



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
Office of Financial and Academic Affairs  
For Higher Education

**Contact: Connie Fraser**  
**860-947-1801 Office**  
**860-986-3508 Cell**  
**cfraser@ctdhe.org**

**For Immediate Release**

**More than 90 Career-Changing Professionals to Enter Teaching**  
***ARC Graduates in High Demand by Schools***

HARTFORD, August 10 — The State of Connecticut’s Alternate Route to Certification (ARC) summer program will graduate 93 new teachers at **1:00 pm. today (Wednesday, August 10)** at Conard High School’s Auditorium in West Hartford.

Thomas Moore, Assistant Superintendent for West Hartford Public Schools, and Maria Davoodi, ARC Director, will address the group, along with Leonard Cooke of **North Windham**, a member of the 2011 ARC class (Mathematics, Grades 7-12) and a former engineer and 15-year veteran with the United States Navy including service in Iraq as a Chief Staff Officer responsible for more than 2,000 military personnel. He is one of three veterans participating in this summer’s program.

ARC, which prepares career-changing adults to become teachers, is the sixth largest of the state’s 21 teacher preparation programs. From 2001-2009, ARC has consistently been Connecticut’s largest preparer of teachers in 5-12 mathematics (78%), physics (48%), biology and chemistry (75%), Spanish (33%), French (55%), German (60%), Latin (58%), and other languages, such as Chinese and Arabic (92%); K-6 world language instruction (92%); and, PreK-12 bilingual education (98%).

“This is a program that is truly beneficial to our students, giving them access to educators who will bring tremendous real- life experience into their classroom,” said Governor Dannel P. Malloy. “Outside of preparing kids to achieve academically, good teachers will instill a lifetime love of learning that will help prepare students to succeed in whatever field they may choose. As Connecticut works to narrow the achievement gap and provide a top quality education to every student, we are grateful for the teachers who put in long hours on behalf of their students. Congratulations to the ARC summer program graduates, and good luck to you this school year.”

Hiring rates show that ARC graduates are in high demand. Last year, 86 percent of ARC graduates were hired by Connecticut school districts with approximately 40-45 percent employed in high-need urban districts such as Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport and Waterbury. Retention rates are equally high, based on a survey of 2002-06 graduates which found that 86 percent are currently teaching, and 46 percent intend to continue teaching for at least 10 more years.

“At a time when urban districts and others are seeking talented teachers -- especially in shortage areas -- ARC is the primary source for classroom leaders who bring a wealth of academic credentials, skills and commitment to our schools,” stated Jane Ciarleglio, Executive Director for the Office of

Financial and Academic Affairs for Higher Education which now administers the ARC Program as a result of legislation eliminating the former Department of Higher Education. “With their strong academic and professional backgrounds, ARC teachers expose Connecticut students to a universe of real-world knowledge and hands-on experience. Further, the impressive hiring and retention rates of ARC teachers speak to the program’s ongoing success. ARC teachers are treasured assets to any school.”

In addition to the 93 ARC students graduating tomorrow, the ARC program graduated another 122 new teachers this past May. Combined, the 215 newest teachers include former engineers, researchers, scientists, business executives, medical professionals, and paraprofessionals, among others. All have worked with youth in various capacities, and are active community volunteers. The average age of this year’s class is 40; some 18 percent are from minority groups and 60 percent hold a master’s or doctoral degree.

Members of this year’s graduating classes are eligible to teach Arabic, art, biology, Chinese, chemistry, English, family and consumer sciences, French, general science, history, Italian, Latin, mathematics, music, physics, social studies, Spanish, and technology education. Most will teach at the middle and high school levels. (*See profiles of 15 ARC graduates below.*)

Since its first class graduated in 1988, ARC has produced more than 4,300 teachers. Since 2007, at least 35 have received prestigious honors, including District Teacher of the Year, Connecticut Teacher of the Year, and the national Presidential Excellence in Teaching for Mathematics and Science. ARC offers training twice a year: nine weeks of full-time study in the summer, and a part-time weekend program that runs from October to May.

More information about the ARC program can be found at [www.ctohe.org](http://www.ctohe.org) or by calling 800-842-0229 or 860-947-1300.

### **Profiles of Selected 2010-11 ARC Graduates**

**Erik Becker, of Madison**, will teach family and consumer sciences in **New London**. A former director of a local nature center, Becker is experienced in planning and implementing educational programs. He is a lacrosse and football coach, and a peer advocate and group leader for his local youth and family services organization.

**Michael Burnett, of Danbury**, will teach English in **Danbury**. He is a licensed acupuncturist **with his own practice**, and an Artistic Director and President of a local arts theater. He is fluent in American Sign Language, and works as an interpreter with his local school system.

**Charles Estabrooks, of Pawcatuck**, will teach technology and engineering education in **Ledyard**. Estabrooks previously held positions as a Senior Engineer in Software Development and Manager of Information Technology. His background includes photography, digital imaging, web and digital audio design, and CAD.

**Edward Freitag, of Vernon**, will be a teacher of Chinese in **Glastonbury**. He was an English Department Manager for a company in Hang Zhou, China. He also was the co-owner, manager and head instructor of Shaolin Wushu Center II in Enfield, where he taught Chinese Wushu Kung Fu to students of all ages, including children with special needs.

**Laila Falkenberg, of Enfield**, will teach middle school mathematics in **Hartford**. She recently worked as an Operations Manager for a local technology firm, and has experience in sales and marketing. Falkenberg was a college-level basketball coach, and served as a peer mentor for minority and international community college students.

**Maria Gilmore, of Redding**, will teach Spanish in **Redding**. Her prior career was in business development and management in the architectural industry. She has studied in Mexico and Spain, and is a volleyball coach with her local Boys and Girls Club. In college, she was the captain of her volleyball team and led her team to a national championship in 2000.

**Sybil Wynne Jones, of Southbury**, will teach English in **Waterbury**. Ms. Jones has experience in media relations, and has held various positions including anchor and on-air reporter with various news networks affiliated with ABC, CBS, NBC and United Cable.

**Sandra Milardo, of Higganum**, will teach mathematics in **Durham**. Milardo has 22 years of experience in accounting and insurance, and has worked with several corporations in the Hartford area. She manages her local youth travel soccer team, and is a school volunteer.

**Gregory Miska, of Manchester**, will teach science in **Hartford**. Mr. Miska has an extensive science background and more than five years of teaching experience in nonpublic schools. He is a tutor with Kaplan Test Preparation, and is also a football coach.

**Dennis Moynihan, of West Hartford**, will teach history and social studies in **Hartford**. Prior to ARC, Moynihan was an assistant football coach and recruiting coordinator for a university in Indiana, and also served as a defensive coordinator and assistant defensive backs coach for universities in the New England area.

**Dorothea Panayotou, Ph.D, of New Fairfield**, will teach science in **Newtown**. A former biologist and scientist, Dr. Panayotou has held various positions in industry and academia. She also spends time volunteering with several organizations, including the Special Olympics and National Sports Center for the Disabled.

**Kenneth Rescsanski, of Southington**, will teach music in **South Windsor**. A musician, he has extensive experience in retail management and music instruction specializing in bass. He has performed with various symphony orchestras in Connecticut.

**Michael Roy, of West Hartford**, will teach Latin in **Litchfield**. An attorney and managing partner with a local law firm, Roy has eight years of nonpublic teaching experience. He also spent some time writing a weekly column about major league baseball analysis for publications including USA Today, USA Today Sports Weekly, and Baseball Forecaster.

**Chandan Sarkar, of Stamford**, will teach mathematics in **Stamford**. A holder of three patents in telecommunications, Sarkar recently stepped down as the CEO of a management firm to pursue a teaching career in mathematics. He was recently featured in The Wall Street Journal as a top telecommunications analyst with a visible global reputation. He is a part-time karate instructor, and holds degrees in Information Technology, Electrical Engineering and Computer Engineering.

**Abir Zenait, of West Haven**, teaches Arabic in **New Haven**. Before moving to the United States, Zenait lived and taught in Egypt. She volunteers with schools and organizations in the New Haven region, and has taught Arabic as an adjunct instructor with the state community college system.

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