



## **AACTE-CT Statement to the State Board of Education Meeting on 12-2-20**

Good morning everyone and thank you for the opportunity to provide some comments to the State Board of Education at your December 2<sup>nd</sup> Board Meeting.

My name is Isaac Gottesman and I am the current Vice President of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE-CT). I am also the Chair of the Department of Education at the University of Saint Joseph in West Hartford. The AACTE-CT is an association of fourteen public and private colleges and universities that provide Educator Preparation Programs to students interested in the education profession. We promote and strongly support high quality teaching and education in the state's schools and are advocates for robust educational leadership.

On behalf of the AACTE-CT, thank you to the Board of Education, Commissioner Cardona, and the Department of Education, especially to those individuals who many of us from AACTE-CT work with on a regular basis.

With the second wave of COVID-19 now here, we recognize the Department and school districts continue to face a myriad of challenges, including trying to address educational inequities that have only been exacerbated by this health crisis. We are all grappling with how best to continue to educate our students whether it is in-person, online, or a combination of both. We applaud your leadership and efforts, and we want to continue to be a partner in your efforts to fill these educational gaps wherever it is appropriate. One concern we wanted to raise, however, is that as we move quickly to address teacher and staffing shortages in our schools, we need to be sure that individuals are qualified, possess the proper skills, and reflect the diversity of the students in the classrooms. We realize that during this unprecedented crisis there are no perfect solutions or simple answers, and we need to be flexible in tackling these challenges. We only want to raise a note of caution as we accelerate the process of moving future educators into our classrooms. We know you have the same goals and are doing everything you can to ensure quality teachers in our schools.

As my AACTE-CT Chapter colleagues have said previously, we look forward to continuing our work together with the Department of Education, the Board, and the various educational stakeholders such as the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents, the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, and other education organizations. Please continue to feel free to reach out to our association on issues of mutual interest. We stand ready to help. Thank you again for the opportunity to address the Board.

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