

**OPENING STATEMENT BEFORE THE
EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

**Malia K. Sieve
Nominee for Member of the Connecticut State Board of Education**

February 18, 2016

Greetings, Senator Duff, Representative Janowski, Senator Kane, Representative Buck-Taylor and members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee. My name is Malia Sieve, and it is an honor and privilege to be appointed as a member to the State Board of Education by Governor Dannel P. Malloy.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to this committee for the opportunity to appear before you today to speak to my desire to serve on the State Board of Education.

I am a proud wife and mother of 11-year-old twins, Taylor and Dylan. We currently live in Norwich, and I have arguably been from Connecticut for my entire life.

I benefited from a great public K-12 education from Ledyard and East Lyme and graduated from the University of Connecticut for both my undergraduate and graduate degrees. I earned my master's degree in social work with a focus on policy and planning. I have worked on many issues in my career – domestic violence, juvenile justice, early childhood, K-12 and higher education, to name a few. All of which have provided me with deeper understanding of the inequities between populations and the role of policy in creating and removing barriers.

I work for HCM Strategists, a consulting firm based in Washington, D.C., which works in the areas of health, education and higher education policy. I work with leaders in states to develop postsecondary attainment goal, metrics, and plans to achieve these goals, with a particular emphasis on addressing equity gaps. Prior to HCM, I worked for the Connecticut Board of Regents as the associate director of policy and research. Primarily, I managed Connecticut's PreK-20 Council and worked with leaders in K12 and higher education, business, philanthropy and elected leaders to try to increase coordination and communication across these sectors to

improve student outcomes. I also had the privilege of serving as the parent representative to the Norwich Public Schools District Data Team and to chair the Huntington Elementary School Governance Council.

My interest in serving on the Board of Education comes down to this. The relationship between education and positive life outcomes is proven over and over again, across just about every issue. However, we cannot deny that, as a society, we have failed to ensure the success of all of our students. While there are indications that we are headed in the right direction to narrow some achievement gaps, there is plenty of work still to be done. This legislature passed a bill last year setting a statewide postsecondary attainment goal of 70% by 2025 based on projected workforce needs. This is necessary and possible, but only with marked improvements in student outcomes, in particular for our students of color and low-income students. The work that I do everyday, my children, and the future of every one of our students – both children and adults struggling to find success – compels me to seize this opportunity.

The strength and vitality of our state depends on our commitment and ability to build our human capital across all ages, races, ethnicities, and income brackets. I hope to bring to the Board my added voice and attention to addressing equity, my experience in working across sectors to build collaborations, and my commitment to making Connecticut an even better place.

Thank you, again, for this opportunity to introduce myself and share my interest in serving on the Board of Education.