

May 29, 2025

# CAS-CIAC Student Equity Advisory Board-Final Presentation

# CAS-CIAC SEAB: Improving Student Mental Health in Schools and Athletics

By: Idhaant Bhosle, Adam Chouiki,  
Alisha Zafar



# Recognize the problem



35.6%

of CT high schoolers felt sad or hopeless for 2+ weeks, affecting daily life.

~182,200  
Students in CT



# Overview of Mental Health

Mental health has to do with our emotional, psychological, and social well being.

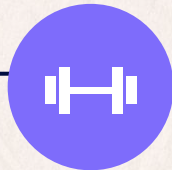
Mental health affects our:

## Thinking

- Our thoughts of surroundings or people.
  - What other people think of us.
  - How we handle stress.
- 
- How we treat others, express feelings, socialize, and make choices in different situations.

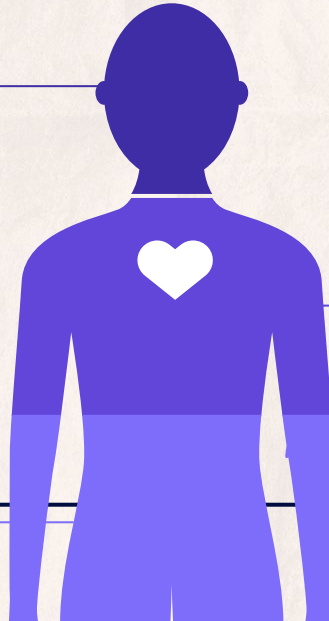


## Actions



## Emotions

- Happy, sad, angry, frustrated, disgust etc..
- How we feel towards certain people.
- How we relate to other people's feelings.



# Destigmatizing Its Practice





# The Impact of Mindfulness Education



## Mindfulness Boosts Grades

- Students who practiced mindfulness on their own:
  - Scored **15–20% higher** in school
  - Were **25% better** at handling stress
- No teachers needed — all done **independently**

[https://bmcmmededuc.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12909-024-06192-6?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://bmcmmededuc.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12909-024-06192-6?utm_source=chatgpt.com) – **Jiroft University of Medical Sciences**

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# Collaboration with CSDE

- Opportunity to discuss with CSDE's consultant for School Mental Health
  - Mindfulness is quintessential to improving Mental Health
  - Practice by incorporating into the curriculum
  - Spreading awareness



# Component of Social, Emotional, and Intellectual Habits



# Plan to apply these practices in Schools



## 1. Breathing Reset (1–2 min):

Breathe in for 4 seconds

- Hold for 4
- Breathe out for 4
- Repeat a few times to clear your head

## 2. Quick Journal (2–3 min)

- Write down 1 thing that went well today
- Or 1 thing you're looking forward to

## 3. Future Snapshot (5 min, once a week)

- Write a short paragraph about what your best life looks like in 5 years
- Be real — job, health, goals, people around you



# Open to Q&A

If you would like to further collaborate with us email us at  
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# CAS – CIAC SEAB: Ensuring Fair Access to Sports Facilities and Equipment in Schools

**Presented By: Alvin, Amaya, Cassandra, Maicen, Naiem**

# Title IX

## And Why It Matters

prohibits gender inequities in funded schools programs

- It requires schools to offer equal opportunities in facilities, equipment, and funding for both girls and boys
- Title IX also protects students from harassment and discrimination in athletic spaces
- Despite this, many Connecticut schools still fall short—girls' teams often receive less support, older equipment, and limited access to — — gyms or fields

# Understanding Inequities in School Sports

- Students in underfunded schools often get outdated or have unsafe equipment
- Gender will often play a role with teams getting more access
- Sports with high costs can exclude lower-income students
- Students of color, disabled students, and underprivileged students may face extra barriers or feel left out

# Involving Booster Clubs Without Causing Conflict

Booster clubs often raise money for sports, but may only support certain teams. This can create big gaps between programs.

Ways to help:

Create school-wide equity policies for donations

Share funding information publicly so everyone understands where money goes

Encourage shared fundraising that benefits all teams fairly

# Barriers Within Sports

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Not all students have the  
same chance to join  
sports, even when offered.

Some barriers:

- No rides home after practice
- Expensive uniforms or fees
- Lack of awareness about tryouts
- Not feeling welcome or safe

# Solutions

That Make a Difference

- Do a sports equity audit to see who's being left out
- Use student surveys to find out what students need
- Make practice times fair for all teams—don't always give best times to just a few
- Partner with community groups for equipment donations or transportation help

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# Call to Action

— — —

What can we do now?

- Speak up if you see unfair access
- Encourage inclusive booster support
- Push for clear equity guidelines in your school
- Make sure student voices are heard in sports decision

# Where Can We Go From Here?

— — —

Fair play starts before  
the game even begins.

- Equity should be talked about in sports more often
- Schools can review its athletic funding and access policies
- Student-athletes can suggest a yearly sports equity check-in or start a student-led survey to keep people informed

# Thank You

Please feel free to reach out to us  
with any further questions!

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# Addressing Racial Inequities in School Achievement

Anvi Bose, Manas Ghanta, and Ashlyn O'Rourke



# Mission

## Statement

Racial inequities in school achievement are mainly seen in urban communities, proliferated by a lack of opportunity and a framing of education that does not emphasize the opportunities available to students after high school. To combat this, we aim to educate students on their choices post-high school and create a community of parents that are involved in their children's post-secondary plans.

# Current Context

- There is an attack on measures considered “DEI” - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion by the current administration
- As these measures move further away from increasing fairness in the college application and selection process, they are beginning to infringe on many of the procedures put in place to bridge the socioeconomic gap between demographics in education
- DEI initiatives in K-12 schools are not clearly defined - which is why it now falls upon the responsibility of school administrators themselves to ensure the infrastructure previously under “DEI” measures is protected- and backed by an ideology of fairness and better opportunity

# The Power Of Education

Why are certain demographics and systems more prone to undervalue education?



## Urban Communities and Socioeconomic Disparities

See next slide: Connecticut's most diverse communities are also its most urban and economically disparaged.



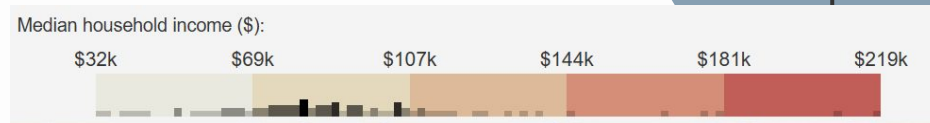
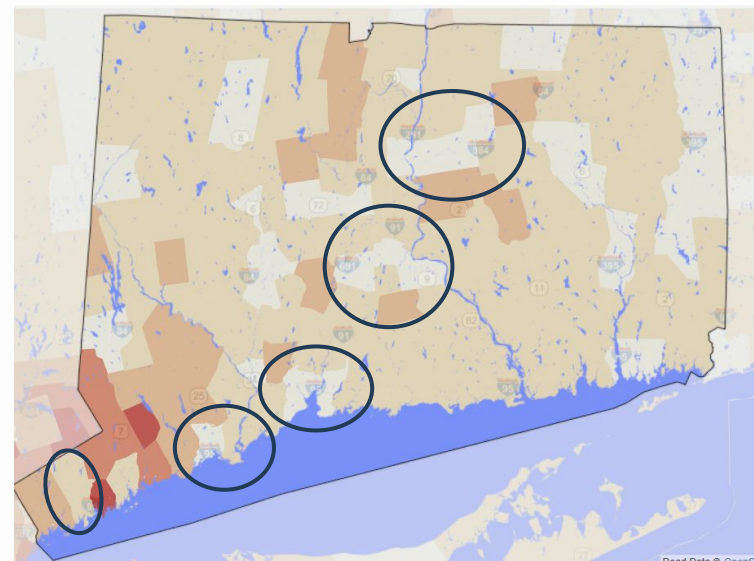
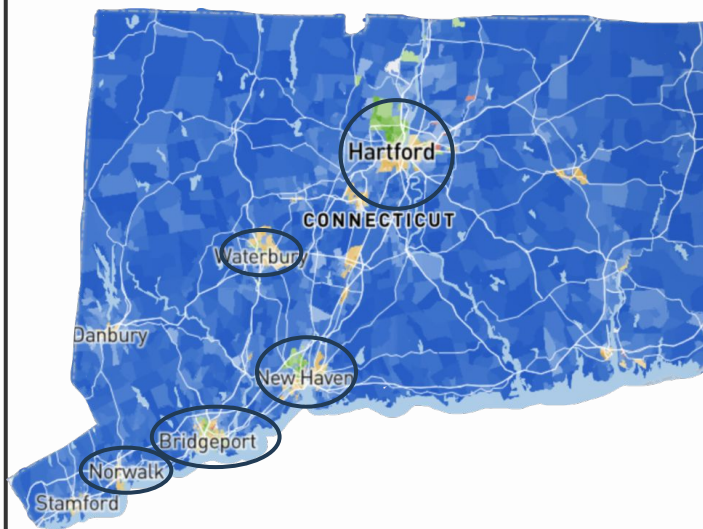
## Opportunities

A lack of funds most often translates to a lack of opportunity; these include transportation, support systems regarding targeted careers and success, and disciplinary accountability.



## Motivation and Mindset

Without the resources to support high-level endeavors by students, an entirely new culture is formed in these groups/regions. Students will not have a community where they are motivated to think about their academic achievement or post-secondary plans. Our goal is to start here- with community.



# Community Partnerships: Horizons



## Opportunities on Education

Systemic inequities often limit access to valuable resources, causing many students to fall behind



## Recreational Activities

Students are exposed to activities such as sports, community service, volunteering, and field trips



## Year Round Support

Keeps students engaged in a supportive, mentor led community from K-12



# Family Involvement

What can schools do to promote family involvement in a child's academic future?



## **Family Management Specialist: Case Study**

Certain schools have family management specialists that keep parents involved and informed



## **Impact On Students**

Students have shown direct correlation with parents who remain involved by having greater attendance and grades

# Questions to Consider and Next Steps

- Do students at your school feel represented by your staff?
- Are students able to see the real world connections of the things they learn in the classroom?
- How will educating students about post-high school options directly impact academic performance?
- What strategies will be used to involve parents, particularly those who may face language, work, or trust barriers?
- What evidence exists to support the claim that a lack of opportunity and poor framing of post-secondary pathways contribute to underachievement?

# Thank you! Feel free to reach out!

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Anvi Bose - Rocky Hill High School - [anvibose08@gmail.com](mailto:anvibose08@gmail.com) - 860-549-2986



**Write down the name of the  
first person you think of  
when you hear these  
professions**

**Scientist** (5 seconds each, go!) **Teacher**

**President**

**Inventor**





**How many of the people that  
you wrote down were white?**

**From the same background?**

We been taught to picture what we see. To  
reflect all students, we must diversify who we  
center our classrooms around



# **Increasin g Diversity Among Educators**

May 24, 2015



# Who are we?



**Emily Yurcisin**

Junior at Brookfield High School



**Mackenzie Stewart**

Senior at Academy of Computer Science & Engineering High School



**Kimar Burton**

Senior at New Britain High School



**Ehsanullah Hadi**

Junior at West Haven High School



**Caleb Ortiz**

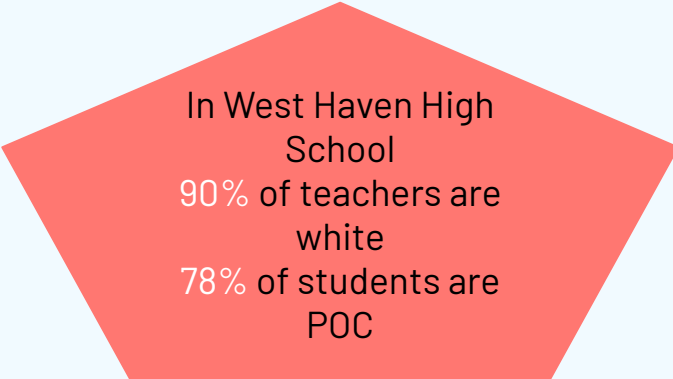
Junior at Sound High School

- ❖ **Unequal access** to quality education
- ❖ **Lack of representation** and role models
- ❖ Limited support and **mentorship** for POC educators
- ❖ **Economic barriers** to higher education and certification




# WHY?

Why is there such a big disparity in educators ?

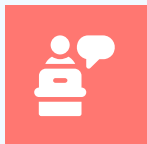


In West Haven High School  
90% of teachers are white  
78% of students are POC



# The Benefit

## Educator-Student Connection



- Students learn better when they connect with their teachers
- Shared backgrounds build trust and understanding
- This improves both teaching and learning

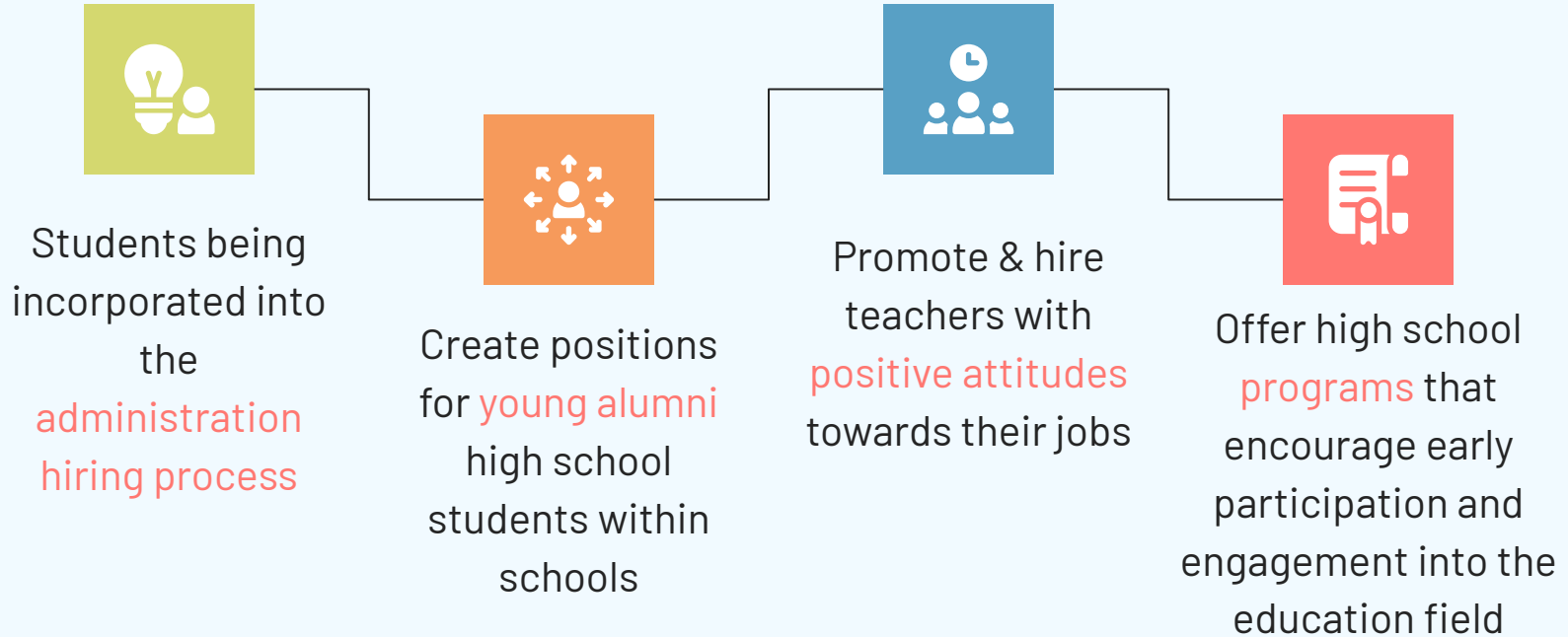
## Secondary Education



- Seeing someone with a shared background makes goals like college feel achievable
- Representation helps students believe they belong



# Recommendations



# Grow Your Own Teacher Programs

**Vision:** To eliminate the teacher shortage by reimagining educator pathways

**Mission:** To inspire and grow current and rising educators to become community leaders and advocates for high quality education



# Recommendation

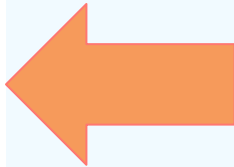
**Problem:** The U.S. faces a growing **teacher shortage**, especially among educators of **color**. Many students never consider teaching because schools don't **expose** them to it early on, leaving potential talent untapped

- Offer a **high school course** that introduces students to the **education field**
- This course would give students **early exposure** to teaching as a career
- It can inspire **future educators** and increase **representation** in the profession



# Proposed Plan

- We met with UConn's ECE program, and Quinnipiac University to further encourage education courses to high schools
- Schools can offer **EDCI 1100: If You love it, Teach it**
- This gives students, especially students of color, early exposure to a career in education



Quinnipiac program

UConn program





# UConn Program Stats

So how does this help not just grow educators, but increase diversity too?

50% of the students enrolled in the course are POC

Almost 20,000 students are currently enrolled in this program



# Benefits of Bringing This Plan to Your School

**Solves real problems** – Tackles teacher shortages and lack of educator diversity

**Low-cost, high-impact** – Uses existing resources, with grants and funding support available

**Boosts student opportunity** – Offers college credit, scholarships, and clear pathways to teaching

**Builds school pride** – Positions the school as a leader in equity and future workforce development

**Backed by universities and national partners** – Strong support makes it easy to implement and sustain.







# **Thank You So Much For Your Time & Consideration**

Feedback &  
Questions?

# Resources

## Emails:

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Ehsanullah Hadi:

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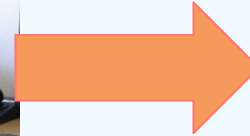
Mackenzie Stewart:

[stewart.mackenzie@gmail.com](mailto:stewart.mackenzie@gmail.com)

## Quinnipiac program



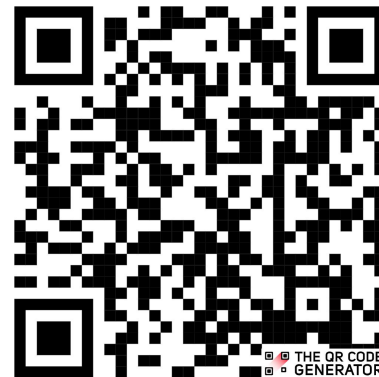
[Video Link](#)



## UConn program



[Video Link](#)





# *Supporting Gender and **LGBTQIA+** Inclusivity in Schools*



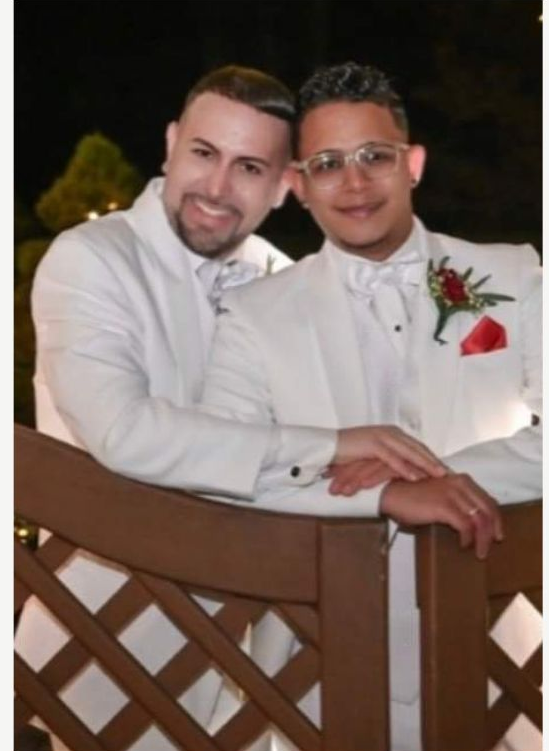
May 2025

Presented by  
**Joy Deng & Jessie Zheng**

*“They bullied me  
until I went **silent**.  
I didn’t come out  
until **college**.”*

- Andrew Peralta, Hamden

*Bullied from 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade to High School*



“The teachers did the best that they could, but some other ones saw bullying going on right in front of their faces. They didn’t do anything about it. **Nothing**. They never took me to the side and say, ‘Listen, are you having a hard time? Are people saying hurtful things about you?’ **Nothing like that.**”

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57%

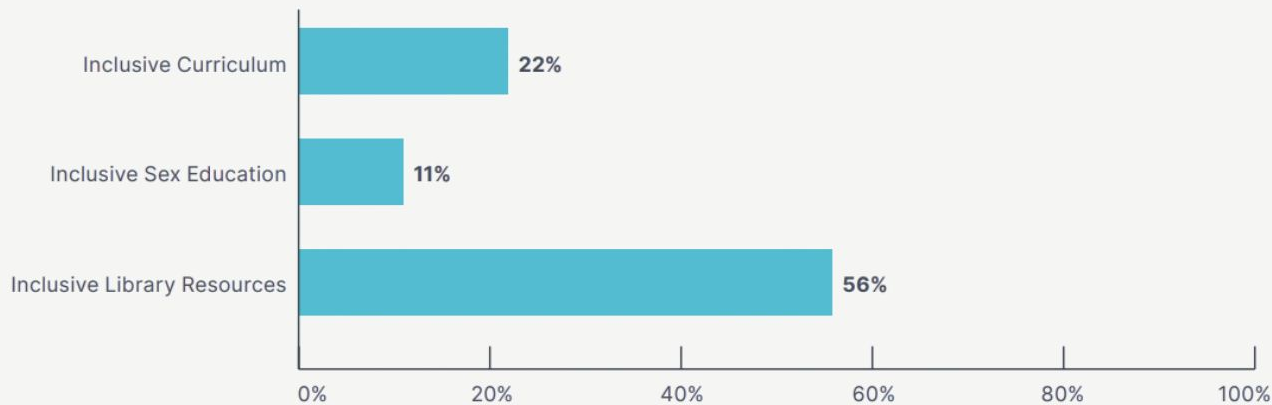
*of LGBTQ+ students reported that their school administration was somewhat or very supportive of LGBTQ+ students.*

46%

*experienced at least one form of anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination at school.*

85%

*of LGBTQ+ students do not attend a school with a comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment policy that included specific protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.*



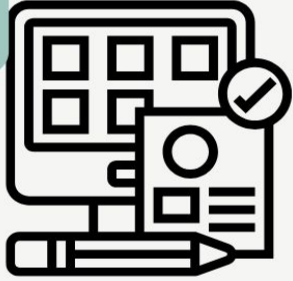
57%

*had access to a GSA or similar student club which provides a safe and affirming space and promotes a more welcoming school climate for LGBTQ+ students.*

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**“There was no support system.** There was no group in school for people that were gay that they could come together and talk about their experiences. Nothing, there was no support, and then in the public culture at the time, it was totally like you were the butt of the joke. For people, it was just normal. And so, it was very much a closeted culture.”

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Curriculum  
Editing

—



Including  
voices

—

2



Book  
suggestions

—



Empa

—



# *Representation in the Classroom is Lifesaving.*

In 2019, just 1 in 4 Connecticut students said they were taught positive representations of LGBTQ people, history, or events at school.

In 2021, only 22% were taught positive representations of LGBTQ+ people, history, or events (“inclusive curriculum”).

2021 NATIONAL SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY STATE SNAPSHOT

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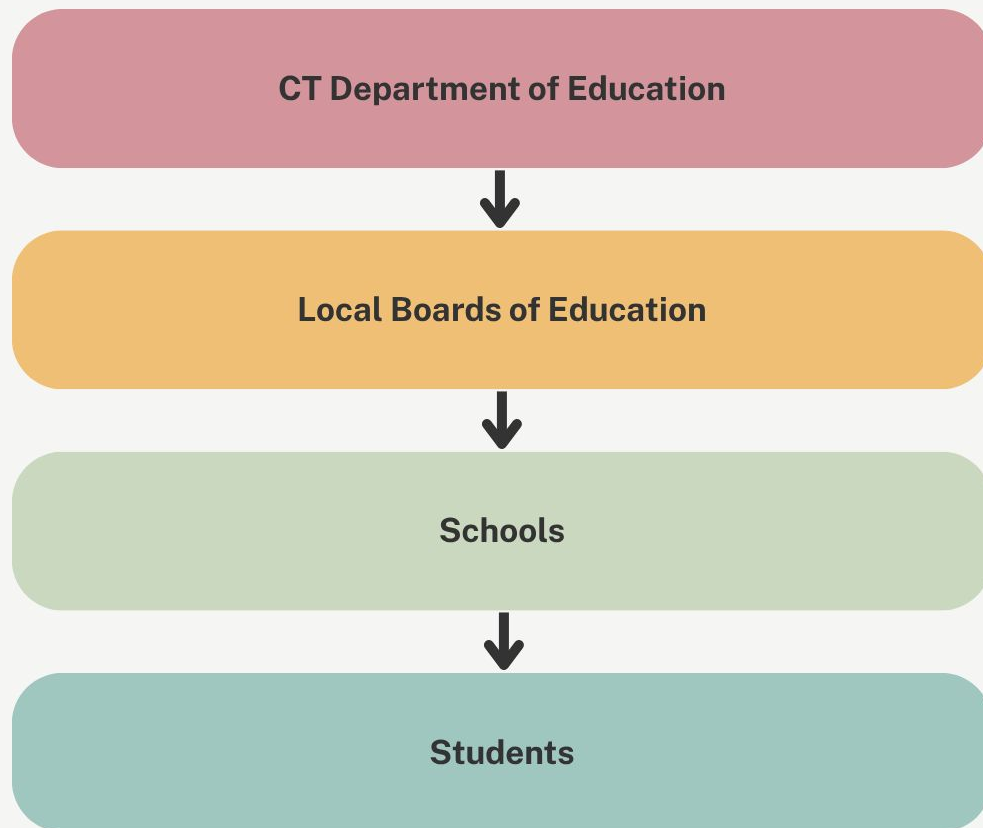
## **CT Has Done This Before — and Succeeded.**

- HB 7082 (2019): Required public high schools to offer Black & Latino Studies
- HB 5282 (2022): Required Asian American history in K–12
- HB 6619 (2021): Funded inclusive K–8 model social studies curriculum

# A Taskforce Model for Change — State to School

Establish a task force to go through  
each level of the curriculum to  
revise.

**Goal: Every level plays a role in  
building safe, representative  
learning environments.**



## Connecticut Student Equity Advisory Board

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### CT Department of Education

- Establish a statewide LGBTQIA+ Inclusive Curriculum Taskforce
  - Include educators, curriculum experts, LGBTQIA+ advocates (e.g., GLSEN CT), and students
  - Timeline: 12–18 months for curriculum development, piloting, and review
- Create:
  - K–12 LGBTQIA+-inclusive model curriculum
  - Implementation guidelines
  - Resource hub for schools (books, lesson plans, training materials)
- Encourage adoption across districts (similar to the HB 6619 model)

*If there are any state representatives or senators, push for a similar bill to ensure it is mandated across the state for better protection & education.*

## Connecticut Student Equity Advisory Board

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### Local Boards of Education

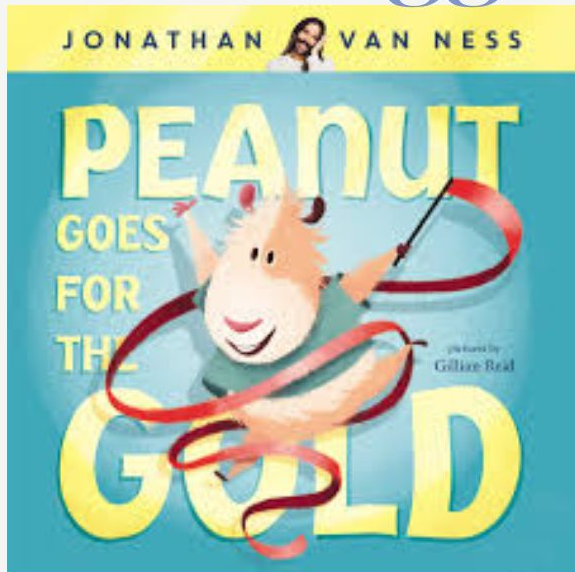
### Schools

- Adopt the state's model curriculum
- Fund local training and curricular review
- Form District Curriculum Equity Committees with student, teacher, and community involvement
- Incorporate LGBTQIA+ inclusion into school improvement plans

# Book Suggestions

## K-6

Visual & story telling  
focused



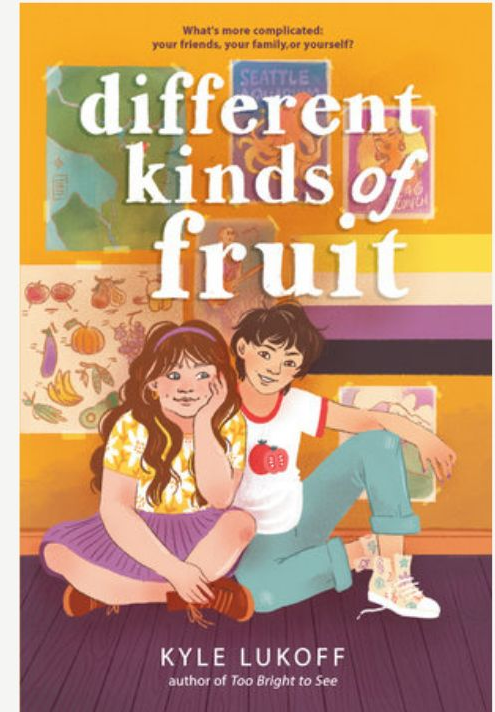
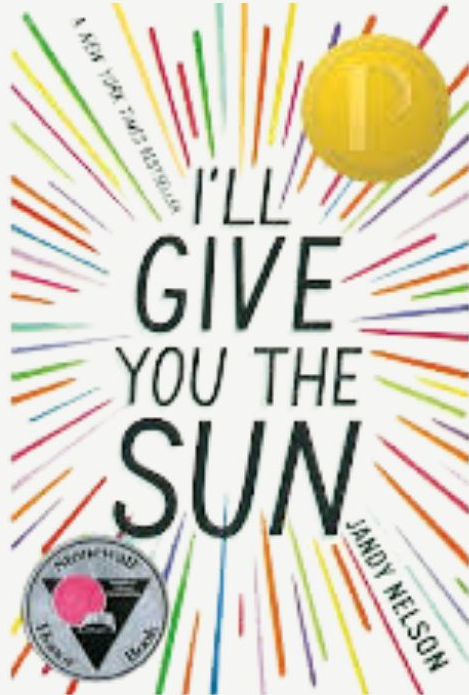
1st grade level  
Charming, funny, heartfelt



4th grade level  
Inquisitive & inspiring

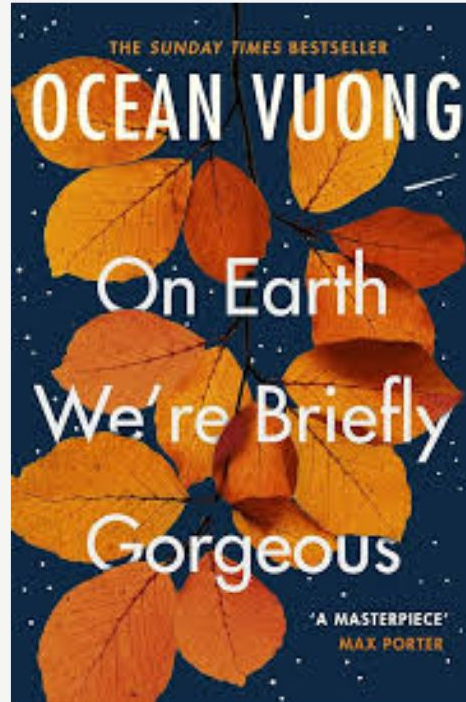
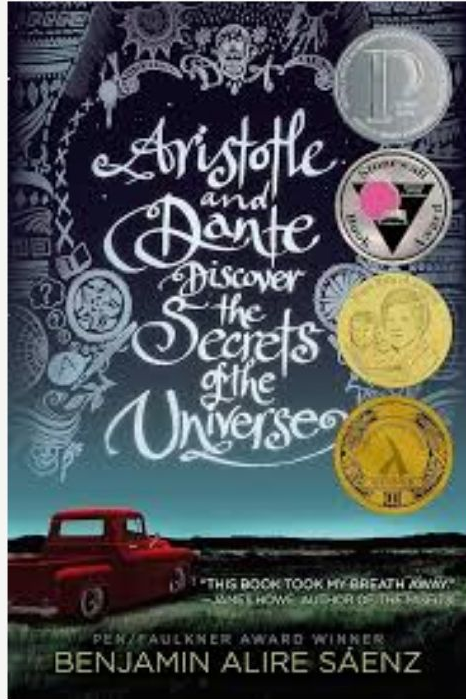
# Book Suggestions 7-8

Coming of age stories that explore identity & happiness



# *Book Suggestions*

9-12



Exploring intersectionality

*This isn't just about inclusion. It's about survival.*

*This isn't just about inclusion. It's about survival.*

Proposals:

- A multi-level curriculum reform plan — modeled on successful CT legislation like HB 6619 and HB 7082
- A statewide taskforce to lead development of inclusive curriculum
- BOE and school-based initiatives to build curriculum teams and include student voice
- Specific book suggestions and historical figures to reflect LGBTQIA+ lives across grade levels

## Connecticut Student Equity Advisory Board

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# *Thank you*

*Please email us: [jessie.zh190@gmail.com](mailto:jessie.zh190@gmail.com), [joy.deng0722@gmail.com](mailto:joy.deng0722@gmail.com)*

