



EQUITY TOOLKIT

*for
Connecticut
Boards of Education*

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INTRODUCTION

“Where equity is the mindset, equality is the result.”

So begins the Connecticut State Board of Education’s five-year *Comprehensive Plan to Ensure Equity and Excellence for All Connecticut Students*. “All children, regardless of their life circumstances,” the Plan continues, “deserve an excellent education that helps them reach high standards of performance” (Preface, p. 4).

Connecticut has work to do. “The persistence of disparities in learning opportunities and academic outcomes has contributed to America’s decline in educational performance in comparison with other nations,” according to Alan Blankstein and Pedro Noguera in *Excellence through Equity*, (2016, p. 4). America is witnessing a significant demographic shift. As students arrive at our schoolhouse doors with an increasing wealth of backgrounds, we have witnessed an erosion in their overall academic success when compared to other nations.

Mirroring the country, Connecticut schools have a pervasive achievement/opportunity gap – one that, according to surveys, may be the worst in the nation. Demographics in Connecticut are also changing -- Connecticut’s student enrollment has declined by 3.5 percent over the past five years (Condition of Education, SDE, 2016-17). Though lower, the enrollment is increasingly more diverse (i.e., 45.2 percent are non-white.)

If we are to ensure a vibrant democracy in the future, the leaders of Connecticut’s public schools must take up the State Board’s challenge and ensure that each of our children has equitable access to excellent educational opportunity.

It is critical that our educational institutions adapt to ensure each child is successful. As our demographics change, local education policymakers must consider the best approaches to prepare every child, building on students’ varied experiences and backgrounds. The diversity of our student bodies requires Boards to engage their communities in open conversations about equity.

This Toolkit is designed to help you, your school Board, and your community to reflect on your policies and practices, then create a plan that eliminates barriers to excellence and equity and encourages a more welcoming culture. We have made every effort to align this toolkit with the State Board’s Plan.

There are no quick fixes to inequities that have long been part of the foundation of this country, our culture, and our educational systems. Nevertheless, this Toolkit is intended to help you examine your personal and collective cultural competency and, with your community, consider issues through an equity lens. Further, we offer tools to engage your communities in discussing issues of equity and opportunity for all.

No student should confront bias, harassment, prejudice, or discrimination in our schools and communities. It is up to us, as effective district leaders, to establish and sustain safe and enjoyable learning environments.

To encourage school Boards in their equity work, the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) established an Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity with the following vision and values:

VISION:

Every Connecticut school Board will embrace diversity and commit to equity and fairness to enhance success for each child.

VALUES & BELIEFS:

- School Board and district staff should reflect the community's diversity
- CABE shall serve as a catalyst in promoting policies and practices that support diversity and equity
- School districts need to understand students' socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. State educational organizations should understand students' socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds.
- Connecticut must overcome barriers to attracting a diverse teaching force

MISSION:

CABE's Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity exists to:

- Analyze and make recommendations to overcome barriers to attracting a diverse workforce.
- Analyze and make recommendations to overcome barriers to attracting Board members of color Inspire other Board members to commit to the vision.

Through this work, we seek to be a critical partner with the Connecticut State Board of Education, to "deliver fully on our promise to our children... sharing this common vision and work(ing) in concert on behalf of all students" (*SBOE Plan, p. 6*).

We thank you for joining with us and taking on this critical work!



EQUITY

Equity is not the same as equality. It is giving students what they need to be successful, academically and socially.

CABE's Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity defined educational equity as:

...access to resources, opportunities, and processes that unleash potential and enhance success and prosperity for each and every child. Equity is NOT sameness. Equity recognizes and responds to the gifts and needs in each individual in each community.

To reach equity, students will need to “see themselves” in their curriculum and instructional materials.

They must have access, support, and resources to achieve success in school and in life. Instruction must tap into their backgrounds.

Educational excellence cannot exist without equity. Excellence results when all students have access to high levels of learning. Equity exists when there are no systematic disparities in academic outcomes based upon race, ethnicity, gender, economic status, or zip code.



CULTURE & CULTURAL COMPETENCE

If school Boards are going to oversee districts that allow each child to thrive, then the school Board itself should be examining its own cultural competence.

WHAT IS CULTURE?

According to the Dictionary of Modern Sociology, “Culture is the total, generally organized way of life, including values, norms, institutions, and artifacts, that is passed from generation to generation.”

HOW DOES CULTURE AFFECT US?

Culture becomes our reality, a map that guides us and a lens through which we see the world and process experiences. Our cultures have helped mold us into who we are and given us context and meaning. Culture influences our values, actions, and expectations.

The cultures of schools may or may not be in harmony with the cultural background of each student. Schools greatly influence how students see themselves. Therefore, schools need to affirm students’ backgrounds if they are to be effective in educating all students. *(Source: Cartledge, 1996... from London County Cultural Diversity)*

WHAT IS CULTURAL COMPETENCE?

Cultural competence is the ability to operate effectively within different cultural contexts. *(National Association of School Psychologists, Loudon)*

In a culturally competent school system, individuals honor, respect, and value diversity in theory and practice. Teaching and learning are relevant and meaningful to students of various cultures.

Cultural competence is:

- The integration and transformation of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, practices, and attitudes used in appropriate cultural settings to increase the quality of services, thereby producing better outcomes. *(National Technical Assistance Center for State Mental Health Planning, Davis, 1997; Loudon)*
- The ability to think, feel, and act in ways that acknowledge, respect, and build upon ethnic, socio- cultural, and linguistic diversity. *(Lynch and Hanson, 1998; Loudon)*
- A district that honors, respects, and values diversity in theory and in practice and where teaching and learning are made relevant and meaningful to students of various cultures.

(A More Perfect Union: Building an Education System that Embraces All Children, National Association of State Boards of Education, 2002)

HOW DO WE ACQUIRE CULTURAL COMPETENCE?

- Recognize the broad dimensions of culture.
- Respect families as the primary source for defining needs and priorities.
- Increase sensitivity to alienating behaviors.
- Change decision-making processes to include families and the community.
- Commit to structural and policy changes that support cultural diversity.
- Make policies and practices fluid to accommodate necessary adjustments.

Source: Focal Regional Research Institute for Human Services, Portland State University; Loudon

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS TO ASSESS CULTURAL COMPETENCE:

Individually:

- Do I have the desire, knowledge, and skill to integrate culturally relevant considerations into our work?
- How do my own cultural experiences and values impact the way I work?
- Do I engage in open and honest dialogue about culture and diversity with diverse groups of people?
- Do I have close personal relationships with people who are culturally and socio-economically different?

As a Board, do we...

Value diversity? Have we...

- Created an environment in which people feel safe to express culturally based values, perceptions and experiences?
- Hired administrators and other employees who reflect the community's cultural diversity?
- Provided learning events at which all cultures are celebrated?



Conduct regular cultural self-assessments? Have we...

- Honestly explored values, beliefs, and attitudes about our cultures and that of others?
- Non-defensively engaged the school system, families, and larger community in the self- assessment?
- Examined recruiting and hiring practices and policies to ensure diverse staffing and leadership?
- Engaged in open, honest dialogue about culture and diversity with diverse groups?
- Gathered participation and satisfaction rates of families served from various cultures?
- Considered our policies, practices, and activities through an equity lens?
- Assessed whether our methods of communication are culturally sensitive?
- Identified cross-cultural dynamics?

Do we...

- Understand how historical and political differences between cultural groups impact relationships and opinions?
- Build capacity to communicate with non-English-speaking families?
- Ensure written communications are appropriate for literacy levels of families served?
- Welcome non-traditional families?
- Understand how religion influences values and behaviors?
- Institutionalize cultural knowledge?

Have we...

- Created/adopted principles of practice around cultural competence?
- Established a permanent advisory group that focuses on cultural competence?
- Ensured our schools adapt teaching and learning to build on cultural backgrounds?

Do we...

- Expect staffing that is linguistically and ethnically representative?
- Leverage cultural strengths?
- Tailor outreach methods to cultures represented?

(adapted from National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown U., Loudon)

GETTING STARTED:

1. Identify cultural diversity within the community.
2. Conduct comprehensive assessment of yourself and your Board:
 - A. Is cultural diversity celebrated?
 - B. Do staff and the organization understand and respect the cultures represented?
 - C. Do programs address the unique needs and concerns of the cultures represented?
 - D. Is cultural competence reflected in policies, practices, and procedures?
 - E. Do staff at all levels reflect the cultures of the community?
3. Engage in dialogue with cultural communities represented in schools
 - A. Explore beliefs, values, and attitudes related to cultural competence
 - B. Build and use network of community experts who have knowledge of groups served
 - C. Network with parents and family organizations
4. Identify and understand the needs and behaviors of families
5. Identify best practices by learning from other organizations and individuals
6. Design and implement services based on families' and community's culturally based choices



THE IMPORTANCE OF BOARDS REFLECTING THEIR COMMUNITIES

One of the most important responsibilities of any Board of Education is to ensure that it reflects the aspirations, needs, and expectations of its community. As we gathered information for this Toolkit, we learned that only a small number of Board members in Connecticut were of color: Approximately 12 percent were African-American and 4 percent were Latino or Hispanic. Research has indicated that when there are people of color on a Board, there is a greater likelihood that policies will be more aligned with student needs and success. If our Boards are going to reflect the changing student demographics of our state, it would be helpful to think about this issue and how more people of color might be recruited to run for the Board.

Adapted from:

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EQUITY LENS*

OBJECTIVE: By utilizing an equity lens, a School Board aims to:

- (a). provide a common vocabulary and protocol for evaluating policies, programs, practices and decisions for equity and;
- (b). produce policies, programs, practices which result in more equitable outcomes.

PROCEDURE: For any policy, program, practice or decision, consider the following five questions:

1. Who are the under-represented groups (federal subgroups) affected by this policy, program, practice or decision? And what are the potential impacts on these groups?
2. Does this policy, program, practice or decision worsen existing disparities or produce other unintended consequences?
3. How have you intentionally involved stakeholders who are also members of the communities affected by this policy, program, practice or decision? Can you validate your assessments in (1) and (2)?
4. What are the barriers to more equitable outcomes? (e.g. mandated, political, emotional, financial, programmatic or managerial)
5. How will you (a) mitigate the negative impacts and (b) address the barriers identified above?

**Courtesy of Portland, Oregon Public Schools*



EXCELLENCE THROUGH EQUITY

In *Excellence Through Equity: Five Principles of Courageous Leadership to Guide Achievement for Every Student* (2016), Pedro Noguera and Alan Blankstein argue (and cite myriad examples) that pursuing excellence through an equity lens improves outcomes for ALL students.

They recognize potential barriers to this pursuit:

- **POLITICS** and a lack of will to ensure that all students have access to high quality learning opportunities and good teachers;
- **TRADITION** of practices that contribute to race/class disparities, like tracking, special education placements, and discipline practices; and
- **BELIEFS** or low expectations, normalization of patterns, and lack of internal accountability.

The achievement gap mirrors other disparities, like health, income, and employment. These conditions affect academic performance, and what we do in schools often increases these disparities.

Axiom 1: The primary responsibility of leaders is to ensure that conditions conducive to good teaching and learning are in place and that all children have the opportunity to learn.

Axiom 2: The skills of the staff and resources available to the schools must match the needs of students.

Axiom 3: We know we are succeeding in closing the gap when race and class cease to predict students' achievement.

What does pursuing excellence through equity look like?

- We take a holistic approach to education, differentiating support;
- We ensure all students have access to deeper learning, since neuroscience demonstrates the elasticity of the brain; and
- We understand and respond to the way students are affected by their environment, family, peers, community, society.

What do we need to know to educate children effectively? Noguera says we need to know:

- What their lives are like outside of school;
- How they learn outside of school;
- What motivates and interests them;
- What challenges they (and their families) face; and
- What needs are unmet that may impact learning.

Axiom 4: The more you know about the children you serve, the better you will be at meeting their needs and supporting their successes.

INGREDIENTS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

- Coherent instructional guidance;
- Ongoing professional development of staff;
- Strong parent-school-community ties;
- Student-centered learning climate; and
- Shared leadership to drive change.

FOCUS ON EVIDENCE OF LEARNING:

- Model and expose students to high quality work, making expectations clear and standards explicit;
- Check for understanding through diagnostic tools;
- Make lessons culturally relevant by learning about students' interests;
- Focus on motivation and engagement by soliciting students' feedback and questions; and
- Analyze student work with a focus on evidence of competence and mastery.

FOCUS ON ENGAGEMENT

- *Behavioral Engagement*: preparation, persistence, seeking help;
- *Cognitive Engagement*: Deep processing; meta-cognition; and
- *Affective Engagement*: Interest, value.

We used to think: intelligence is innate;

- Schools are supposed to measure intelligence and sort accordingly;
- We should give the best resources to the highest achievers; and
- Discipline is to weed out the “bad” kids.

Now we know:

- Intelligence and ability are influenced by access and opportunity;
- Schools must cultivate talent and ability;
- Resources should be allocated based on need; and
- Discipline should reinforce school values and norms.

(Adapted from Pedro Noguera's PowerPoint, Excellence Through Equity, 5/25/16)

WHY PERSONALIZED LEARNING?

Since equity involves students “seeing themselves” in their instruction and educational materials, a “Personalized Learning” approach may be an important tool to allow that to happen. The Connecticut State Department of Education encourages local school Boards to “take the opportunity and make (learning) come alive for every student in their care” (CSDE Plan, p. 6), and encourages personalized learning as a vehicle to get there.

A key component of personalized learning is embracing the backgrounds and cultures of students. Policy makers and educators need to walk in the shoes of those whose cultures have not been in the traditional mainstream, embracing the richness of talents and backgrounds our children bring to school. There is increasing urgency for school Boards to engage their communities in dialogue on the topic of cultural competency.

Why personalized learning?


Too many of our students attend schools where they feel disconnected, since the school experience is rooted in a culture that is not their own. Students for whom a traditional education has not worked often have low levels of confidence in themselves (self-efficacy) as learners, and in the system that has not valued their backgrounds. Schunk and Zimmerman (1994) found that when self-efficacy is low, students are not motivated to learn.

Educators’ knowledge of students’ backgrounds and cultures is a key ingredient in learning and self- efficacy. Butler and Winnie (1995) recognized that feedback to students is filtered through the existing knowledge and beliefs of the learner, so that feedback needs to be rooted in students’ backgrounds. A student’s learning style influences how they learn, and should influence how instructors teach, and how they interact (Reiff, 1992).



NEXT STEPS FOR BOARDS OF EDUCATION

1. Articulate a vision of equity, aligned with that of the Connecticut State Board of Education.
2. Commit to a “core principle that, with the right supports and rich learning opportunities, every student will meet high academic standards, regardless of a child’s life circumstances” (State Board Plan, p. 7).
3. Generate goals and expectations, aligned with state, school, classroom, and student level goals.
4. Expect our schools “to challenge students to think critically and solve real-world problems” (CSDE, p. 7).
5. Support mastery-based, personalized, experiential learning so students are well-rounded, healthy, lifelong learners.
6. Conduct a Board Cultural Competency Assessment (see pp. 7-8).
7. Consider policy decisions using an Equity Lens.
- 8. Engage your community in an authentic, meaningful conversation about equity (Guide follows).**
9. Work with town committees to recruit school Board members who reflect your community.
10. Ensure a well-aligned support system for vulnerable students.
11. Encourage students to earn credit for credible learning experiences outside the jurisdiction of the district.
12. Recruit great teachers and leaders who reflect students’ diversity and implement and commit to a policy on Minority Recruitment (See CAFE Sample Policy 4111.3).
13. Oversee schools that are structurally safe, welcoming, and culturally responsive learning environments where students meet their learning goals and parents and guardians are true partners.



**A BOARD OF
EDUCATION
PLANNING GUIDE
FOR COMMUNITY
CONVERSATIONS
ABOUT EQUITY**

BACKGROUND

The following planning guide is designed to guide Connecticut school boards in hosting community conversations on equity. Planning these conversations takes some work, but offers a rich opportunity to talk with community members and staff who share concerns about ensuring each child in your district has access to educational excellence and success.

This conversation format is a tool for respectful discussion, characterized by full and diverse participation, where real questions are asked and mutual listening and learning occur.

THE CONVERSATION:

- Provides opportunities for participants from diverse backgrounds to speak openly with each other in a safe setting;
- Invites participants to voice personal views; and
- Encourages community members to consider what they might do individually or what they would like to see the schools and community do to address this issue.



PLANNING A CONVERSATION

A Board should first discuss the purpose of a conversation on equity, exploring the needs it might address. If Board members choose to go this route, they should commit to it through a Board vote.

Once a Board decides to move forward, the first step in hosting a conversation is to **create a planning committee** made up of Board, staff, parents, and community members. It would be important to have individuals who represent all cultural groups to enhance outreach.

At the first meeting of the planning committee, the group will **set a tentative date** for your conversation, ensuring a time that does not conflict with significant school or community events.

CONVERSATION DESCRIPTION

Allow enough time for the conversation... Rich dialogue takes time, and the occasion is also about building trusting relationships. You will want to allow at least three hours for the event, including time for a light meal, opening remarks, small group discussion, and closing. You could choose to make this a weeknight or breakfast on a Saturday. The meal is followed by a brief introduction. It is helpful if trained moderators guide each small group discussion and trained recorders ensure that participants' ideas and comments are accurately documented.

GOALS FOR THE CONVERSATION

The overarching goal is to hear rich, productive discussion among a representative cross-section of the community. Specific objectives are to:

- Advance understanding and broaden perspectives of all stakeholders – parents, students, employers, educators, civic leaders, and the Board itself – by providing a neutral setting in which they can come together, interact with one another, and share experiences and perspectives.
- Engage members of the community who are not typically involved in conversations about excellence in education.
- Generate conversations that begin with the public's starting point as much as with that of the Board. Give participants the chance to consider several options – each with its own set of possible actions and drawbacks.
- Help participants think and talk through basic values, concerns, barriers, and assumptions that underlie their views.
- Help participants consider any areas of agreement, disagreements, and next steps.
- Raise important issues and questions and provide participants with information, contacts, and resources they can use to improve excellence and equity in your schools.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

The planning group could choose to structure conversation looking at some opposing perspectives, such as:

Option 1:

Intelligence and ability are influenced by access and opportunity; schools are supposed to cultivate talent and ability; resources should be allocated based on need; and discipline should reinforce school values and norms.

Option 2:

Intelligence and ability are innate; schools are supposed to measure intelligence and provide opportunities accordingly; we should give the best resources to the highest achievers; and discipline should weed out the misbehaving students.

Option 3:

Intelligence is tied with experience; when some students have a wealth of enriching experiences to give their learning meaning and others do not, learning outcomes will differ; school district policies should reflect the deep value of each child and ensure high expectations, rich, relevant opportunities and experiences, and adequate resources so that each child will thrive.

We have learned that people have to address issues of race and equity head on. Here are some **moderator probes** that can help to guide the conversation:

- What do our students need to be successful? What would that look like in the ideal?
- What would ensure our students are excited about learning?
- To what degree has race been a factor impacting student achievement?
- What would equity look like in our schools?
- How do we address teaching across racial, economic and social boundaries?
- What are we doing to counter stereotypes?
- What factors explain achievement patterns?
- What are our schools doing to support excellence in teaching?
- How can we harness the benefits of our diversity to move to excellence in our schools?
- What are the primary equity challenges in our schools?
- What are our “sub groups”?
- What are the greatest challenges affecting those subgroups?
- What should educators know to narrow the educational achievement gap?
- What type of support should we provide to make greater progress?
- What should we do as a district to prepare students to be independent learners?
- How do we ensure learning is relevant and meaningful to our students?
- What are our schools and community doing to motivate and engage our students?

DISCUSSION STRUCTURE

Selecting a couple of ways of looking at this issue for your conversation will help by:

- Establishing a common reference point for participants and keeping the discussion focused;
- Steering the conversation away from a narrow, technical discussion of issues toward a broader discussion of values, priorities, and goals;
- Giving participants a chance to consider different ways to look at the issue;
- Expanding people's perspectives, and giving them a chance to question their initial thinking and perceptions;
- Helping participants gain a better understanding of the complexity of these issues; and
- Letting participants be active problem solvers, rather than passively reacting to solutions offered by experts.



SAMPLE CONVERSATION AGENDAS

EVENING COMMUNITY CONVERSATION (5:30-8:30)

5:30 REGISTRATION and LIGHT SUPPER

6:00 INTRODUCTION *About 20 minutes, hosted by a LEAD MODERATOR*

Welcome and explanation of process.

Cover Options

Send participants to small groups. *If in breakout rooms... Otherwise, invite them to start conversations at their round tables. One person stays at registration table to register latecomers.*

6:20 SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION *Led by trained small group moderators, 6:20-8:00.*

OPENING *10 minutes* Welcome

Go around circle and introduce by role.

Highlight posted agenda and guidelines and ask for agreement with guidelines.

DISCUSSION *70 minutes*

Introduce topic and consider each option.

SUMMARY *10 minutes*

Identify common ground, disagreements, and questions and concerns.

NEXT STEPS *10 minutes*

RETURN TO LARGE GROUP

8:00 WRAP UP *About 30 minutes, hosted by a LEAD MODERATOR*

Invite each group to share summary findings.

Ask participants to fill out survey.

Thank those who planned conversation, hosts, and others as appropriate.



SAMPLE CONVERSATION AGENDAS

MORNING COMMUNITY CONVERSATION (9:00-12:00)

9:00 REGISTRATION and CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

9:30 INTRODUCTION *About 20 minutes, hosted by a LEAD MODERATOR*

Welcome and explanation of process.

Cover Options

Send participants to small groups. *If in breakout rooms... Otherwise, invite them to start conversations at their round tables. One person stays at registration table to register latecomers.*

9:50 SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION *Led by trained small group moderators, 9:50-11:30.*

OPENING *10 minutes* Welcome

Go around circle and introduce by role.

Highlight posted agenda and guidelines and ask for agreement with guidelines.

DISCUSSION *70 minutes*

Introduce topic and consider each option.

SUMMARY *10 minutes*

Identify common ground, disagreements and questions and concerns.

NEXT STEPS *10 minutes*

RETURN TO LARGE GROUP

11:30 WRAP UP *About 30 minutes, hosted by a LEAD MODERATOR*

Invite each group to share summary findings.

Ask participants to fill out survey.

Thank those who planned conversation, hosts, and others as appropriate.



PLANNING COMMITTEE TASKS

- **PICK A DATE** that does not conflict with any major community activities.
- **CHOOSE A SAFE, WELL-LIT SITE** with parking. You may need a place where culinary arts students can prepare food and a room for child care.
- **SELECT MODERATORS/FACILITATORS AND RECORDERS** to be trained by CAFE. It would be better to have people with moderating experience who are comfortable speaking with diverse groups of community members. They should be able to manage participants' divergent positions and ideas. They must be viewed as neutral and impartial, not associated with a particular viewpoint.

If comfortable with the role, School Board members could serve as **recorders**, where they will be seen as listening carefully and NOT contributing to the conversation.

It is advisable to have moderators and recorders who reflect the demographics of the community. The recorders' notes are the only record of the small groups' discussions.

- **CREATE AN INVITATION LIST AND RECRUIT PARTICIPANTS.** Aim for between 40 and 100 participants. That means, inviting about 150 participants. Make sure you are including a representative group of staff, parents, community members, and students. You may also want to announce the event in the press and ask that interested participants telephone someone on the planning team for information. Walk-ins tend to be rare and can be accommodated at the last minute. Reminder calls just before the event are helpful.
- **DESIGN AN INVITATION** with a tear off for the RSVP that includes any requests for special requirements, such as translators, child care, etc.
- **ARRANGE FOR PRINTING, MAILING, OR ELECTRONIC OUTREACH AND CENTRAL SITE TO GATHER RSVPS.** Follow up RSVPs with reminder phone calls.
- **ENGAGE INTERPRETERS**, if necessary.
- **ARRANGE FOR CHILD CARE.** To accommodate young families, it is important to plan safe, engaging activities for children during the conversation. Be sure the invitation RSVP indicates ages of children needing care.
- **SELECT A CATERER, CULINARY ARTS STUDENTS**, or some other way to feed 100 people. There is something about breaking bread together that opens people's hearts and minds to others' experiences and ideas. It is best to keep food simple and to consider a vegetarian option. Conversations held in the morning should include hot and cold beverages during both the welcome and the wrap-up.

APPENDIX A: SMALL GROUP ROOM SET-UP

Please print the following on newsprint and **post on walls**:

AGENDA

1. Introduction and guidelines
(10 minutes)
2. Discussion *(70 minutes)*
3. Summary *(15 minutes)*
 - Common ground
 - Disagreements
 - Questions and concerns
4. Next steps *(15 minutes)*
5. Return to large group

COMMON GROUND

DISAGREEMENTS

CONVERSATION GUIDELINES

- Speak for yourself
- Participate as equals
- Listen carefully and with respect
- Respect others' opinions
- Everyone has an opportunity to speak
- Agree to disagree
- Disagree with ideas, not with people
- Stay focused – silence devices

QUESTIONS/ CONCERNS

NEXT STEPS

What can I do as a result of today's conversation?
What could the schools/community do?

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE PARTICIPANT SURVEY

This survey is the final step in today's conversation. It will give the Board valuable feedback about how to ensure we are meeting the needs of each of our students.

The Conversation Experience:

1. What was it like to take part in this conversation?
2. How was this different than your other community experiences?
3. How would you improve it?

The Issue:

4. Do you think differently about what it means to meet our students' needs as a result of attending this conversation?
5. Is there anything you might do differently after this conversation?
6. Are there any aspects of this conversation that might be helpful to you in other ways?

Demographics:

7. What is your gender identity?
8. What is your race/ethnicity?





The Leading Voice for Connecticut Public Education

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