

**Trumbull Board of Education**  
**Hiring Practices Committee – Final Report**

**February 19, 2009**

**A. Statement of Purpose:**

1. **Reason for committee** – Conduct a fact finding review of the hiring practices which should include but are not limited to:
  - a. The demographics of the teachers hired over the past few years
  - b. The retention of these teachers
  - c. The hiring practices of other districts
  - d. The pros and cons of the Trumbull Public School's present hiring practices
  
2. **Make-up of committee** – 4 board members  
Loretta Chory – Chairman  
Joann Tyborowski – Secretary  
Lisa Labella  
Deborah Herbst
  
3. **Number of meetings** – 5  
July 24, Aug 13, Sept 4, Oct 16, Nov 11

**B. Process of Review:**

1. **What was looked at**

Geller vs. Markham 1979, Appeal 1980

- Re: Education Involvement in Hiring Process letter from Attorney Richard O'connor
- Re: The Board of Education needs to exercise extreme care in publicly directing the administration to hire in accordance with any specific schedule or limitation without satisfying itself that the effect of the directive is non-discriminatory

TEA Agreement 2007-2011, Section 4. Teachers shall be placed on the appropriate step of the salary schedule by the Superintendent with the following considerations:

- Re: Subsection 4.2: "In no case, however, will any Teacher be given credit for more than ten (10) years of service."
- Re: 08/08/2008 e-mail from Ralph lassogna – "When Dick O'Connor negotiated this clause in 1992 into the contract, its intent was to contain costs..."
- Re: 08/19/2008 Memorandum of Agreement - contract modification letter to delete the above wording in TEA contract in order to correct a scrivener's mistake.

TPS current hiring practices/procedures – Ralph lassogna & Celeste Jardim (attended Sept 4, 2008 committee meeting)

- Teachers
- Administrators

In addition to gathering information for Trumbull Public Schools, a Comparative School Practices study was undertaken by the committee. Committee members contacted Fairfield, Milford and Monroe Public Schools to gather information from the following list of questions:

- Are job openings posted both inside and outside simultaneously? What drives the decision to post inside vs. outside? Who determines this? Where are outside positions posted? Provide website, newspaper, etc. Is an online application used? Is it required? Please provide a copy of the application used by the district.
- What candidates come before the board as part of the hiring process? Please provide the process used for teachers and administrations. Ex: Who does the initial screening? Who does the interviewing? Who is asked to sit on the committee?
- Does the Superintendent meet with teacher candidates?
- Are teacher candidates required to do a model lesson as part of the interview process? If yes, is it with or without a sampling of students present?
- Is any form of rubric or tally sheet used during the interview process? Please provide samples.
- Is the interview process consistent from school to school within the district?
- Are graduates of the district given the courtesy of an interview?
- Education and prior experience of new teacher hires, including level, step, special subject area for years 06-07, 07-08, 08-09.
- # of teaching staff retirees and # of teaching staff resignations for years 05-06, 06-07, 07-08. How long were each employed by the district.
- Percent of total current teaching staff who have been with the district for 5 years, 10 years, 15 years, over 15 years?

## **2. Sources of information**

**Fairfield** (Enrollment: 10,000; Teaching Staff: 900)

Loretta Chory met with Fairfield's Asst Superintendent for Human Resources, Mary Margaret Fitzgerald. Comments from meeting:

- Fairfield's hiring policy is to "hire the best fit".
- School District no longer accepts any paper applications; all applicants must use the online AppliTrack system ([www.applitrack.com/fairfield](http://www.applitrack.com/fairfield)). Online application includes tool developed by Gallop Organization that helps predict teacher / principal talent based on insight into applicants "belief and values about education". Teachers are generally notified of internal opening a week before it is posted online. No special timing for administrator openings.
- Booklet, Guidelines for the Interview Committee, is provided to Interview Committee members, who serve in advisory capacity to the Superintendent. Asst Superintendent meets with teacher candidates recommended by school principal. Standard Interview rubric is used for all candidates. Model teaching lessons are preferred of teacher candidates but not always required; often set up mock classrooms during summer for teacher observations. No heavier weighting is given to graduates of Fairfield PS in hiring decisions.

- Policy 4121: The board shall make appointments of Headmasters and Principals based on the recommendation of the Superintendent.

**Milford** – Deb Herbst spoke with employees from the Human Resources Dept in Milford PS. The following information was provided:

Teacher Openings - All applicants to the Milford PS system apply online through School Spring. There are no exceptions made to this policy. Online applications are reviewed by Director of Human Resources and building principals to develop a list of candidates to be interviewed. Building level teams, under the direction of the principal, interview teacher candidates. All persons interviewed must do a demonstration lesson; special summer sessions are set up by building principal if necessary. Questions for interview and rubrics are developed and used at the building level. Principals must have substantial data to support hiring recommendation.

Administrative Openings – Applicants must apply online thru School Spring. Director of Human Resources screens candidates and develops interview list. Superintendent, Asst Superintendent and team of principals do the interviewing, with applicants moving through “learning stations” to demonstrate proficiency in instruction, staff evaluation, assessment, budget and other organizational / leadership skills. Superintendent, in conjunction with Asst Superintendent, make final decision on candidate hiring.

**Monroe** – Lisa Labella spoke with Monroe Board of Education Chair Deb Dutches. Ms. Dutches provided the following information:

- The philosophy of the district is to hire the best fit for the position
- The Superintendent is charged with responsibility for all hiring
- Teacher hiring originates at the building level; however, the Superintendent interviews all candidates and has the final say over hiring
- Deb is not familiar with the details of the hiring process, i.e. makeup of hiring committees, use of written rubric, etc.

Deb stated that, due to several years of very tight budgets, the district is understaffed at present, including in the area of Human Resources. Therefore, it would be difficult to schedule their limited staff for a meeting on this issue. However, she did provide specific hiring data for FY 06-07, 07-08, and 08-09.

**Trumbull** – The committee members, joined by Board Chairman Steve Wright, met with Ralph Iassogna & Celeste Jardim. Comments from meeting:

- Trumbull’s philosophy is to hire the best fit for the position
- Trumbull strives for a blend of staff, in both hiring and current staff; we are currently in “retirement bubble” so experience level will be going down; teaching staff is much more transient than they used to be, both leaving and joining Trumbull from other nearby communities school districts. Trumbull hired 188 teachers in the past four years.

- Trumbull accepts a paper application only; applications are kept active for 12 months. Celeste makes copies of paper-screened applicant packets to give to principal(s) for consideration. All “promotional” vacancies must first be posted inside due to contact requirements. Interview committee for all applicants made up of administrators, staff and parents. Candidates sometimes asked to do samples lessons, but this is not done during the summer. Recommendations sent to Superintendent for final decision.
- Tenure System - 40 consecutive months results in tenure; if person hired already had tenure from another district, 20 consecutive months.

### **C. Findings Relevant to Purpose:**

1. Lisa Labella collated and reviewed hiring data for Trumbull, Fairfield, and Monroe. The data included number of positions hired at each step for each district for fiscal years 06-07, 07-08, and 08-09. A summary of findings is shown below.

	<b>Fairfield</b>	<b>Monroe</b>	<b>Trumbull</b>
<b>3-year average 5 years or less</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>69%</b>
% new teachers hired (of workforce), 3 years	27%	19%	36%
Students/teacher	13.0	15.6	15.0
Teachers/admin	16.9	15.3	18.8
Total student enrollment	9,494	4,364	6,921
# teachers	731.8	280.3	460.8
Administrators	43.4	15.4	24.5
% of teachers with Masters & above	90.7	79.8	86.0
Total teachers hired, 3 years	199	53	167
Total teachers hired with <= 5 years exp.	137	42	111

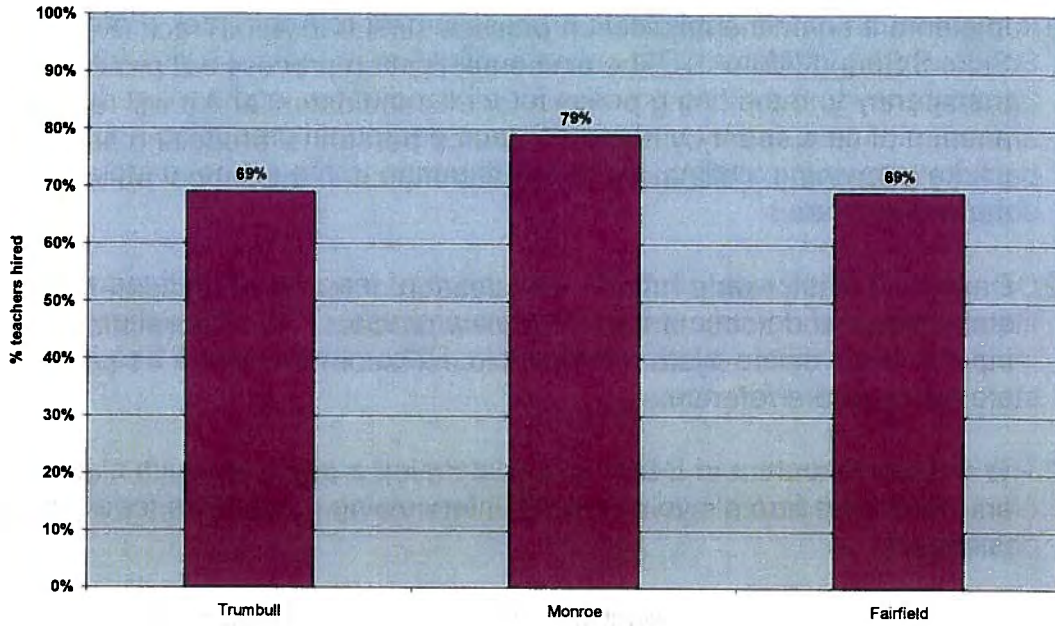
Sources: Strategic School Profiles, 2006-2007; and hiring data provided by Fairfield, Monroe, and Trumbull.

It should be noted that Trumbull’s hiring practices in two critical areas are consistent with other districts. First, all districts state as their goal hiring the person who is the best fit for the job. While that can often mean hiring at entry levels, it sometimes means hiring people with more experience or different, specialized background.

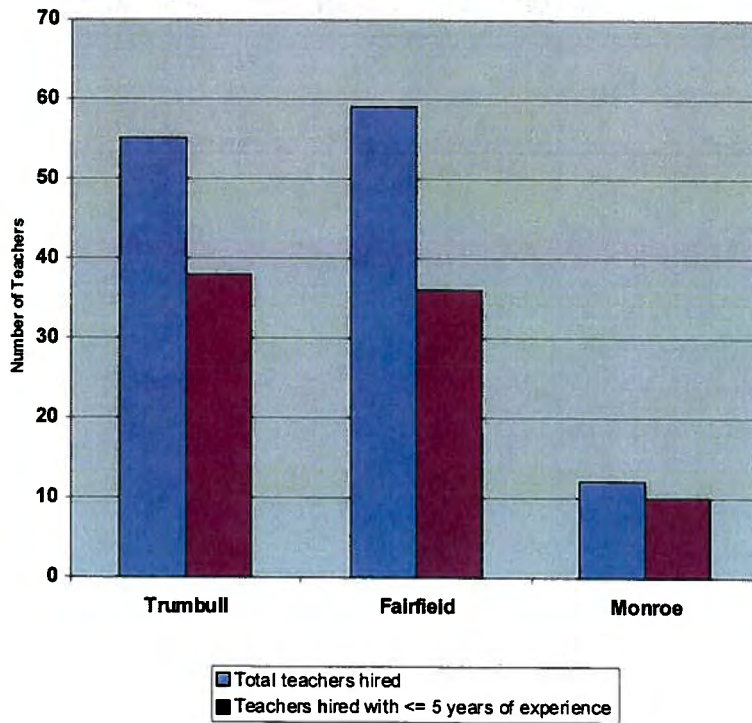
Second, the percentage of teachers at Trumbull with 5 years or less experience is consistent with that of Fairfield. While Monroe has a higher percentage of new teachers, Monroe’s total teacher workforce is significantly smaller than Trumbull’s. In addition, Trumbull has replaced over 1/3 of its work force in the last 3 years, vs. 27 percent in Fairfield and less than 20 percent in Monroe. Detailed data from the all three districts is attached.

2. Loretta Chory reviewed other Connecticut public school districts and found that the following schools currently accept online applications (Note: this is not a complete list): Fairfield, Farmington, Greenwich, Madison, Region 15, Simsbury, South Windsor, West Hartford, Stamford, Westport, Danbury, Norwalk, Milford, Hartford, Manchester, Mansfield, Middletown, New Britain, Region 10, Region 16, Torrington, Windsor Locks.

**% Teachers Hired with <= 5 years experience**  
**Fiscal years 06-07, 07-08, 08-09 (3-year average)**



**Fiscal Year 2006-2007**



## **D. Recommendations**

1. Implement an online application process similar to AppliTrack (Fairfield) or School Spring (Milford). The online application process will provide a transparency to the hiring process for all candidates, and it will reduce the amount of time spent by human resource personnel producing application packets (copying, collating, etc) for distribution to the school principals or department head.
2. Develop a district-wide rubric for evaluation of teacher candidates which will standardize and document the interview process. This information could also be input into the online system referred to in Recommendation #1 so it can be stored for future reference.
3. The Superintendent and Board should develop a practice which clarifies and articulates the board's involvement in interviewing candidates for administrative positions.
4. The 2007-2011 TEA contract will be corrected such that the final sentence in Article V, Section 4, paragraph 4.2, "In no case, however, will any Teacher be given credit for more than ten (10) years of service" will be crossed out and a note will be inserted referring the reader to the 08/19/2008 Memorandum of Agreement to strike it from the contract to correct a scrivener's error. The Memorandum of Agreement will be added to the end of the contract posted online. This will ensure that readers of the contract are clear on the hiring practices being followed when determining the step placement of newly hired teachers. In addition, the Board of Education Chairman will add his signature to that of the superintendent on the Memorandum of Agreement.



