

New Haven Federation of Teachers

LOCAL 933

AFL-CIO

An Affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers



*David Cicarella
President*

Senator Martin Looney, Representative Janowski, and Members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee,

I am writing to recommend Erik Clemons for a seat on the Connecticut State Board of Education. Erik served on the City-wide Reform Committee in New Haven. This committee, created in our landmark 2009 contract, is charged with overseeing the entire School Change Initiative for the New Haven Public School district. It consists of 3 administrators, 3 teachers, 2 parents, and the superintendent's designee. Erik was an incredibly valuable and influential part of this nine member committee. He is an excellent listener and is consistently articulate and passionate when advocating for the students we serve. He has the unique ability to work through and around the various obstacles that we all too often encounter in our work. Erik is an outstanding collaborator which proved to serve us quite well as we continuously tackled difficult educational and societal issues on this high level committee.

The New Haven Public School's partnership with ConnCAT has proved to be a tremendous asset to the turnaround school efforts at Lincoln Bassett Community School. As president of Conn CAT, Erik coordinates the wraparound service efforts which are such a vital component to our work at the school. This organization is housed within a mile from the school and as such creates a strong, positive physical presence. Erik's incredible work ethic and presence is evident and instrumental to their success.

As a member of the State Board of Education he will be invaluable when working through the myriad of issues, which will include the current divisive activity among charter schools and traditional public schools, as he has served in both arenas. I firmly believe his immense integrity, of which I have personally witnessed many times in his relentless work to best serve our students, will advocate for all public schools. Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, I am certain he will hold all of us accountable to create a public school system that provides equal and diverse educational opportunities for all Connecticut school children.

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