

Written Testimony

Connecticut State Board of Education Meeting

February 1, 2017

The Sheff Movement coalition asks that the Board include in its proposed state accountability metrics under the Every Student Succeeds Act the need to track school integration trends within and across school districts throughout Connecticut.

The Every Student Succeeds Act requires that State Education Agencies develop four different accountability indicators for elementary and middle schools, and high schools:

- 1) academic achievement,
- 2) growth (for elementary/middle) or graduation (high school),
- 3) English Language proficiency, and
- 4) state determined measures.

The fourth indicator gives states significant flexibility for adding their own metrics to the state accountability plan. The state board of education has proposed six such additional measures.

Given the significant body of research supporting the importance and effectiveness of socioeconomic and racial integration in schools, and given the significant investment made in implementing education integration programs within Connecticut, the study and monitoring of integration progress, both within and across districts, should be a measure included by the State in the service of improving our efforts to reduce racial isolation and poverty concentration. Are our schools and districts moving in the direction of greater racial and economic integration – or in the opposite direction? What is the rate of progress over time? The burden of monitoring progress on school integration should not be placed on the already over-burdened resources of individual schools and school districts.

ESSA accountability plans must be approved by the U.S. Department of Education, and as a condition of their approval must undergo peer-review by a team selected by the Secretary which includes civil rights researchers and experts. The inclusion of a metric tracking integration trends, a critical measure of the constitutional right of Connecticut students to an equitable education, will help to provide the most holistic picture of our educational progress and inform integration efforts into the future. But even more importantly, it is imperative that we know if and in what ways our students are affected by our significant efforts to provide them with an integrated, equitable education, where we are succeeding, and where we can do more.

Rachel Gary

The Sheff Movement

860-796-8013

rgary@sheffmovement.org