



AACTE-CT Statement to the State Board of Education Meeting on 1-13-21

Good morning everyone and thank you for the opportunity to provide some comments to the State Board of Education at your January 13th Board Meeting.

My name is Catherine O’Callaghan and I am the current Secretary of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE-CT). I am also the Chair of the Education and Educational Psychology Department at Western Connecticut State University in Danbury. 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, I want to thank the Board of Education, Commissioner Cardona, and the Department of Education, especially to those individuals with whom the AACTE-CT works with frequently.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic initially struck Connecticut, we have all been hard at work at each of our respective institutions of higher education to try to determine the best paths forward for our teacher preparation programs and related functions. Our approach continues to be not only to deal with COVID-19 and its negative impacts but also how to positively transform our programs for our students, student teachers, teachers, professors, and educational leaders moving forward. I want to point out that many of the same people who are part of the AACTE-CT are also involved with a task force, “The Connecticut Higher Education Resilience Working Group on k-12” that is supported by the state of Connecticut, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region 1, and the Global Resilience Institute at Northeastern University. We are committed to helping transform our programs for the future in recognition of the many changes generated by this pandemic.

I want to echo my previous AACTE-CT Chapter colleagues’ statements to the State Board of Education that we want to continue working 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. Thank you again for the opportunity to address the Board.

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