



**AACTE-CT Statement to the State Board of Education Meeting
on 10-6-21**

Good morning everyone and thank you for the opportunity to provide comments to the State Board of Education at your October 6th 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. AACTE-CT is an association of thirteen 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 Russell-Tucker, the Department of Education, and especially to those individuals who many of us from AACTE-CT work with on a regular basis.

In previous comments myself and others in AACTE-CT have publicly thanked the school personnel—the teachers, administrators, and staff—who have worked tirelessly during the pandemic to ensure that the students of Connecticut receive an excellent education.

Today, I want to thank CSDE, which has been phenomenal during this pandemic. The work of the State Department of Education is largely unseen by the public. But it is essential. Public education cannot function without the strong State Departments of Education, which undertake the day-to-day operational work that keeps the system moving. As a relatively new resident to Connecticut—I moved here in July 2019—I have been extremely impressed with the Department.

More specifically, in my work in educator preparation, I have had the privilege of working closely with CSDE's Talent Office. Led by Chief Talent Officer, Dr. Shuana Tucker and Bureau Chief, Christopher Todd, the Talent Office—all of the staff who do the day-to-day work of certifying, evaluating, and supporting the teacher workforce in the state—has been a skilled, agile, and responsive partner with educator preparation programs. We are certainly strongest when we are all working together, especially as we face a crisis such as a pandemic, and I think the collaboration and conversations have been excellent.

As we move forward, hopefully closer to the end of the pandemic, we look forward to continuing to develop and sustain our strong relationships with CSDE. It is clearly by working together that we will best be able to tackle the most pressing educational issues in the state, such as guaranteeing that all students, regardless of race or ethnicity, regardless of socio-economic status, and regardless of special learning needs, receive opportunities to engage in rich, rigorous, and meaningful educational opportunities.

Please continue to feel free to reach out to our association on issues of mutual interest. Our faculty and staff are a resource.

Thank you again for the opportunity to address the Board.

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