



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Superintendents of Schools
FROM: Desi D. Nesmith, Deputy Commissioner
DATE: December 7, 2020
SUBJECT: Encourage Students to Have their Voices Heard through ThoughtExchange

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), in partnership with the RESC Alliance, is conducting an outreach to middle and high school students. We want to hear their voices with regard to how they are learning through the pandemic, and what Connecticut Schools can do to make them feel even more connected, energized, and enthusiastic about learning this year.

To gather this information, the CSDE and the RESC Alliance will once again be using the Thoughtexchange platform. Please send the message on the following page to all your middle and high school aged students and encourage them to share their thoughts. Note that the platform is monitored continuously and any thoughts containing inappropriate, hurtful or personally identifying language will be immediately flagged and blocked from circulation. The focus of the exchange is on students from Grades 5-12; however, younger students may also participate by selecting "Other" for grade category (please use discretion here as we do not want parents filling it out for their children).

While we have heard from many stakeholders in this pandemic, it is important that we also hear from our students. To ensure that the respondents are reasonably representative of students across the state, we need all districts to share this message with their middle/high school aged students. The exchange will be open at least until Wednesday, December 23, 2020.

Please do not hesitate to contact Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan at ajit.gopalakrishnan@ct.gov if you have any questions.

Thank you so much for your cooperation.

SAMPLE MESSAGE TO STUDENT

Dear Student,

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to cause disruption to many schools in the 2020-21 school year. As you learn in this unprecedented year, we want to hear from you. We want to know what Connecticut Schools can do to make you feel even more connected, energized and enthusiastic about learning this year. The feedback gathered here will be shared with the Commissioner of Education, the State Board of Education, and other leaders across the state.

The Thoughtexchange platform is being used to solicit your feedback. Thoughtexchange keeps confidential who shared each thought and who assigned what ratings. You can rate as many thoughts as you'd like before moving on to Discover where you can see all the thoughts sorted by the average star rating. The entire process is described in the introduction. Thank you for participating in this important conversation.

Notes about this process:

1. It could take you as little as 5 - 10 minutes to participate.
2. You can complete questions at your own pace and come back to review your answers at any time.
3. There are three ways you can access the Thoughtexchange
 - Please click HERE <https://my.thoughtexchange.com/254760758> to participate.
 - Go to www.thoughtexchange.com click on the "Join" button and enter the code 254-760-758
 - Download the Thoughtexchange app (IOS) only, click on the "Join" button and enter the code 254-760-758

Thank you for participating in this effort and making your voice heard.