

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

MAY 13, 2020

E-MAILS SUBMITTED

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

	NAME	Topic to be discussed
1.	Georgia Young-Peart Reading Interventionist, Metacomet	Relay's M.A.T. Program
2.	Jevon Williams	Relay CT Masters of Arts in Teaching Program
3.	Kara DelGuidice	Relay's M.A.T. Program
4.	Cecilia Illescas	Relay's M.A.T. Program
5.	Dr. Tonya M. Claiborne	Relay's Masters of Arts
6.	Desiree Napoleon	Relay's M.A.T. Program
7.	Janet Brown-Clayton Executive Director, Highville Charter School, Highville Change Academy (e-mail submission by Carla Silva-Muhammad)	Relay's M.A.T. Program
8.	Samantha Remillard	Relay's M.A.T. Program
9.	Valerie Moses	Relay's M.A.T. Program
10.	Lynn S. Moorhouse	Relay's M.A.T. Program
11.	Santa Regina Mercedez ELL Interventionist Woodrow Wilson Middle School ELL Tutor Middletown High School	Relay's M.A.T. Program

12.	Christina Philidor	Relay's M.A.T. Program
13.	Brianna D'Alessio STEAM Teacher Smith Elementary School New Britain, CT.	Relay's M.A.T. Program
14.	Kristin DeGray Math Tutor, North Windham School Relay/GSE Teacher in Residence	Relay's M.A.T. Program
15.	Gala D. Joubert Resident in Teaching- 5 th grade Tracey Magnet School Norwalk, CT	Relay's M.A.T. Program
16.	Dr. Mayme Hostetter President Relay Graduate School of Education	Relay's M.A.T. Program
17.	Maurissa Brady 7th Grade Mathematics Teacher McDonough Middle School Hartford, CT	Relay's M.A.T. Program
18.	Lauren Bruno	Relay's M.A.T. Program
19.	Traci Camacho Paraprofessional Hamilton Avenue School	Relay's M.A.T. Program
20.	Shauntee Duzant Paraprofessional Harbor Elementary School New London, CT	Relay's M.A.T. Program
21.	Shirley R. Castro John S. Martinez Sea and Sky STEM Magnet School	Relay's M.A.T. Program
22.	Alejandra Corona Ortega	Relay's M.A.T. Program

23.	Lygia Davenport Substitute Teacher Brennan-Rogers School New Haven, CT	Relay's M.A.T. Program
24.	Robert M. Goodrich R.A.C.C.E. Radical Advocates for Cross-Cultural Education	Relay's M.A.T. Program
25.	Daniel Luciano 7th grade English teacher Great Oaks Charter School Bridgeport, CT	Relay's M.A.T. Program
26.	Kelli Thomas Pre School Teacher Discovery Learning Montessori School Windsor, CT	Relay's M.A.T. Program
27.	Benedicte Kalala 7th Grade History Teacher in Resident (TIR) Amistad Academy Middle School	Relay's M.A.T. Program
28.	Reba Stanley Kindergarten Teacher Achievement First Hartford Elementary Academy	Relay's M.A.T. Program
29.	Antoinette M. White Assistant Teacher Amistad Academy in New Haven at Achievement First	Relay's M.A.T. Program
30.	Joselyn M. Acosta-Torres Math Tutor at North Windham School Windham Public School district	Relay's M.A.T. Program
31.	Cheryl A. Johnson Relay Culturally Responsive Teaching Mindset Award winner 2018-2019 Breakthrough Magnet School- South Paraeducator of the Year 2021 Hartford District Paraeducator of the Year 2021	Relay's M.A.T. Program
32.	Gwen E. Samuel President and Founder Connecticut Parents Union	Relay's M.A.T. Program

33.	Andrew Martell Student Management Aerospace and Engineering 6-12 Middle/High School	Relay's M.A.T. Program
34.	Mabel Soto ESL paraprofessional at Cos Cob School at Greenwich Public Schools	Relay's M.A.T. Program
35.	Shamari Weaver Adult Support Paraeducator Hartford Public High School	Relay's M.A.T. Program
36.	Subira Gordon Executive Director of ConnCAN (Submitted by Hamish MacPhail)	Relay's M.A.T. Program
37.	Andréa Comer Executive Director Educators for Excellence	Relay's M.A.T. Program
38.	Jenée Valerie Jefferson 4 th Grade Teacher Chamberlain Elementary School New Britain, CT	Relay's M.A.T. Program

Dewar, Aldith

From: Georgia Young-Peart <gyoung-peart@blmfld.org>
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020 5:53 PM
To: StateBoard, SDE

Good Day members of the Board,

My name is Georgia Young-Peart and I am currently a Reading Interventionist at Metacomet Elementary in Bloomfield.

I have been a Tutor for over ten years. I love my students and my community, but know that I can do even more once I become a certified teacher.

Fortunately, Bloomfield School District supported my dreams when they decided to select me to enroll at the Relay Connecticut Alternate Route to Certification Program this school year. I have been working hard to successfully complete the Relay program. With their preparation, I am working towards passing all my certification exams to receive certification in Elementary Education.

Relay Connecticut's program will allow me to become a certified Elementary teacher in the state. If Relay is allowed to offer a Masters of Art in Teaching, I would not hesitate to also pursue the M.A.T. through their program. A master's degree is essential for me to reach the highest level of licensure in the future. I strongly urge you to approve Relay's M.A.T. program here in Connecticut so that my peers can do the same.

Best regards,

Georgia Young-Peart

Reading Interventionist, Metacomet

860-286-2660 Ext 181

gyoung-peart@blmfld.org

The information in this email is confidential. The contents may not be disclosed or used by anyone other than the intended recipient. If you are not the intended recipient, please delete the message and notify the sender immediately.

Dewar, Aldith

From: Jevon Williams <jevonrw@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020 6:13 PM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: Support for Relay CT Masters of Arts in Teaching
Attachments: Jevon Williams - Teacher letter.pdf

Attached is my letter of support for Relay CT Masters of Arts in Teaching program.

Sincerely,

Jevon Williams



Dr. Miguel A. Cardona
Commissioner
Connecticut State Department of Education
165 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Relay Connecticut –Application Support for Relay’s Master of Arts in Teaching

Dear Dr. Cardona and members of the Board,

My name is Jevon Williams. I am a proud 5th grade Relay teacher at Franklin H. Mayberry Elementary School in East Hartford. I am testifying today in support of Relay Connecticut earning the status of an Institution of Higher Education in our state.

(Bell rings) “Math time”, the teacher says. I looked into my student’s eyes and saw fear takeover. I watched as their bodies became paralyzed with terror, the terror of staring hopelessly at work they didn’t understand. I was familiar with this scene. The constant hesitation towards the academic process because of an achievement gap that engulfed our community, like a California wildfire. I grew up in this community. I understood what my students were going through on a daily basis, but I still believed in them. Why couldn’t they believe in themselves? That’s when I knew I wanted to become a certified teacher. It wasn’t just about building their academic skill - it was about instilling a belief in themselves that others saw. There was just one problem; I didn’t know how to become a certified teacher.

Like too many of my students, I felt lost and hopeless. I didn’t have the money to afford a master’s degree from a prestigious university and I couldn’t just put my life on hold to fit a university’s class schedule. That’s when I found Relay. Relay made it affordable and flexible for the working adult. Their partnership with schools in various districts allowed for many colleagues to complete the program without having to quit their jobs. Relay made it possible for any adult with passion and desire to become a certified teacher.

Relay talked about how rigorous the program was. I didn’t believe it until I started. From learning various teaching techniques, to filming our live teaching practice every week and receiving feedback constantly, it was tough. Looking back, I wouldn’t have wanted it any other way. One of the biggest takeaways from Relay was the economy of language. We taught everyday, but I never realized how many extra words were in my instruction. This was an important technique that helped students understand what was expected of them. Less confusing directions created more time for academic guidance, and ultimately more time for students to spend engaged with their work and each other.

Hearing feedback and reflecting on our practice are two of the most important, yet hardest aspects of teaching. Relay taught me that feedback is just another opportunity to grow. I can’t count how many times colleagues were nervous for their professional observations. For me, it was another opportunity for someone to help me to improve my instruction - a fact that my advisors drove home during every coaching opportunity. Professional observations paled in comparison to teaching in front of a camera



and fifteen other adults every week. Because of Relay, I crave feedback and that is something I am working on with my students. We make mistakes all the time. It is what we learn and how we move forward that makes us stronger.

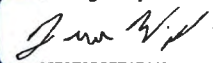
In addition to all the resources Relay produced, they also provided free Praxis support. Relay had free weekly tutoring sessions and study groups that helped me pass each test on the first attempt. Without Relay's Praxis preparation, I would have lost out on an interview opportunity.

Relay prepared me to compete for a job in my community. In my final interview with the Superintendent I was asked, "How did you do it? How did you beat out all these other candidates from these prestigious master's programs?" My response was simple, "Relay". I wouldn't be the teacher I am today, or a teacher at all, if it wasn't for Relay. When everyone else closed their doors, Relay took me by the hand and welcomed me in. Relay gave me the opportunity to instill belief in myself and my kids.

Relay Connecticut's program allowed me to become a certified 5th grade teacher. Relay allowed me to stay in Connecticut and teach in the community where I grew up. However, this is not the finish line for me and for many of my colleagues. I am aware of how, as a teacher, I must successfully obtain a Master of Arts in Teaching degree in the near future and would not hesitate to pursue a M.A.T. through Relay if given a chance. I strongly urge you to approve Relay's Institution of Higher Education status request and Master of Art in Teaching program here in Connecticut, so that others can do the same.

Thank you for your consideration.

With Warmest Regards,

DocuSigned by:

25F2E25C7E1F446...
Jevon Williams

5/4/2020

Dewar, Aldith

From: Kara Delguidice <karadel141@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020 7:09 PM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: re: Relay Masters of Arts in teaching

Good Evening State Board of Education Members,

My name is Kara DelGuidice and I am currently a para educator at Grove J. Tuttle Elementary School in East Haven. I grew up in the Town of East Haven, and Grove J. Tuttle Elementary is where all three of my children attended elementary school.

I have been a para educator for fifteen (15). I love my students and my community, but know that I can do even more once I become a certified teacher. I always knew that I wanted to become a teacher, however life took me down a different path. I married and had three children and had to put my journey on hold. Now that my children are grown, I knew it was time for me to pursue my dream of becoming an elementary school teacher. Relay has made my dream become a reality.

Fortunately, the East Haven school district supported my dreams when they decided to select me to enroll at the Relay Connecticut Alternate Route to Certification Program this school year. I have been working hard to successfully complete the Relay program. With their preparation, I am working towards passing all my certification exams to receive certification in elementary education.

Relay Connecticut's program will allow me to become a certified elementary education teacher in the state. If Relay is allowed to offer a Masters of Art in Teaching, I would not hesitate to also pursue the M.A.T. through their program. A master's degree is essential for me to reach the highest level of licensure in the future. I strongly urge you to approve Relay's M.A.T. program here in Connecticut so that my peers can do the same.

Best regards,

Kara DelGuidice

Dewar, Aldith

From: Cecilia Illescas <cecilia_illescas@greenwich.k12.ct.us>
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020 7:10 PM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: Relay's Masters of Arts in Teaching

Good afternoon members of the Board,

My name is Cecilia Illescas, and I am currently a Professional Assistant at Hamilton Avenue School, Greenwich Public School. I am a teacher of color and speak multiple languages- English and Spanish. I have been a Professional Assistant for 5 years. I love my students and my community, but know that I can do even more once I become a certified teacher.

Fortunately, my district supported my dreams when they decided to select me to enroll at the Relay Connecticut Alternate Route to Certification Program this school year. I have been working hard to successfully complete the Relay program. With their preparation, I am working towards passing all my certification exams to receive certification in Elementary Education.

Relay Connecticut's program will allow me to become a certified Elementary Education teacher in the state. If Relay is allowed to offer a Masters of Art in Teaching, I would not hesitate to also pursue the M.A.T. through their program. A master's degree is essential for me to reach the highest level of licensure in the future. I strongly urge you to approve Relay's M.A.T. program here in Connecticut so that my peers can do the same.

Sincerely,

Cecilia Illescas

Dewar, Aldith

From: Tonya Claiborne <tclaiborne@relay.edu>
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020 7:25 PM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: Support for Relay CT_ M.A.T

Good evening, members of the Board-

My name is **Dr. Tonya M. Claiborne**, and I currently serve as an Assistant Professor of Practice and Hartford County lead instructor for Relay.

I have served in education for over 15 years, and throughout my career I have observed the lack of diversity in public and private schools. As a Black woman who lives in Hartford County, with two sons in the public school system, I personally understand the importance of having educators that reflect the diversity of our student body.

For the past two years I have had the opportunity to teach and support a diverse group of aspiring educators seeking to teach in their communities. As a founding member of Black Leaders and Administrators Consortium, Inc. (BLAC, Inc.), I am very proud when I attend our board meetings and principals and administrators across Connecticut rave about their current or former Relay Residents. Our attention to recruit aspiring educators of color has helped schools across Connecticut increase the diversity of their teaching staff. I am honored to know that the educator preparation program I choose to serve, is contributing to increasing culturally responsive educators to teach our kids, and is truly grounded in our communities.

To continue to serve aspiring teachers across Connecticut, means to support Relay in aligning our certification program to our master's degree program offered across the country. A Masters of Arts degree in teaching will allow educators, who otherwise may not have the opportunity, to grow in their craft and ultimately obtain professional certification. I urge you to support the work that my colleagues and I are doing in service of our Connecticut educators.

Warmly,

Dr. Tonya M. Claiborne
Assistant Professor of Practice
Relay Graduate School of Education
Connecticut Campus-Hartford County Region
tclaiborne@relay.edu
Cell: 413-355-2468 | Office: 203-680-0571

Check us out online @ [Relay Connecticut](#)
Sign up for office hours: <https://calendly.com/tclaiborne/office-hours>

Dewar, Aldith

From: Desiree Napoleon <dnapoleonbsw@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020 7:34 PM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: Relay CT M.A.T.

Good evening,

My name is Desiree Napoleon and I am currently a paraeducator at Global Communications Academy in Hartford, CT.

Last year, I participated in the Relay Connecticut program, and am currently six points away on the CT Foundations of Reading exam from earning my elementary certification as an educator in the state of Connecticut.

What Relay Connecticut has done for me is provide me with the vision of my certification laid before me. I love my students and I love what I do but this program has given me renewed confidence in my ability to serve Hartford youth and communities in an even greater capacity.

I have passed all but one exam (I need just six points now) and look forward to holding a permanent certification come the 20-21 school term; something I was unable to do in any other ARC program.

Should Relay be allowed to offer a Masters of Art in Teaching, I would not hesitate to pursue the M.A.T. through their program. I strongly urge you to approve Relay's M.A.T. program here in Connecticut so that others can do the same.

Thank you,

Desiree Napoleon

Dewar, Aldith

From: Carla Silva-Muhammad <csilva-muhammad@relay.edu>
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020 7:57 PM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: Letter of Support for Relay
Attachments: Janet Brown Clayton - Leader letter.pdf

Dear members of the Board,

Please find it attached in this email a letter submitted by Mrs. Brown-Clayton, executive director of Highville Charter School and Highville Change Academy, in support of Relay Connecticut.

Best regards,
Carla

Carla Silva-Muhammad
Director of Strategy & Operations
Relay Connecticut
(203) 680-8861

relay.edu

RELAY/GSE

[Sign here](#) to schedule a 15 min appointment.



Highville Charter School · Highville Change Academy

One Science Park · New Haven, Connecticut 06511
Telephone 203.287.0528 · Fax 203.497.9899 · www.highvillecharter.com

Janet Brown-Clayton
Executive Director

Dear members of the Board,

My name is Janet Brown-Clayton, and I currently serve as the Executive Director for Highville Charter School and Highville Change Academy. I am testifying today in support of Relay Connecticut expanding their certification licensure program to align with a master's degree program.

In both my current role at Highville Charter School and Change Academy. In my previous role as principal of Lincoln-Bassett Community School, I have collaborated with Relay for a total of 7 years. In both roles my students have been the beneficiaries of the Relay's well-prepared teachers – our partnership with Relay was one of our many initiatives to grow our own culturally responsive and diverse teaching workforce. I have worked with Relay as both program partner and neighbor - prior to moving to their current space Relay Connecticut partnered with us by utilizing our building for the past three years.

Relay Connecticut has not only proven that they can prepare highly effective classroom teachers, but has also proven dedicated to the work of diversifying our teacher workforce. I've attached alumni testimonials to this letter, as a statement of the knowledge they've acquired from Relay Connecticut. We must act with urgency to continue diversifying and retaining our teaching force. To date, 80% of the Relay graduates I've hired or worked with have been retained by their hiring district. Relay Connecticut's high-quality programs and approach benefit the state of Connecticut, our public schools, and particularly our urban charter schools, which enroll high percentages of students of color.

Relay's ability to confer a Master of Arts in Teaching will give Relay graduates a clear pathway to professional certification in Connecticut. These master's degrees will improve retention in the field for Relay's graduates, leading to a growing cadre of culturally-responsive educators and educators of color over the long-term who choose to remain in Connecticut's public schools.

I strongly urge the board to approve Relay Connecticut's proposal to expand their certification licensure program to align with a master's degree program in the great state of Connecticut. In continuing to gain access to high-quality teacher training, this will allow my district increased opportunity to retain its teachers, who will be supported in pursuing a Masters of Art in Teaching through Relay.

For all of these reasons, and on behalf of the students and families of Highville Charter School and Highville Change Academy, I strongly urge the board to approve Relay Connecticut's proposal as an institution of higher education in the state of Connecticut.

Thank you for your consideration.

With Warmest Regards,

Attachment 1: Relay Alumni testimonials from Highville teachers

Wooly Pierre:

I can personally say that Relay has given me the teaching tools to ensure all of my kids are successful. I have been able to reach a majority of my kids with what I have learned from my experiences in the classroom. With that said, what I have learned while in Relay has helped me to not only affect the majority of my kids but all of them. Whether it be through parent contact, positive notes to students or allowing the data to drive all of my instruction. All of the pedagogical practices have made my teaching more effective and has led to student growth and I am looking forward to seeing the growth and achievement this year particularly with the 7th-grade cohort.

Zack Sirowich:

Relay Connecticut provides educators with the necessary tools to be great in the classroom and in the professional educational community. One of the most valuable parts of the program is the practicality and direct application it has towards the classroom. The coursework and instruction from the Relay professors is directly applicable to the classroom giving educators the utmost potential for success. Coming from a background in science, Relay has given me the foundational tools and skills to develop in my science oriented pedagogy allowing for professional growth and opportunity as an educator.

I personally have benefitted the most from Relay's direct and immediate feedback approach to improve myself as an educator. The 1 on 1 constructive feedback I have received from my professors is always applicable to the classroom and my professional development molding me into an always improving educator.

Feedback comes in various forms throughout the program and that is what is so unique about the programs dynamic. In addition to being visible in the classroom and providing feedback, Relay professors review video recordings of their teachers and provide feedback digitally giving optimal opportunity for continuous professional growth. The distinctive approach to consistent personalized feedback makes the Relay program second to none.

Camille Fulcher:

In July 2018, I started my Relay GSE journey. My experience was amazing! As I started the course work I was met with thoughtful planning, and innovative curriculum from a group of seasoned educators. Our opening ceremony was a week full of engaging peer discussions. We performed tasks that would support our future expectations. Throughout the Core sessions and our deliberate practice, our cohort developed a bond centered around becoming great educators. As my year progressed, I completed assignments that I have and continued to use in my classroom daily. The Relay GSE educators, staff and organization have created a program that has produced knowledgeable, diverse, and thoughtful educators.

Dewar, Aldith

From: Samantha Remillard <srem1115@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020 8:05 PM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: Relay M.A.T. Program

Dear members of the Board,

My name is **Samantha Remillard** and I am currently an applied behavior analysis assistant, or ABAA, at Wintonbury Early Childhood Magnet School which is a part of the Bloomfield Public School district. Connecticut is my home and it is where my heart is. I've been privileged to live in Bloomfield with my aunt since she adopted me. I love my community and I am so proud to live and work in Bloomfield. I have been an ABAA in Bloomfield for five years. I love my students and my community, but know that I can do even more once I become a certified teacher. My dream is to be a certified teacher in Bloomfield where I can be a valuable asset to the community.

Fortunately, my district supported my dreams when they decided to select me to enroll at the Relay Connecticut Alternate Route to Certification Program this school year. I have been working hard to successfully complete the Relay program. With their preparation, I have successfully passed all my certification exams to receive certification in elementary education.

Relay Connecticut's program will allow me to become a certified elementary education teacher in the state. Relay is an incredible program and I am very lucky to be a part of it. If Relay is allowed to offer a Masters of Art in Teaching, I would not hesitate to also pursue the M.A.T. through their program. A master's degree is essential for me to reach the highest level of licensure in the future. I strongly urge you to approve Relay's M.A.T. program here in Connecticut so that my peers and I can do the same. Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

Samantha Remillard
ABAA and excited future teacher

Dewar, Aldith

From: Moses, Valerie <Valerie.Moses@hartfordschools.org>
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020 8:09 PM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: Masters of Art in Teaching - Relay Connecticut ARC program

Good evening members of the Board,

My name is Valerie Moses, and I am currently a Math Teacher at Bulkeley High School in the Hartford Public Schools District.

I have been a Math Teacher for one year. I love my students and my community, but know that I can do even more once I become a certified teacher.

Fortunately, my district supported my dreams when they decided to select me to enroll at the Relay Connecticut Alternate Route to Certification Program this school year. I have been working hard to successfully complete the Relay program. With their preparation, I am working towards passing all my certification exams to receive certification in secondary mathematics.

Relay Connecticut's program will allow me to become a certified secondary Math teacher in the state. If Relay is allowed to offer a Masters of Art in Teaching, I would not hesitate to also pursue the M.A.T. through their program. A master's degree is essential for me to reach the highest level of licensure in the future. I strongly urge you to approve Relay's M.A.T. program here in Connecticut so that my peers can do the same.
Best regards,

Valerie Moses
Mathematics Teacher
Bulkeley High School
mosev001@hartfordschools.org
(860) 695-1174

"Nothing will work, unless you do." - Maya Angelou

Dewar, Aldith

From: Lynn Moorhouse <lynnsmoorhouse@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020 9:02 PM
To: StateBoard, SDE

Good morning members of the Board,

My name is Lynn S. Moorhouse and I am currently a 7th grade math teacher at Milner Middle School. Last year I was staff long term sub at Pathways to Technology and Design. I loved my students, and worked as hard as I could every day, but knew that I could do even more if I was a certified teacher.

Fortunately, Relay Connecticut provided me with a path to certification that worked for me. I successfully completed Relay's program: with their preparation, I successfully passed all my certification exams, and have had started the paperwork for permanent certification in Elementary Education as the pandemic took us out of the school year.

Relay Connecticut's program will allow me to become a certified Elementary Education teacher with an opportunity to dual certify in math once this has social distancing has passed and testing is allowed. If Relay is allowed to offer a Masters of Art in Teaching, I would not hesitate to encourage others and potentially consider the M.A.T. through their program. I strongly urge you to approve Relay's M.A.T. program here in Connecticut so that others can do the same.

Best regards,

Lynn S. Moorhouse

Dewar, Aldith

From: Mercedez, Regina <mercedezr@mpsct.org>
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020 9:25 PM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: Relay GSE _ M A T

Dear Sirs:

My name is Santa Regina Mercedez, and I am currently enrolled as a student in the Relay Graduate School of Education. An immigrant, I grew up in New York City and moved to Connecticut as an adult. Although I have had a desire to teach from early on, I was unable to find an affordable path to teaching. I worked in various fields, including the non-profit legal field and at the American Civil Liberties Union. There I worked to address and solve the needs of a population that was primarily Black and Brown, and underserved.

After I had children, I focused my energies on their schooling and education, and began working as a substitute teacher. While substituting in various schools, I realized that many of the issues addressed by non-profit law firms could be better addressed and solved by education, before they became legal problems. Once my children left for college, I earned some needed credits at the community college to qualify for a teaching certification program. Middletown Public Schools, where I am currently working as an English Language Learners interventionist and tutor, has granted me a scholarship to finance my Relay Connecticut Alternate Route to Certification Program schooling, for which I am very thankful.

For the past year, I have worked diligently to pass my certification exams and to become a certified Middle School English Language Arts teacher. Once I receive my teaching certification, I would not hesitate to enroll in Relay's Masters of Arts in Teaching program, to get a Master's degree, which is an essential tool to remain a teacher in the State of Connecticut.

I write to urge you to grant approval of the Relay M.A.T. application as they are an intensely and increasingly effective school that is culturally responsive to its student body and to the communities we, as teachers, serve. Now more than ever this is the kind of education we need

Regina Mercedez (She, Her)
ELL Interventionist
Woodrow Wilson Middle School
ELL Tutor
Middletown High School

Dewar, Aldith

From: CHRISTINA PHILIDOR <christina.philidor@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020 9:26 PM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: Relay - M.A.T.

Good evening members of the Board,

My name is Christina Philidor and I am currently a teacher at Fred E. Wish Elementary in Hartford, CT.

1 year ago I was a paraprofessional at Gaffney Elementary School. I loved my students and worked as hard as I could every day, but knew that I could do even more if I was a certified teacher.

Fortunately, Relay Connecticut provided me with a path to certification that worked for me. I successfully completed Relay's program: with their preparation,

If Relay is allowed to offer a Masters of Art in Teaching, I would not hesitate to pursue the M.A.T. through their program. I strongly urge you to approve Relay's M.A.T. program here in Connecticut so that others can do the same.

Best regards,

Christina Philidor

Dewar, Aldith

From: Brianna D'Alessio <b.dalessio24@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020 9:51 PM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: In support of Relay's M.A.T approval
Attachments: Letter of Support_Relay M.A.T.pdf

Good Evening,

Please see the attached statement addressed to the Board of Ed., to be read at the Wednesday, May 13th meeting in support of Relay's approval for the Masters of Arts in Teaching program.

Thank you kindly,

Brianna D'Alessio
Relay Resident in Teaching
Elementary Educator
Hartford County, CT

37 Gillette Street
West Hartford, CT 06119
321.693.3790

May 11th, 2020

Connecticut State Dept.of Education
450 Columbus Blvd
Hartford, CT 06103

Good Morning Members of the Board and Community,

My name is Brianna D'Alessio and I am a STEAM Teacher at Smith Elementary School in New Britain, CT. I have worked as an educator in the district for the past three years and am currently completing my Connecticut teaching certificate through the Relay program.

I am working to become a certified teacher so that I may better serve our youth and community by aiding students in realizing their power and potential through education. I was extremely grateful to be chosen by my district to participate in Relay Connecticut's Alternative Route to Certification Program and could not have imagined a more supportive, engaging learning environment or more thorough student teaching experience.

Relay embodies everything that it means to educate effectively and meaningfully. Their staff is diverse in experience, vast in knowledge and driven in their commitment to student learning and development. The impact this program has had on both my education and professional career far surpasses that of any credit bearing course I took in my undergraduate degree studies.

Earning a Master of Arts in Teaching degree from Relay would mean a great deal to me for a multitude of reasons, including consistency, affordability, accessibility and credibility among others; but none more than that I can be certain of my preparedness and ultimate success as an educator as a result of the quality education they provide.

It is with the utmost respect that I urge you to approve Relay as an accredited program for Masters in Teaching. Doing so would serve to prepare many more educators in the state of Connecticut in fulfilling the highest level of licensure, thus delivering our students the highest quality education possible.

Best Regards,

Brianna D'Alessio
Relay Resident in Teaching
Elementary Educator
Hartford County, CT

Dewar, Aldith

From: DeGray, Kristin P. <kDeGray@windham.k12.ct.us>
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020 9:53 PM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: RELAY M.A.T. - Please approve!

Good morning members of the Board,

My name is Kristin DeGray, and I am currently a Math Tutor with Windham Public Schools.

I've been a Math Tutor for 5 years in Windham, and have also taught Pre-K elsewhere in Connecticut and secondary English in Massachusetts. I love my students and the Windham/Willimantic community; in fact, I live here. I applied for a position with Windham Public Schools after volunteering in my own children's elementary classrooms and observing the wonderful things happening there. Windham has a high poverty rate and high percentage of English Language Learners, and is not often recognized for the incredible resilience and achievements of its students and their families. It has been my ultimate dream for the last 6 years to become a certified teacher in Windham so that I can better serve my community, but also represent and share its success to the outside world. I didn't know how I would get there, financially or logistically, but I knew just getting into the school system as a tutor was a start.

Fortunately, Windham Public Schools supported my dreams when they decided to select me to enroll at the Relay Connecticut Alternate Route to Certification Program this school year. I can't tell you the happiness I felt upon being admitted to this program. I have been working hard to successfully complete the Relay program. With their preparation, I am working towards passing all my certification exams to receive certification in Elementary 1-6. You should also know that another tutor in Windham Public Schools went through the Relay program last year and is now teaching in our one-way dual language program, Dos Ríos. I've heard from several people that he has been asked to share some of his instructional techniques and lesson planning strategies with others in his building. Relay's program is a successful one!

Relay Connecticut's program will allow me to become a certified Elementary teacher in the state. If Relay is allowed to offer a Masters of Art in Teaching, I would not hesitate to also pursue the M.A.T. through their program. A master's degree is essential for me to reach the highest level of licensure in the future. In addition, Relay's excellent programming and team of leaders and professors has shown me I wouldn't want to pursue my master's degree anywhere else. Relay's focus on best practices and culturally responsive teaching should be the standard among all programs, and especially for those teachers who work in communities of color. I strongly urge you to approve Relay's M.A.T. program here in Connecticut. It would allow me, and future Relay students, to commit to eradicating the achievement gap in Connecticut.

Best regards,

Kristin DeGray

Math Tutor, North Windham School

Relay/GSE Teacher in Residence

Resident of Willimantic, CT

Dewar, Aldith

From: G. T.Joubert <galadtj@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020 10:14 PM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: Support request Relay Connecticut M.A.T. program

Monday, May 11, 2020

Good afternoon members of the Board,

My name is Gala Joubert and I am currently a Resident in Teaching in 5th grade at Tracey Magnet School in Norwalk, CT.

I was raised in Norwalk and have been a paraprofessional in the Norwalk Public School district for 15 years serving in a number of roles. I love my students and my community; I give my all and have high expectations for my students. While I have made an impact, I know I can do even more once I become a certified teacher.

I have wanted to pursue certification for many years but as a mother of six children, could not find a program that was affordable and that I could successfully complete. Most required an unpaid internship which was an impossibility for my family. Fortunately, Norwalk Public Schools supported my dreams when they decided to select me to enroll at the Relay GSE Connecticut Alternate Route to Certification Program this school year. I have been working hard to successfully complete the Relay program. With Relay's preparation, I have passed all of the certification exams required to receive certification in Elementary Education, Grades 1-6.

Relay Connecticut's program is causing my dream to become a reality and I will become a certified Elementary School teacher in this state. If Relay is allowed to offer a Master of Art in Teaching, I would not hesitate to also pursue the M.A.T. through their Connecticut program. A master's degree is essential for me to reach the highest level of licensure in the future and a requirement within six years of certification, in my school district. I strongly urge you to approve Relay's M.A.T. program here in Connecticut so that my peers can do the same.

Best regards,

Ms. Gala D. Joubert

Dewar, Aldith

From: Mayme Hostetter <mhostetter@relay.edu>
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020 10:51 PM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: Support for Relay CT's IHE Approval
Attachments: Support for Relay CT IHE Approval.pdf

To Whom It May Concern:

Attached please find a letter of support for Relay Connecticut's IHE approval process. My understanding is that by sending this email before 9:00am on Tuesday, May 12, it will be shared with CT Board of Education members prior to the board vote on Wednesday, May 13, as well as posted on the CSDE website in advance of that meeting. Thank you, in advance, for distributing and posting accordingly.

Best,
Mayme Hostetter

Mayme Hostetter
President
Relay Graduate School of Education
25 Broadway, 3rd Floor
New York, NY 10004
M: 917-655-1311
mhostetter@relay.edu | relay.edu



Dr. Miguel A. Cardona
Commissioner
Connecticut State Department of Education
165 Capitol Avenue

RE: Relay Connecticut –Support for Relay’s Master of Arts in Teaching

Dear Commissioner Cardona,

My name is Dr. Mayme Hostetter, and I am Relay’s President. I write to express my support of our Relay Connecticut (CT) application to gain approval as an out-of-state institution of higher education, offering a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) in CT.

Launched in 2016, Relay CT prepares aspiring teachers through its Alternative Route to Certification (ARC) program, in which students receive high-quality instructional coaching and gain practical teaching and leadership skills through an immersive cohort experience.

Since its inception, Relay CT has demonstrated the ability to recruit a diverse cohort of aspiring teachers for CT’s public schools. Over 70% of our aspiring teachers at Relay CT identify as teachers of color. To date, 56 Relay teachers have obtained an CT initial certificate, successfully navigating the 20 steps it takes to become a CT teacher. Over half of these 56 Relay lead teachers identify as people of color.

Relay CT’s ability to confer an MAT will provide Relay CT graduates with a clear pathway to permanent professional certification. Our master’s degrees will improve retention in the field for Relay CT’s graduates, leading to improved retention for educators of color over the long-term for CT’s public schools, as has been the case in many other states where Relay successfully offers the MAT program.

The lack of diversity among our nation’s teachers is of urgent concern – for too long we have ignored the positive impact of equitable representation, a goal that we are deeply committed to as a preparer of teachers. Relay’s programs and approach will benefit CT public schools—particularly the state’s urban schools, which enroll high percentages of students of color. I urge you to approve Relay CT’s application to become an institution of higher education, offering a Master of Arts in Teaching in your state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Hostetter".

Mayme Hostetter, President
Relay Graduate School of Education

Dewar, Aldith

From: Brady, Maurissa <Maurissa.Brady@hartfordschools.org>
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020 11:07 PM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: Relay Master's Program

Good afternoon members of the Board,

My name is Maurissa Brady and I am currently a 7th grade teacher at McDonough Middle School in Hartford.

I graduated from Hartford Public High School after immigrating to the United States. Being a resident of Hartford, I am aware of the negative implications that a lack of education can have on society as a whole. As a minority teacher, I can relate to the socio-demographic population of my school community while working to bridge the achievement gap. I love my student community and I am currently doing my very best to support my students. I also know that I can do even more once I become a certified teacher and I am able to teach at my alma mater.

This year, I am teaching mathematics as a first year teacher under the Durational Shortage Area Permit (DSAP). Without Relay, I would probably still be a substitute teacher. My District saw the need to increase equity within its school system and have supported my desire to become a certified teacher. They have selected me as a candidate to enroll at the Relay Connecticut Alternate Route to Certification Program this school year. With the knowledge, skills and preparation received from the program, I am proud to say that I am on track to receive my certification in Secondary Mathematics with successful completion of my exam.

Relay Connecticut's program will allow me to become a certified Secondary Mathematics teacher in the state. If Relay is allowed to offer a Masters of Art in Teaching, I would not hesitate to also pursue the M.A.T. through their program. A master's degree is essential for me to reach the highest level of licensure in the future. Within the state of Connecticut, certified teachers are now required to hold a master's degree within the first five years of teaching. I strongly urge you to approve Relay's M.A.T. program here in Connecticut so that my peers can do the same.

Best regards,

Maurissa Brady

7th Grade Mathematics
McDonough Middle School
111 Hillside Ave, Hartford CT 06106
860-695-4260

Dewar, Aldith

From: lauren bruno <lauren.bruno7@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020 11:29 PM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: Relay Master's degree program

To the Members of the State Board of Education:

Please consider endorsing Relay GSE as a provider of the MAT degree in Connecticut. Through RELAY, I expect to obtain certification in Elementary Education this June; I have passed the Praxis II as well as the Foundations of Reading Test. Many of my colleagues would benefit by being able to continue their studies as candidates for the MAT degree. These students put their whole hearts into their students and their studies.

As an "older" student, I find RELAY very accommodating for both full-time and part-time working students. The course material is very practical, and our experienced instructors have been unstinting in their efforts to "hand off" the best and most effective educational practices.

Sincerely yours,
Lauren Bruno

--
Thank you,
Lauren

Dewar, Aldith

From: TRACI CAMACHO <Traci_Camacho@greenwich.k12.ct.us>
Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2020 12:26 AM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: Master's Program Request

Good morning/afternoon members of the Board,

My name is Traci Camacho and I am currently a Paraprofessional at Hamilton Avenue School.

I have been a Paraprofessional for 21 years. I love my students and my community, but know that I can do even more once I become a certified teacher.

Fortunately, my Greenwich Public School supported my dreams when they decided to select me to enroll at the Relay Connecticut Alternate Route to Certification Program this school year. I have been working hard to successfully complete the Relay program. With their preparation, I am working towards passing all my certification exams to receive certification in Certified Elementary Teacher.

Relay Connecticut's program will allow me to become a certified teacher in Elementary 1-6 in the state of Connecticut.

This would be a wonderful opportunity for me and my future students because I have the privilege of working and living in a community where I am able to see my students and parents outside of the school district. We raise my three children here in Greenwich, Connecticut and one of the most challenging obstacles discussed at our dinner table is that there is an imbalance of teachers that they could identify with because there were not African-American or Hispanic teachers that resembled our family make up.

If Relay is allowed to offer a Masters of Art in Teaching, I would not hesitate to also pursue the M.A.T. through their program. A master's degree is essential for me to reach the highest level of licensure in the future. I strongly urge you to approve Relay's M.A.T. program here in Connecticut so that my peers can do the same.

Best regards,

Traci Camacho

Dewar, Aldith

From: Shauntee Duzant <stayduzant@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2020 12:50 AM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: Letter of Support for Relay Masters Program
Attachments: RELAY MASTERS SUPPORT.docx

I have attached a letter of support for Relay to be shared with the Board of Education Members voting to approve their Masters of Art in Teaching this Wednesday , May 13, 2020.

Best regards,

Shauntee Duzant

5/11/2020

Good morning/afternoon members of the Board,

My name is Shauntee Duzant, and I am currently a Paraprofessional at Harbor Elementary School in New London, Connecticut.

My story is a bit different from many. I was Born in New London, Connecticut but not raised here, I returned when I was 19years old to chase my "American Dream". I endured many obstacles trying in pursuit of my education in Connecticut and if it weren't for the Relay's program, I honestly would not have made it this far, which is why I fully support Relay's endeavor to offer a Masters of Arts in Teaching.

First, and foremost, my American Dream started when I attended Central Connecticut State University in New Britain Connecticut as a part time student in pursuit of my bachelor's degree in French and Spanish. My commute to and from campus took 2 hours out of my day and I did this 2 – 3 days a week for approximately 8years. In addition, I worked two (sometimes 3) jobs while balancing my life as a single mom of two children. My dream to become a teacher did not come to me until my last 2years of college and I sadly realized that I did not have time or extra financial resources to further my education in pursuit of my teaching certificate at CCSU. I thought, "this is unfortunately the end of the road for my dream" and for some time, it was. There was not any other path to certification accessible to me at that time.

Next, I was excited to learn about the Relay program through my school district of New London and ecstatic when they supported my dreams by selecting me to enroll at the Relay Connecticut Alternate Route to Certification Program this school year. I have been working hard to successfully complete the Relay program. With their

preparation, I have successfully passed some exams and am working towards passing all my certification exams to receive certification in Elementary Education.

Finally, If Relay were to offer a Masters of Art in Teaching, I would not hesitate to enroll in their program. As a matter of fact, a M.A.T through Relay is most likely the only accessible program for me, my peers and many who may find themselves in a unique circumstance that prevent them from pursuing a M.A.T in the traditional way. A master's degree is essential for me to reach the highest level of licensure in the future. I strongly urge you to approve Relay's M.A.T. program here in Connecticut so that my peers and future RELAY alumni can pursue their American Dream.

Best regards,

Shauntee Duzant

Dewar, Aldith

From: Shirley Castro <shirleyrcastro@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2020 1:16 AM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: RELAY MAT

My name is Shirley Castro, and I am currently an Academic Tutor at John S. Martinez Sea and Sky STEM Magnet School. I am a fully bilingual latina.

I have been a Tutor for two years. I love my students and my community, but know that I can do even more once I become a certified teacher. Sadly, there wasn't really a accesible path when I started because it was too expensive and required too much time and I need to work to provide for my family.

Fortunately, my school and the New Haven Public Schools district supported my dreams when they decided to select me to enroll at the Relay Connecticut Alternate Route to Certification Program this school year. I have been working hard to successfully complete the Relay program. With their preparation, I am working towards passing all my certification exams to receive certification in Elementary Education.

Relay Connecticut's program will allow me to become a certified Elementary Education teacher in the state. If Relay is allowed to offer a Masters of Art in Teaching, I would not hesitate to also pursue the M.A.T. through their program. A master's degree is essential for me to reach the highest level of licensure in the future. I strongly urge you to approve Relay's M.A.T. program here in Connecticut so that my peers can do the same.

Best regards,

Shirley R. Castro

Dewar, Aldith

From: Alejandra Corona Ortega <alejandra.coronaortega@yale.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2020 2:54 AM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: Relay Graduate School of Education

Good morning members of the Board,

My name is Alejandra Corona Ortega. I am a teacher at Elm City Montessori School in the New Haven School District. I want to urge you to allow the Relay Connecticut Alternate Route to Certification Program to expand into a Masters of Art in Teaching so they can continue to support people like me.

When I was in college, I was an undocumented immigrant from Mexico. I graduated from college without knowing what I would do. I knew I wanted to serve my community—New Haven; New Haven had allowed me to go to school and receive an education, but my lack of legal status made the available options rather narrow or nonexistent. Fortunately, my mother and I received a U-Visa in the late summer of 2019. This opportunity meant that I received a worker's permit and the chance to work in my beautiful city. I knew I wanted to be a teacher in my community, but I did not know of a program that would allow me to devote myself to a teaching job without requiring another Bachelor's degree until I found Relay.

My school nurtured me and selected me to enroll at the Relay Connecticut Alternate Route to Certification Program this school year. Thanks to Relay's support, I have successfully passed most of my certification exams (postponed), and I will be a certified teacher soon enough in the state. I know that my talents belong here, in my community.

I urge you to allow Relay to offer a Masters of Art in Teaching so I can continue to be a teacher and give back to my community in the only way I know.

Sincerely, Alejandra Corona Ortega
alejandra.coronaortega@yale.edu

Dewar, Aldith

From: Lygia Davenport <lygiadavenport@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2020 6:00 AM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: Relay M.A.T. Support

Good morning members of the Board,

I hope you and your families are well. My name is Lygia Davenport and I am currently a Substitute Teacher at Brennan-Rogers School in New Haven, Connecticut. Prior to assuming this role, I was a paraprofessional for close to five years also within New Haven Public Schools. I love my students and my community, and I know that I can do even more once I become a certified teacher. This has been my dream. As a mother working full-time, it was daunting trying to figure out how to afford a certification program on a paraprofessional's salary, pay for exams, and make time to be proficient in my coursework. I knew that my time commitment to my family and job, required a hybrid program for me to be successful. I surveyed many throughout the state and Relay Connecticut was the best option for me to remain employed and pursue certification in an affordable manner that was conducive to my family obligations. My school was extremely supportive of my endeavor.

The New Haven School District supported my dream when they decided to select me to enroll at the Relay Connecticut Alternate Route to Certification Program this school year. I have been working hard to successfully complete the Relay program. With their preparation, I have successfully passed four Praxis II exams, and I am awaiting the re-opening of testing sites to complete my fifth and final certification exam Foundations of Reading. This will allow me to receive certification in Elementary Education. I plan to continue working at Brennan-Rogers School in New Haven upon completion of my certification.

My professors at Relay have been extremely knowledgeable and supportive of my journey. If Relay is allowed to offer a Masters of Art in Teaching, I would not hesitate to also pursue the M.A.T. through their program. A master's degree is essential for me to reach the highest level of licensure in the future. I strongly urge you to approve Relay's M.A.T. program here in Connecticut so that my peers can do the same. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lygia Davenport

Dewar, Aldith

From: Robert Goodrich <rgoodrich@racce.net>
Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2020 7:52 AM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: Letter In Support of Relay
Attachments: RACCE_RELAY_SBE5122020.pdf

Please provide board members a copy of our written testimony that is attached.

Regards,

Robert M. Goodrich

[/he-him-his/](#)

Co-Founder

R.A.C.C.E.

Radical Advocates for Cross-Cultural Education

(203) 597-7456

rgoodrich@racce.net

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“The obligation of anyone who thinks of himself as responsible is to examine society and try to change it and to fight it – at no matter what risk. This is the only hope society has. This is the only way societies change...”

~James Baldwin~



14 Stanrod Ave.
Waterbury, CT 06704
(203) 597-7456
info@racce.net
www.racce.net

Allan B. Taylor
Chairperson
Connecticut State Board of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

May 12, 2020

Re: Relay Connecticut

Commissioner Cardona, Chairperson Taylor and esteemed members of the Connecticut State Board of Education my name is Robert Goodrich and I am the co-founder of R.A.C.C.E., a Waterbury based education advocacy organization. I am here today to submit testimony in support of Relay Connecticut's proposal to expand their certification licensure program to align with a master's degree program in Connecticut.

In Waterbury, and throughout our state Dean Good and her team have embraced the difficult task of increasing the number of Black and Brown educators in our state by providing untold hours of support to potential candidates, vetting of candidates provided to them from partner districts, and supporting admitted candidates with proper amounts of high quality instruction as well as coaching through completion of their program. Relay Connecticut has taken steps to increase the effectiveness of its instruction, maintained strict adherence to regulatory and legislative guardrails and grown its footprint three-fold since 2016. This is quite an accomplishment. Relay Connecticut is demonstrating the professional capacity, insight, and flexibility to respond to educator workforce trends so that a more robust and responsive pipeline for teachers of color can be sustained here in Connecticut.

As an organization, we have participated on the state legislative task force for teacher diversity as well as being a member of the policy oversight committee for the state department of education that is tasked with shifting or creating policies that ensures a thickening of the pipeline for teaches color. Teacher diversity and culturally sustaining pedagogy are at the center of our work. Race matched student-teacher dyads have innumerable socio-cultural benefits and as advocates on the front lines fighting for social justice, we believe increasing teacher diversity to be a moral imperative. We urge you to support Relay's proposal.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Goodrich
Co-Founder
R.A.C.C.E.
rgoodrich@racce.net
(203) 597-7456

Dewar, Aldith

From: Daniel Luciano <dluciano@greatoakscharter.org>
Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2020 8:11 AM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: Relay Master Program

Good morning members of the Board,

My name is Daniel Luciano, and I am currently a 7th grade English teacher at Great Oaks Charter School-Bridgeport.

I have been at Great Oaks Charter School for three years. I love my students and my community, but know that I can do even more once I become a certified teacher.

Fortunately, my school supported my dreams when they decided to select me to enroll at the Relay Connecticut Alternate Route to Certification Program this school year. I have been working hard to successfully complete the Relay program. With their preparation, I am working towards passing all my certification exams to receive certification in Secondary Education.

Relay Connecticut's program will allow me to become a certified Secondary English teacher in the state. If Relay is allowed to offer a Masters of Art in Teaching, I would not hesitate to also pursue the M.A.T. through their program. A master's degree is essential for me to reach the highest level of licensure in the future. I strongly urge you to approve Relay's M.A.T. program here in Connecticut so that my peers can do the same.

Best regards,

Daniel Luciano

Dewar, Aldith

From: k thomas <kellit76@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2020 8:20 AM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: Relay Program M.A.T

Good morning members of the Board,

My name is Kelli Thomas, and I am currently a Pre School teacher at Discovery Learning Montessori School in Windsor, CT.

For seven years I was a paraprofessional for the Hartford School System in Connecticut. I loved my students, and worked as hard as I could every day, but knew that I could do even more if I was a certified teacher.

Fortunately, Relay Connecticut provided me with a path to certification that worked for me. I successfully completed Relay's program.

If Relay is allowed to offer a Masters of Art in Teaching, I would not hesitate to pursue the M.A.T. through their program. I strongly urge you to approve Relay's M.A.T. program here in Connecticut so that others can do the same.

Best regards,

Kelli Thomas

Dewar, Aldith

From: benedicte kalala <benedictekalala95@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2020 8:42 AM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: Relay Resident

Good members of the Board,

My name is **Benedicte Kalala** and I am currently a 7th grade History Teacher in Resident (TIR) at Amistad Academy Middle School.

I have been a TIR for a year now. I love my students and my community, but know that I can do even more once I become a certified teacher.

Fortunately, my school supported my dreams when they decided to select me to enroll at the Relay Connecticut Alternate Route to Certification Program this school year. I have been working hard to successfully complete the Relay program. With their preparation, I am working towards passing all my certification exams to receive certification in ELA.

Relay Connecticut's program will allow me to become a certified ELA teacher in the state. If Relay is allowed to offer a Masters of Art in Teaching, I would not hesitate to also pursue the M.A.T. through their program. A master's degree is essential for me to reach the highest level of licensure in the future. I strongly urge you to approve Relay's M.A.T. program here in Connecticut so that my peers can do the same.

Best regards,

BENEDICTE M. KALALA

Teacher In-Residence

7th grade History

Amistad Academy Middle School

130 Edgewood Ave, New Haven, CT

Email: benedictekalala95@gmail.com

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“The best time for new beginnings is now”

Dewar, Aldith

From: Reba Stanley <rebarstanley@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2020 8:47 AM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: Approval of the Relay M.A.T Program

Good morning members of the Board,

My name is Reba Stanley, and I am currently a Kindergarten teacher at Achievement First Hartford Elementary Academy. Relay Connecticut provided me with a path to certification that worked for me. I successfully completed Relay's program: with their preparation, I successfully passed all my certification exams, and have had permanent certification in Early Childhood to Kindergarten Education since 2019.

Relay Connecticut's program allowed me to become a certified Kindergarten teacher that was actually affordable. If Relay is allowed to offer a Masters of Art in Teaching, I would not hesitate to pursue the M.A.T. through their program. I know that I would be in amazing hands and it would be an opportunity for me to advance myself as well as my career without going into debt. As a teacher of color, I strongly urge you to approve Relay's M.A.T. program here in Connecticut so that others can do the same.

Best regards,
Reba Stanley

Dewar, Aldith

From: Antoinette White <antoinettewhite20@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2020 8:47 AM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: Relay Master's Program

Good evening members of the Board,

My name is Antoinette White and I am currently an Assistant Teacher at Amistad Academy in New Haven at Achievement First.

I have been an Assistant Teacher for 6 years. I love my students and my community, but know that I can do even more once I become a certified teacher.

As an African American woman, I think it's super important for people of color to be represented in the classroom. Fortunately, Achievement First has supported my dreams when they decided to select me to enroll at the Relay Connecticut Alternate Route to Certification Program this school year. I have been working hard to successfully complete the Relay program. With their preparation, I have successfully passed all sections of my Praxis and I am working on passing Foundations of Reading to receive my certification in Elementary Education.

Relay Connecticut's program will allow me to become a certified in Elementary Education in the state of Connecticut. If Relay is allowed to offer a Masters of Art in Teaching, I would not hesitate to also pursue the M.A.T. through their program. A master's degree is essential for me to reach the highest level of licensure in the future. I strongly urge you to approve Relay's M.A.T. program here in Connecticut so that my peers can do the same.

Best regards,

Antoinette M. White

Dewar, Aldith

From: Acosta-Torres, Joselyn M. <jAcosta-Torres@windham.k12.ct.us>
Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2020 8:54 AM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: RELAY M.A.T.

The draft:

Good morning members of the Board, \

My name is Joselyn M. Acosta-Torres and I am currently a Math Tutor at North Windham School in the Windham Public School district.

I have been a Math Tutor for 6 years and a half in the regular and double immersion program (Compañeros-English and Spanish). I love my students and my community, but know that I can do even more once I become a certified teacher.

Fortunately, my district supported my dreams when they decided to select me to enroll at the Relay Connecticut Alternate Route to Certification Program this school year. I have been working hard to successfully complete the Relay program. With their preparation, I am working towards passing all my certification exams to receive certification in Elementary Education.

Relay Connecticut's program will allow me to become a certified Elementary Education teacher in the state. If Relay is allowed to offer a Masters of Art in Teaching, I would not hesitate to also pursue the M.A.T. through their program. A master's degree is essential for me to reach the highest level of licensure in the future. I strongly urge you to approve Relay's M.A.T. program here in Connecticut so that my peers can do the same.

Best regards,

Joselyn M. Acosta-Torres

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Dewar, Aldith

From: Johnson, Cheryl <Cheryl.johnson@hartfordschools.org>
Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2020 8:55 AM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Cc: Urbanhaiku1@gmail.com; Johnson, Cheryl
Subject: PLEASE Approve Relay's M.A.T. Program

Hello,

Greetings to you the members of the Board on this glorious day. How exciting it must be for all of you to be part of this definitive movement within this very specific 21C evolution of pedagogical praxis being canonized as the Relay Masters of Arts in Teaching Program. My heart is overjoyed!

Through the power of your imaginations, driven by your call to duty to do what is necessary for a people or a district or system to evolve in order to survive, you have the divine insight this day to know, your vote today to approve Relay's Masters of Arts in Teaching program is one of the reasons you were blessed to wake up this morning! Relay Alternate Route program is but a mere seed that is now being planted into this fertile ground. We know not what the tree will be but we know the seed is of great stock much like a mustard seed, a tiny seed. What can Relay become?

"The Relay Experience" can be likened to the creative artistic, intellectual, and social explosion associated with the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s. How apropos, 100 years later to have a program on a Master's level that creates the same potent atmosphere... *for teachers*, specifically of color! The shared beauty in the fact that they found these "invisible" teachers already servicing the school populist, is Relay's crowning jewel!

There are no other programs in anyone's first world country that is as unique, not even America's HBCU's have been able to recruit and train the amount of QUALIFIED & GIFTED teachers of a diverse culture that Relay of Connecticut, specifically has. I was born in London, lived in Canada and the United States. My parents are West Indians that meet in London while bettering their lives... "and life for me ain't been no crystal stair" as Langston Hughes would say. My route to Relay comes as a third career: radio broadcasting was one, learning Biblical Greek and Hebrew to do Biblical exegesis, theology, & ethics in Seminary was the second, and now the third, a call into education to teach elementary students. It was the door that Relay opened for me in 2018 that made it possible to step out on faith to start another career while still providing for my family on a paraeducator salary and caring for my Dad who has since passed away. I would be remiss, if I did not mention or recognize that having women of color at the helm who understand the multilayered, facets of life, and I dare to say Black life because the nuance is oftentimes missed if not misconstrued, was a major factor in my completion of teacher certification!

When the practical path for most was an impossibility, Relay Program scoped me up and nurtured me in a way that no other educational institution has in any country. If they have a Master's program, I would certainly seek my second Master's degree from Relay. Please give Relay a chance to continue to mine the "acre of diamonds" within our devastated school systems especially in these "Ahmaud Arbery" days of racial conflict. As a collective, we all benefit from what Relay provides in education. Thank you for your listening ears!

Yours In Partnership,

Cheryl A. Johnson

Relay Culturally Responsive Teaching Mindset Award winner 2018-2019

Breakthrough Magnet School- South Paraeducator of the Year 2021

Hartford District Paraeducator of the Year 2021 ❤️❤️❤️❤️

Dewar, Aldith

From: gwen@ctparentsunion.org
Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2020 9:03 AM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: CT Parents Union Testimony in Support of Implementation of a Relay Graduate School of Education Masters of Arts of Teaching Program
Attachments: Final CTPU_ SBE_Relay Letter of Support 05 12 2020 .pdf

Good Morning,

Please see attached CT Parents Union SBE testimony in support of the development and implementation of a Relay Graduate School of Education Masters of Arts of Teaching Program,

To all SDE & SBE members please stay safe and well

Best Regards

Gwen E. Samuel_
President and Founder
Connecticut Parents union
Mobile: 203-443-3203
gwen@ctparentsunion.org

"Taking responsibility for our children's K12 academic and life journey is something we must do, not something that is done for us – but with us." – Gwen Samuel, Founder of the Connecticut Parents Union.____

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**GWEN E. SAMUEL, CONNECTICUT PARENTS UNION
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING
MAY 13, 2020**

Good Morning Chairperson Allan B. Taylor, Vice-Chairperson Estela López, State Board of Education committee members and to all parents, children, and community members

My name is Gwen E. Samuel. I am a mom and the president and founder of the CT Parents Union (CTPU); a parent-led organization established to connect parents, guardians and families with the support systems necessary to effectively advocate for the educational rights of children by ensuring that race, zip-code and/or socio-economic status *will never* serve as limiting factors or predictors of student academic and life success.

Before I continue my testimony, *I pray that all of you and your loved ones are safe and well during these unprecedented times with this deadly pandemic.*

With that said, on behalf of CTPU, I am testifying today in support of Relay Connecticut expanding their certification licensure program to align with a master's degree program.

As both a Black mom and leader of a parent advocacy organization, we have engaged Relay for the last several years in various educational activities throughout Connecticut's priority school districts to include Middletown. The majority of these activities served multiple purposes that include exposing diverse communities to a highly qualified and committed diverse teaching base. Why? Because the research is clear according to [a John Hopkins and American University](#) researchers study that examined the impact of having a same-race teacher on students' long-run educational attainment.

The study found:

- *White and other non-black teachers were 12 percentage points more likely than black teachers to predict black students would not finish high school.*
- *Non-black teachers were 5 percent more likely to predict their black boy students would not graduate high school than their black girls.*
- *Black female teachers are significantly more optimistic about the ability of black boys to complete high school than teachers of any other demographic group. They were 20 percent less likely than white teachers to predict their student would not graduate high school, and 30 percent less likely to say that than black male teachers.*
- *White male teachers are 10 to 20 percent more likely to have low expectations for black female students.*
- *Math teachers were significantly more likely to have low expectations for female students.*
- *For black students, particularly black boys, having a non-black teacher in a 10th grade subject made them much less likely to pursue that subject by enrolling in similar classes. This suggests biased expectations by teachers have long-term effects on student outcomes, the researchers said.*



In closing, there is a clear need for additional Master of Arts of Teaching Programs in Connecticut that have demonstrated the ability to enroll, support, and graduate a diverse student body.

The Connecticut State Department of Education's Talent Office has stated its commitment to "developing and deploying strategies for districts state-wide that ensure the most effective educators are in every school and classroom, including making progress on increasing the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of the state's educator workforce."

Relay Connecticut has not only proven that they can prepare highly effective classroom teachers, but has also a continued track record dedicated to the work of diversifying Connecticut's teacher workforce.

To support *all* of Connecticut's children, we must act with urgency to continue diversifying as well as retaining our teaching force. Relay GSE's high quality programs and approach benefit the state of Connecticut, our public schools, and particularly our urban schools, which enroll high percentages of racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students.

CTPU strongly urges the board to approve Relay Connecticut's proposal to expand their certification licensure program to align with a master's degree program in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gwendolyn Samuel", written in a cursive style.

Gwendolyn E. Samuel, President and Founder
Connecticut Parent's Union

Good morning members of the Board,

My name is Andrew Martell, and I am currently a Student Management at Aerospace and Engineering 6-12 Middle/High School.

I have been a Student Management for two and a half years. I care deeply for my students the community I serve, but I have more dreams and aspirations I hope to fulfill for my students when I become a certified teacher.

As a black man growing up Connecticut I can recount the number of black male teachers I had in grades K-12 and that number was zero. I grew up in Hartford and ended up moving to West Hartford at the age of 12 with my family, where my views of education changed drastically. I always thought white students were naturally smarter than me and others that looked like me and didn't help when I was usually the only black student in my classes. Having a teacher that young black boys can identify with, is pivotal in education especially for building confidence when it comes to learning.

My school along with the district supported my dreams when they allowed me to take in in the Relay Connecticut Alternate Route to Certification Program this school year. I have been working hard to successfully complete the Relay program. The program has been given me great teaching and training to meet the demands of my students and to support and aid them to be successful scholars. I am currently working towards passing all my certification exams to receive certification in a K-6 Elementary Certification.

This program has opened so many doors for me because it has given me the ability to provide for myself and my son, at the same time allows me to become a certified K-6 certification teacher in the state. If Relay is allowed to offer a Masters of Art in Teaching, I would not hesitate to also pursue the M.A.T. through their program. A master's degree is highly important for me to reach the highest level of licensure in the future so push toward my dream of serving my community in an administrative role. This program has presented me with an opportunity to pursue my dreams so with much respect it is the utmost importance to approve Relay's M.A.T. program here in Connecticut so that my peers can do the same.

Thank you for your time,

Andrew Martell

Dewar, Aldith

From: mabel soto <mabelgreenwich@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2020 9:23 AM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: Master's Program Update & Request

Good morning members of the Board,

My name is Mabel and I am currently an ESL paraprofessional at Cos Cob School at Greenwich Public Schools. I have been a paraprofessional for 10 years. I love my students and my community, but know that I can do even more once I become a certified teacher.

Fortunately, my school and district supported my dreams when they decided to select me to enroll at the Relay Connecticut Alternate Route to Certification Program this school year. I was always looking to become a certified teacher but it was very expensive get into a program. Coupled with the fact that I speak two languages, I knew this was something that I could surpass. Currently, I am an esl paraprofessional and thanks to relay I got into the program for the Greenwich public school district and I got the opportunity to become something greater.

I have been working hard to successfully complete the Relay program. With their preparation, I am working towards passing all my certification exams to receive certification in Elementary education.

Relay Connecticut's program will allow me to become a certified elementary teacher in the state. If Relay is allowed to offer a Masters of Art in Teaching, I would not hesitate to also pursue the M.A.T. through their program. A master's degree is essential for me to reach the highest level of licensure in the future. I strongly urge you to approve Relay's M.A.T. program here in Connecticut so that my peers can do the same.

Best regards,

Mabel Soto

Dewar, Aldith

From: Weaver, Shamari <Shamari.Weaver@hartfordschools.org>
Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2020 9:31 AM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: Relay Master's Program

Good morning members of the Board,

My name is Shamari Weaver and I am currently an Adult Support Paraeducator at Hartford Public High School.

I have been a Paraeducator for 6 years at Hartford Public High School. I love my students, and work as hard as I can every day.

Fortunately, Relay Connecticut provided me with a path to certification that worked for me. I successfully completed Relay's program: with their preparation, I am currently working on passing all my certification exams.

If Relay is allowed to offer a Masters of Art in Teaching, I would not hesitate to pursue the M.A.T. through their program. I strongly urge you to approve Relay's M.A.T. program here in Connecticut so that others can do the same.

Best regards,
Shamari Weaver

Dewar, Aldith

From: Hamish MacPhail <hamish.macphail@conncan.org>
Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2020 9:33 AM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: Letter in support of Relay Graduate School of Education
Attachments: Relay Support Letter (2).pdf

Good morning,

Please see ConnCAN's letter in support of Relay Graduate School of Education's Master program application.

All the best,

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Hamish MacPhail

Policy & Research Director

C: 781-652-1205

20 Church Street, Floor M

Hartford, CT 06103

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20 Church Street, Mezzanine
Hartford, Connecticut 06103

Subira.Gordon@conncan.org
www.conncan.org

May 12, 2020

Connecticut State Board of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Connecticut State Board of Education,

My name is Subira Gordon and I am the Executive Director of ConnCAN, a statewide education advocacy organization committed to ending educational inequity in the Constitution State. This letter outlines ConnCAN's support for the Masters of Arts of Teaching Program application submitted by Relay Graduate School of Education.

As you well know, ConnCAN, along with members of the Minority Teacher Recruitment Taskforce, have worked diligently over the past five years to increase the minority teaching corps in Connecticut. Right now, 48.9% of students and 9.5% of teachers identify as people of color. This is a serious misalignment, and research shows that minority teachers can make a significant impact in minority student achievement. We know that minority teaching candidates must have tangible, high-quality pathways to get into and remain in the classroom. This is why Relay Graduate School of Education is so important to Connecticut's progress.

Relay Graduate School of Education is the most diverse teacher certification program in the state, and prioritizes minority teacher recruitment as one of its core tenets. Relay's Masters program would be highly accessible to those already in the classroom, making a difference for students each day. The culturally responsive pedagogy ensures that the next generation of teachers can reach, understand and support a diverse population of learners. Finally, Relay offers flexibility and affordability that reduce the systemic barriers that have prevented high-quality candidates of color from participating in the past.

Relay has operated a successful ARC program and are well-situated to take the next step to offer a Masters program. They have a nationally recognized model, with proof points across the country, and a locally-developed leader in Rebecca Good, who has demonstrated professionalism and competency in every manner.

Simply, without Relay operating a Masters program, Connecticut will continue to fall short on its goal to increase teacher diversity for the foreseeable future. They are a necessary piece of the puzzle, and Connecticut is blessed to have their presence in the state.

Should you want to connect personally, please contact me at: Subira.Gordon@conncan.org.

Stronger together,

Subira Gordon

Dewar, Aldith

From: Andréa Comer <acomer@e4e.org>
Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2020 9:33 AM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: Letter of support - Relay GSE
Attachments: 5.12.2020 Relay GSE Letter.pdf

Good morning,
Please see attached letter of support for Relay.
Thank you.

--

Andréa Comer

Executive Director, E4E-Connecticut



EDUCATORS
FOR EXCELLENCE



t: 203-553-7794

m: 860-462-4457

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New Haven, CT 06511



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CONNECTICUT

153 East St., Suite 400
New Haven, CT 06511
203-553-7794

May 12, 2020

CT State Board of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Distinguished Members of the Board,

My name is Andréa Comer, and I currently serve as Executive Director of Educators for Excellence, and I am testifying today in support of Relay Connecticut expanding their certification licensure program to align with a master's degree program.

Educators for Excellence is a teacher-led organization that is committed to elevating teacher voice and improving student outcomes. I speak professionally in support of Relay, as our organization has collaborated with Relay in promoting teacher diversity in the state. I also speak personally, as my daughter is a proud graduate of Relay Graduate School of Education.

Relay Connecticut has not only proven that they can prepare highly effective classroom teachers, but has also demonstrated that the state can increase the number of Black and Brown teachers in Connecticut, which the state has indicated its commitment through passed legislation. Relay GSE's high quality programs and approach benefit the state of Connecticut, our public schools, and particularly our urban schools, which enroll high percentages of racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students.

Relay's ability to confer a Master of Arts in Teaching will provide its graduates a clear pathway to professional certification in Connecticut. These master's degrees will improve retention in the field for Relay's graduates, leading to improved retention amongst culturally responsive educators and educators of color over the long-term.

If the state is truly committed to teacher diversity and a high caliber of teaching professionals, supporting Relay Connecticut's proposal to expand their certification licensure program should be a

no-brainer. A vote for Relay is a vote for a diverse, prepared educator workforce, but more importantly, it is a vote for educational equity for all students.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Andréa Comer
Executive Director

Dewar, Aldith

From: Jenee Jefferson <jeneevj207@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2020 11:00 AM
To: StateBoard, SDE
Subject: Relay Masters Program

Good morning members of the Board,

My name is Jenée Jefferson, and I am currently a fourth grade teacher at Chamberlain Elementary School in New Britain.

I have been a long term substitute teacher for over three years. I love my students and my community, but know that I can do even more once I become a certified teacher.

Fortunately, my administrator and the New Britain District supported my dreams when they decided to select me to enroll at the Relay Connecticut Alternate Route to Certification Program this school year. I have been working hard to successfully complete the Relay program. With their preparation, I am working towards passing all my certification exams to receive certification in Elementary Education.

Relay Connecticut's program will allow me to become a certified teacher in grade K-6 in the state. If Relay is allowed to offer a Masters of Art in Teaching, I would not hesitate to also pursue the M.A.T. through their program. A master's degree is essential for me to reach the highest level of licensure in the future. I strongly urge you to approve Relay's M.A.T. program here in Connecticut so that my peers can do the same.

Best regards,

Jenée Valerie Jefferson

--
Jenee V. Jefferson