



October 21, 2019

**Joint Statement from Education Commissioner Miguel Cardona,
CAPSS Executive Director Fran Rabinowitz and CABE Executive Director Bob Rader
on Addressing Issues of Intolerance**

In light of several recent high profile acts of racism involving students in our Connecticut schools, we want to take this opportunity to state unequivocally that all children deserve to be educated in a safe environment where they do not feel threatened regardless of their race, gender, gender identity or expression, religion, nationality, status of citizenship, or sexual orientation. It is our core responsibility as educators to do everything we can to foster environments that ensure equity, diversity and inclusion. In fact, the diversity in our state is one of our greatest strengths. Research indicates that when our students are introduced to diversity at a young age, implicit biases are not only reduced, but we see stronger social skills and respect on all levels.

Together, the CT State Department of Education (CSDE), the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) and the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) share a sense of urgency to proactively address issues of intolerance. This is our priority. We plan to work together to ensure districts are supported and have the necessary tools needed to promote environments safe from bias. Preparing students to become productive members of society includes teaching about respecting diversity and creating a sense of community.

Below are links to resources for districts to consider as they continue this work. However, links alone will not accomplish the important work ahead. Many districts are already paving the way and we will be reaching out to them to share “evolving practices.” In addition, leaders from CSDE, CAPSS and CABE will be meeting together soon to identify steps we plan to take in collaboration to provide resources, guidance, and technical assistance for districts.

Together, as leaders, let’s embrace this opportunity to create learning environments where all students feel valued, respected, and safe to learn and grow.

Sincerely,

Miguel A. Cardona, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education

Frances M. Rabinowitz
Executive Director, CAPSS

Robert Rader
Executive Director, CABE

RESOURCES

“Avoiding Racial Equity Detours” - Paul Gorski, EdChange:

<http://www.edchange.org/publications/Avoiding-Racial-Equity-Detours-Gorski.pdf>

“The Critical Work of Racial Identity Development” - Dr. Daren Graves presentation to CSDE:

<https://portal.ct.gov/->

[/media/SDE/Discipline/Critical Work of Racial Identity Development Presentation.pdf](/media/SDE/Discipline/Critical%20Work%20of%20Racial%20Identity%20Development%20Presentation.pdf)

State Education Resource Center’s (SERC) “Equity in Education: A Transformational Approach to Teaching and Learning”: <https://ctserc.org/documents/misc/equity-2017-09-20-teaching-and-learning.pdf>

The National Education Association’s (NEA) online resources for teachers, students and parents to help engage in a dialogue about racism, hate and violence:

http://www.nea.org/home/71339.htm?_ga=2.190746219.1184054331.1503515003-985918643.1503515003