

Appropriations Subcommittee on Elementary and Secondary Education
Public Hearing
Written Testimony
February 13, 2020

Written Testimony of Tim Sullivan, Superintendent of CREC Schools

Dear Senator Abrams, Representative Rosario, and members of the Appropriations Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee:

I am submitting testimony to ask that you consider identifying funds to support getting more teachers of color in Connecticut's public schools.

You are all well aware of the disproportionality that exists between our Black and Latinx teachers and our students. For several years, we have heard speeches about the need to get more teachers of color in front of our students. For years, there has been little progress.

I respectfully submit that we have misplaced our efforts on recruiting when we should be talking about certification.

Hundreds of young adults of color are ready and willing to become teachers. They already have a bachelor's degree and a strong desire to make a difference in the lives of children. Many are from underserved communities, and they have the skills to build bridges with our students and their families. What they need is an alternative route to certification when the traditional path is not an option.

Many young adults are strapped with student loans and need to get paid while they get certified. Some have families and need access to health care. Some need extra support to pass the certification tests, but all of them have the potential to add richness and expertise to our classrooms. We need to give them the chance to join our classrooms.

There are rigorous, high-quality programs in Connecticut that are designed to accomplish the goal of getting more people certified while ensuring they have access to a steady income and health care. Some of them, like CREC's Teacher Residency Program, are already established, approved by the SDE, and recommended by the CEA. All that is lacking is the financial commitment to expand it throughout the state.

Please consider allocating funds directly to Minority Teacher Certification programs so that we can provide every child in Connecticut the opportunity to be taught by an individual who is not only highly-qualified and capable but also a member of a racial/ethnic group that has been shut out of public education for too long. Our students deserve it.

We will not recruit our way out of this problem, we can only certify our way out. Show that we deeply support this goal by putting real money behind it.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Timothy Sullivan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Timothy Sullivan
Superintendent
CREC Magnet Schools