

March 15, 2021

Dear Members of the Education Committee,

I'm writing today with testimony for the public hearing on Wednesday March 17, 2021 for Senate Bill 1034 An Act Concerning Minority Recruitment and Retention.

I've owned an education reform consulting practice, specializing in school and district improvement for over eleven years, I served as a school board member for Norwalk Public Schools for two years, I am a Connecticut resident, and the mother to two biracial/bilingual boys (4.5 and 1.5 years old).

All of the components of this bill are crucial to ensuring that Connecticut has a teaching workforce that resembles the population of the students we serve. More culturally diverse teachers are needed for both BIPOC students as well as Caucasian students.

Section 1 (Residency Program), Section 2 (Use of Funds for Residency Program), and Section 3 (Grow-your-own program development) all target getting more educators of color into the teaching field. When I was on the board of education in Norwalk, we had one of the most diverse teaching workforces in the state and yet our educator demographics still didn't resemble the student population. The research-base is clear that the impact of having teachers who resemble the students they serve have short and long-term positive impacts, especially for Black/African American males.

Section 4 (Anti-bias training creation), Section 5 (Anti-bias training obligation), and Section 6 (teacher professional development for anti-bias) all target the need to address both implicit and explicit bias in hiring and our education systems. Education leaders and educators often underestimate the impact of their own biases. It is time to directly identify bias in the hiring, recruitment and retention systems, while also addressing bias that all educators have in how they relate to their students (and their co-workers).

SB1034 includes many useful components that will begin to address the lack of diversity in the state's educator workforce.

Thank you,

Julie Corbett

President & Founder
Corbett Education Consulting LLC
41 Quail Ridge Road
Wilton, CT 06897