Equity and Excellence, which explicitly calls for increased access to diverse and high-quality teachers for all students.

“I’m proud to have championed this legislation and encouraged by the strong support it has received,” **State Representative Douglas McCrory (D-Hartford)** said. “Research shows that students of color do better when they see educators who look like them in the classroom. How we can recruit more teachers of color is a conversation we must be having if we want to improve educational outcomes for all children.”

“I am proud that the state is taking steps to further diversify the teacher population in our schools,” **State Representative Robyn Porter (D-Hamden, New Haven) said.** “Embracing diversity and employing educators who are reflective of the actual population of Connecticut’s urban centers will result in a much more positive learning experience for our students.”

“I am thrilled by the steps that are being taken to diversify our educator workforce and increase minority teacher recruitment and retention in the State of Connecticut,” **National Teacher of the Year and Waterbury teacher Jahana Hayes said.** “You cannot begin to address an issue that you do not find value in and this legislation shows that Connecticut values our commitment to providing equitable access to all and is willing to take the necessary steps toward improvement. I am so proud to be an educator in Connecticut.”

NAACP Connecticut President Scot X. Esdaile said, “The NAACP applauds Governor Malloy and the state legislature on passing this very important bill. Since the NAACP was founded, we’ve been fighting for equity in education and equal opportunities for all. Currently, the lack of diversity among teachers in the State of Connecticut is appalling. We are looking forward to partnering with the State Department of Education to help with this situation by mobilizing experts from our communities statewide for long term solutions.”

This morning’s discussion was held in the Town of Bloomfield because that school district, where approximately 75 percent of the student population in the district is African American and 10 percent are Hispanic and Latino, has made significant progress in recent years in ensuring its students have access to teachers whose diversity reflects their own, and has made significant academic progress as well.

At Bloomfield High School the percentage of African American teachers increased from 23.1 percent during the 2009-10 school year to 29.6 percent at the end of the 2013-14 school year, while the percentage of Hispanic and Latino teachers increased from 2.6 percent during the 2009-10 school year to 4.2 percent at the end of the 2013-14 school year. At Carmen Arace Middle School, the percentage of African American teachers increased from 27.7 percent to 38.5 percent from the 2009-10 school year to the 2013-14 school year, and the percentage of Hispanic and Latino teachers increased from zero to 2.6 percent during the same time period.

To assist in these improvements, the Bloomfield school district implemented a comprehensive system of supports for all teachers and does an excellent job of recruiting and retaining teachers of color. For example, the district receives teacher recommendations from members of the community and current staff and employs public relations and networking strategies that publicize Bloomfield as a welcoming environment for all teachers. Additionally, district administrators work closely with SDE’s Office of Certification to assist candidates with the certification process, provide assistance with forms and relevant questions, and facilitate the submission of required documentation through Bloomfield’s human resources to support prospective candidates.

“I support the intent of this new law to provide more meaningful recruitment and retention of minority teachers and administrators,” **Bloomfield Superintendent James Thompson said.**

“Collectively, we all can be more resourceful and consistent in efforts to recruit and retain talented educators of color. In Bloomfield, close to 30 percent of our teaching staff is comprised of people of color. We work to make our outreach efforts inclusive by reaching out to historically black colleges and universities, as well as non-HBCU higher learning institutions. By being more resourceful and consistent in our marketing to publications with diverse readerships and networking with organizations, such as the National Association of Black School Educators, we find that our selection pool for hiring is more inclusive.”

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