



**Connecticut Association of
Boards of Education, Inc.**

81 Wolcott Hill Road, Wethersfield, CT 06109-1242 - (860) 571-7446

**Testimony
Before to the
Achievement Gap Task Force
on the Draft Master Plan to Eliminate the Achievement Gap in Connecticut
April 17, 2014**

The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education greatly appreciates the opportunity to discuss with you the question of what CABE can do, in the spirit of partnership, to help implement the master plan.

Let me begin by commending Task Force Co-Chair Dr. Miguel Cardona and the members of this Task Force for their months of hard work and ongoing commitment to this critical issue. I want to extend special appreciation to David Kennedy, who contributed so much to the draft report, and has demonstrated his commitment to closing the achievement gap by remaining on this Task Force after his service as a member of the Stratford Board of Education had ended.

CABE is delighted to see that this report recognizes the multitude of factors necessary to close the achievement gap. While education plays a critical role, it is important that all of us acknowledge the need to address issues outside the schoolhouse, including poverty, housing, family engagement and early care and education.

In our work providing professional development to local and regional boards of education, and in providing advocacy at the state and federal level, CABE is already supporting a number of the initiatives outlined in your policy recommendations, including:

- Providing quality preschool for all low-income children
- Expanding student learning time
- Working with CAPSS to focus on personalized learning, including recognition that learning must be the constant and time the variable
- Developing and maintaining a climate and culture that supports student success
- Supporting professional development and sharing of best practices in curricula, instruction and assessment.

CABE has also been involved in supporting one of the strategies designed to increase family engagement through our work with school governance councils. We have provided training and ongoing support to school governance council members. Part of that training focuses on their role as ambassadors and the need for outreach to other parents and community members.

CABE is also expanding the outreach to school boards to help them focus on their role in raising student achievement. The Lighthouse training gives board members the tools to analyze data and ask the right questions to move their students forward. CABE and CAPSS are currently working together to review the existing school board/superintendent governance and assessment documents to insure a greater focus on their roles in promoting student achievement.

Sustained leadership at all levels - from the classroom to the state legislature - is critical to addressing the achievement gap. CABE looks forward to continuing to work as a partner with you in this effort.