



Testimony of DR. SCOTT V. NICOL

Superintendent of the Ellington Public Schools

Chair of the BLAC Legislative Committee

Member of the CAPSS Legislative Committee

IN SUPPORT OF (w/ necessary amendments) to S.B. NO. 1034

AN ACT CONCERNING MINORITY TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

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Chairs McCrory and Sanchez, Ranking Members Berthel and McCarty and distinguished members of the Education Committee, my name is Dr. Scott V. Nicol, Superintendent for the Ellington Public Schools, Chair of the Legislative Committee for the Black Leaders and Administrators Consortium Inc. (BLAC) and member of the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) Legislative Committee.

I write to you today **IN SUPPORT OF (with necessary amendments) to S.B. NO. 1034 An Act Concerning Minority Teacher Recruitment and Retention**, and specifically wish to address the statewide expansion of the *Connecticut Teachers Residency Program* in partnership with the Regional Education Service Centers (RESC) Alliance, which includes the originator of the program the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC).

The *Connecticut Teachers Residency Program* (TRP) is aligned with the *CAPSS Blueprint to Transform Connecticut's Public Schools'* recommendation #10 (Attacking Structural Racism & Discrimination) specifically "increasing Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino educator and leader recruitment and retention."

Teachers of Color: State-Wide Expansion of Connecticut Teacher Residency Program

The State's commitment to increasing racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of Connecticut's teaching workforce has met with some success but not enough. As of the 2019 – 2020 school year, educators of color (9.6 %) are underrepresented relative to the number of students of color (39.6 %) in the State of Connecticut.

The Ellington Public Schools, which enrolls 26% students of color, has approximately 3% teachers of color employed. Additionally, the number of teachers of color statewide in predominantly white suburban and rural school districts has been scarce.

TRP is an alternative route to certification program designed to recruit, certify and retain elementary teachers of color from a largely untapped pool of talent. Residents participate in the following:

- Take courses for 18 months as taught by practitioners
- Work as a resident for one school year with a mentor teacher while receiving pay and benefits
- Obtain a full-time teaching position upon completion of the program and certification

The Ellington Public Schools is a TRP early adopter with a resident teacher of color currently (2020-2021 school year) teaching with a mentor Ellington teacher. Upon successful completion of the program, the Ellington Public Schools will hire this teacher of color for the 2021-2022 school year.

In addition to Ellington, school districts in Bristol, Southington and various CREC schools currently enroll 15 residents (73% Black and 27% Latino) with the prospect of full employment in the 2021-2022 school year.

Necessary Amendment Recommendations for S.B. NO. 1034:

- 1) The funding mechanism for **S.B. NO. 1034** overlooks the number of current and future partner districts who are not Alliance districts. This includes the Ellington Public Schools. Currently, 17 of our 25 partner districts are NOT Alliance districts and would not be ineligible to benefit from this legislation as drafted. In addition, using this funding mechanism could strain those Alliance districts that need that support.

In lieu of the proposed funding mechanism, we urge the committee to incorporate the \$4.5 million into a general fund line item to be included within the State Department of Education (SDE) budget. This funding would support four planned cohorts for up to 60 residents of color starting their Alternate Route to Certification during the summer of 2021.

The original request of \$8 million was to expand the program to all eight Regional Education Service Centers (RESC) as opposed to four sites and \$4.5 million.

- 2) It is recommended modifying the definition of “residency program” to ensure that we are maximizing the number of qualified candidates who would be eligible under the bill. In furtherance of that objective, we suggest changing “and” to “or” in Section 1 (a)(3) as follows:
 - (3) “Residency program” means an alternate route to certification program approved by the State Board of Education pursuant to section 10-145m of the general statutes or section 10-155d of the general statutes, that requires participants to complete a residency in which such participants serve (A) in a position requiring professional certification, [~~and~~] or (B) in a full-time position for ten school months at a local or regional board of education in the state under the supervision of (i) a certified administrator or teacher, and (ii) a supervisor from the regional educational service center or private, nonprofit teacher or administrator operating such alternate route to certification program;
- 3) Connecticut school districts --with local budgets already submitted-- will not be able to fund this program unless the State allocates monies for the 2021 – 2022 school year.