



# NEWS

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DR. DIANNA R. WENTZELL, COMMISSIONER

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## **Commissioner Wentzell Convenes First Roundtable for Family and Community Engagement in Education**

(Hartford, CT) — State Department of Education Commissioner Dianna R. Wentzell today convened the first meeting of the Commissioner’s Roundtable for Family and Community Engagement in Education, a group of parents, educators, students, and community members who will serve as advisors to the Commissioner on matters of education.

The members of the roundtable are tasked with engaging in discussion about policy and programmatic priorities to improve outcomes for all students and advance the State Board of Education’s comprehensive plan for equity and excellence in Connecticut schools.

“This roundtable brings together a diverse set of voices representing a broad range of stakeholders that will help us strengthen the way we engage with families and communities in support of equity and excellence for all Connecticut students,” said Commissioner Wentzell. “Family and community engagement are priorities built into the State Board of Education’s five-year comprehensive plan, and I look forward to the work ahead with this group of passionate and dedicated advocates.”

The charge of the Commissioner’s Roundtable for Family and Community Engagement in Education is to:

- advise the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) on issues and policies related to family and community engagement in education;
- bring an authentic parent and community voice to CSDE projects and initiatives;
- review and make recommendations on implementation of the [Connecticut State Board of Education’s Five-year \(2016-21\) Comprehensive Plan](#) from the school-family-community partnership perspective; and
- review and recommend effective practices to increase school and district capacity to develop successful partnerships and families’ capacity to support their children’s education and determine the feasibility of carrying out those practices in Connecticut.

The roundtable includes over 30 members intended to reflect a balanced representation of three major constituencies — school/district staff, parents (or guardians) and community members — as well as students. The members also are meant to reflect Connecticut’s geographic, economic, ethnic, and racial diversity.

The first meeting of the roundtable involved a discussion of the State Board of Education’s comprehensive plan and focused on deep discussion about one priority identified in the plan: the need to have great teachers and

leaders who collectively reflect the rich cultural diversity in Connecticut and are culturally responsive instructors. The State Education Resource Center facilitated the meeting.

The next formal meeting of the roundtable will be March 16, 2017. However, one of the purposes of the roundtable is to have an existing group of key family and engagement partners who can be called on to provide feedback and ideas on important issues as they arise. This group will also play a role in providing feedback for the development of a state plan to implement the new federal education law, the Every Student Succeeds Act.

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