

Quarterly Convening

December 14, 2021

Welcome

**Please “rename” your zoom
name with your first & last name
and organization (or list
community member)**

Select participants→select your name→select more→select rename

Agenda

- ▶ **Norwalk ACTS Policy & Advocacy Cornerstone**
 - Highlights from last session
 - Norwalk ACTS approach to Policy & Advocacy
- ▶ **Policy & Advocacy Workshop**

SCHOOL + STATE FINANCE PROJECT

Celebrating our Collaborative Action work in Early Childhood



Thank you to our school readiness members!



The Early Language and Literacy Initiative™

- Fox Run Elementary
- Jefferson Elementary
- Kendall Elementary
- Naramake Elementary



- Ben Franklin
- Nathaniel Ely



Stepping Stones Museum for Children

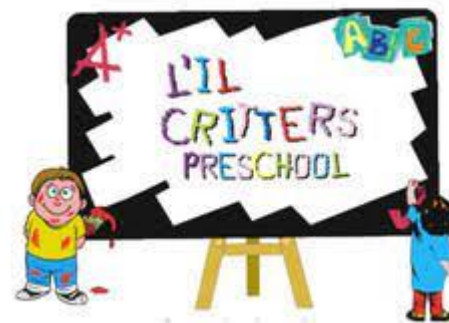


BEN FRANKLIN



TRINITY PLACE

- The Children's Playhouse
- The Children's Playhouse Too



- Child Development Center



ALL OUR KIN

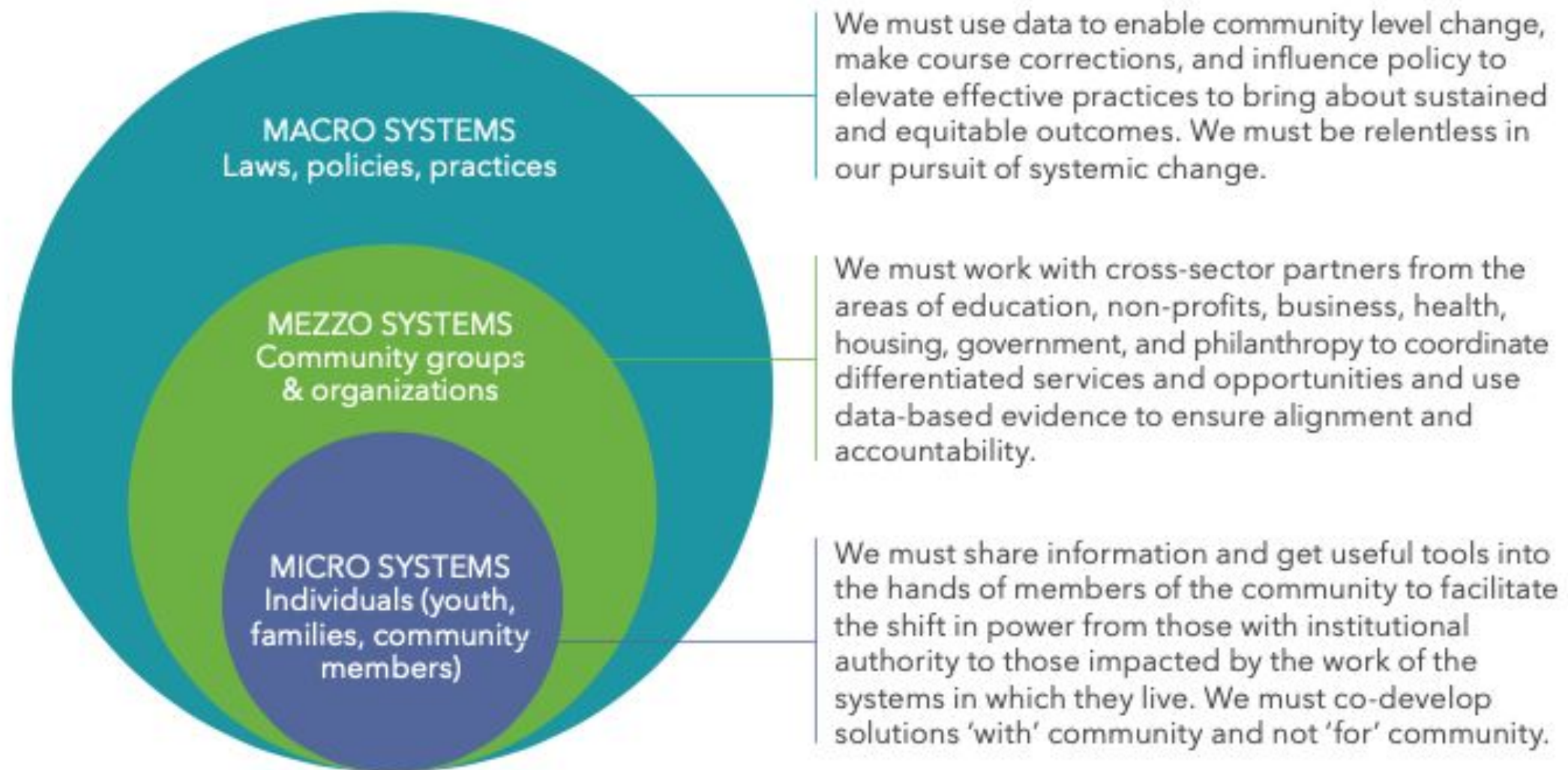


Governance Shift

- ▶ **Board of Director nominations and voting shift from December to June moving forward**
 - If interested in joining the board or have a suggested nomination, please email Jennifer - ibarahona@norwalkacts.org
- ▶ **New Executive Board will begin January 1st**
 - Nancy Von Euler, Chair
 - Rev. Elizabeth Abel, Vice Chair
 - Kate Ritter, Secretary
 - Charlie Allred, Treasurer
 - Cathy DeCesare, Immediate Past Chair
- ▶ **Special THANK YOU to Cathy DeCesare for her many years of board chair service!**

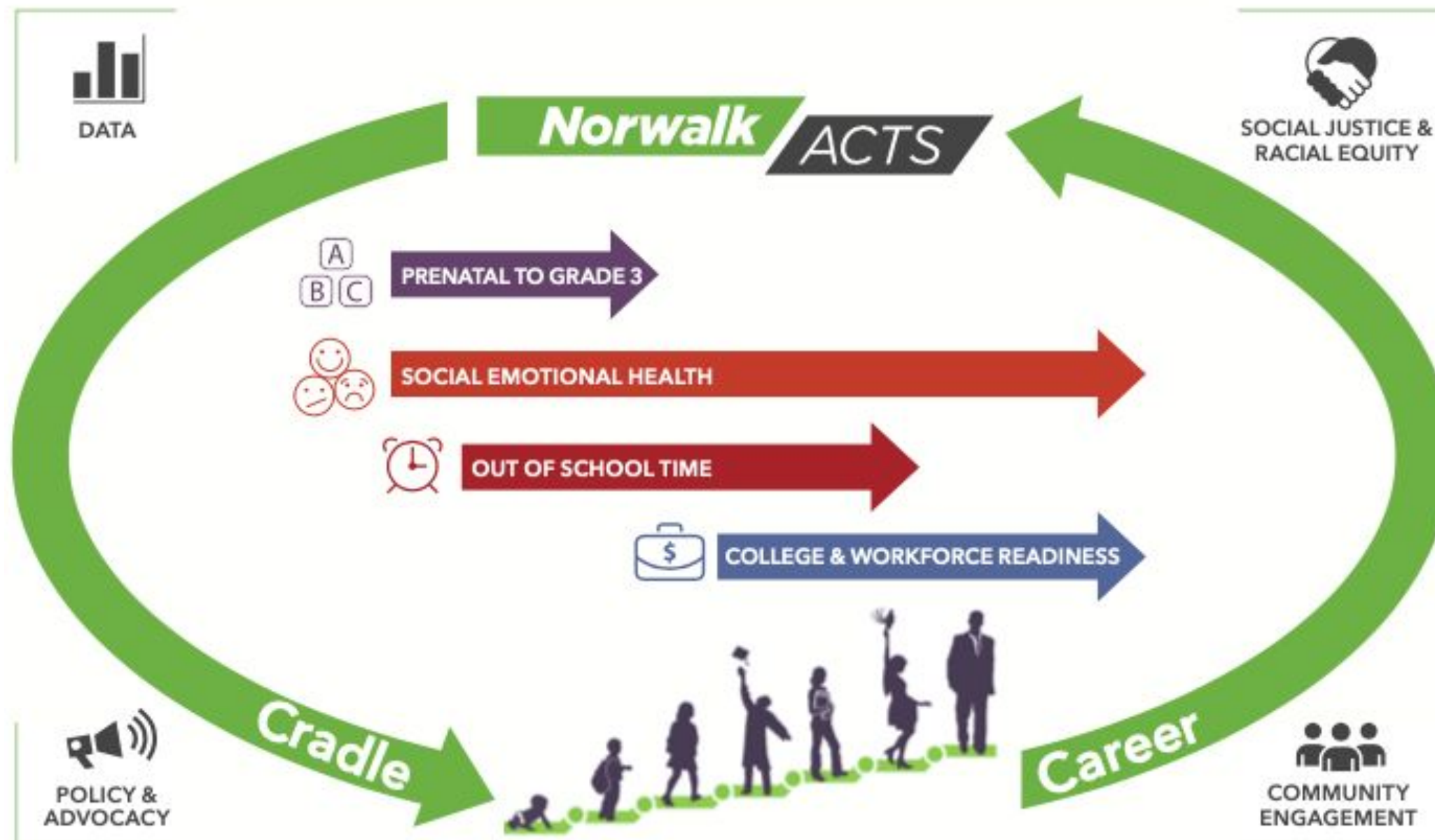
Micro, Mezzo, Macro

Our theory of action includes a three-tiered model for systems change because we believe that all interrelated systems must work in concert to achieve the outcomes we seek.



Cornerstones

Our cornerstones are embedded into each of our Initiatives across the cradle-to-career continuum.



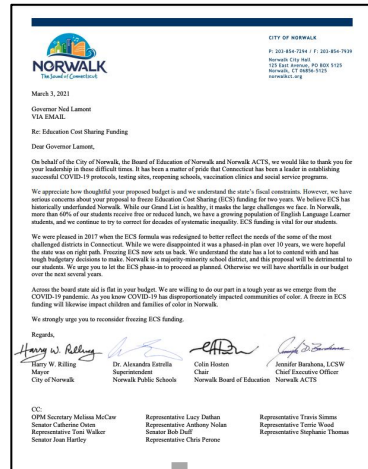
Welcome Brandon - Cradle to Career Statewide Policy Director!

CT Cradle to Career Coalition

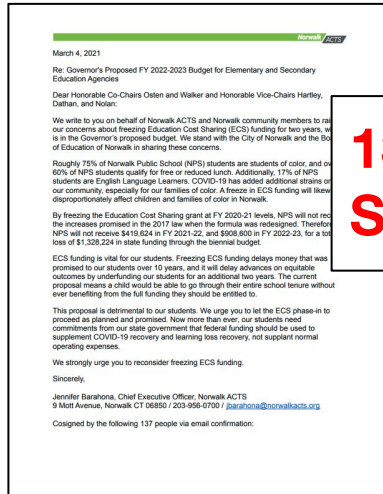


Looking back on our ECS Funding Advocacy Efforts

Co-signed letter to Governor from City of Norwalk, NPS, BOE, & NACTS

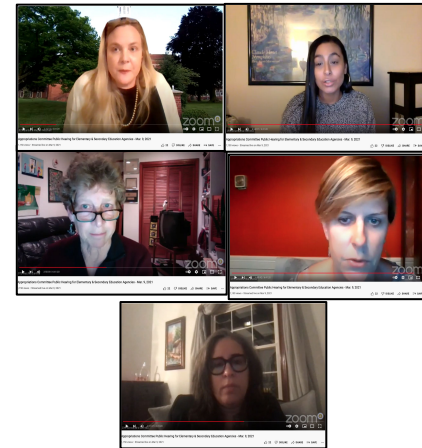


Submitted Written Testimony



137 Signatures!

5 powerful oral testimonies at public hearing on behalf of Norwalk



Governor Lamont passes budget



LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT

MARCH 4, 2021

Dear Members,

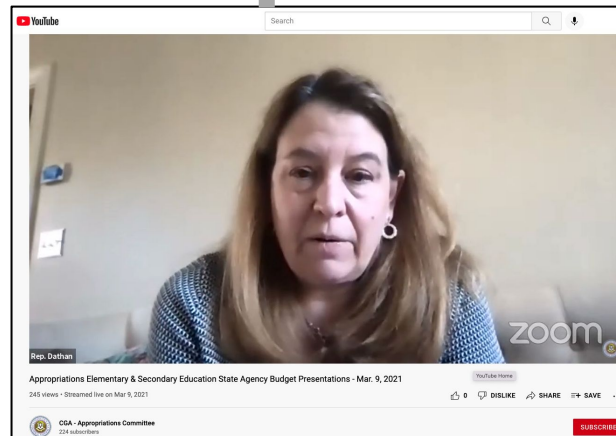
Norwalk ACTS recently co-signed a letter alongside Mayor Rilling, Superintendent Dr. Estrella, and Board of Education Chair Colin Hosten that urges Governor Lamont to reconsider freezing Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funding that would impact Norwalk Public School students. The Governor's proposal delays a 10-year rollout of school funding to 12 years, which will be detrimental to our students. By freezing the Education Cost Sharing grant at FY 2020-21 levels, NPS will not receive the increases promised in the 2017 law when the formula was redesigned. Therefore, NPS will not receive \$419,624 in FY 2021-22, and \$908,600 in FY 2022-23, for a total loss of \$1,328,224 in state funding through the biennial budget.

[Learn More About The Problem Here](#)

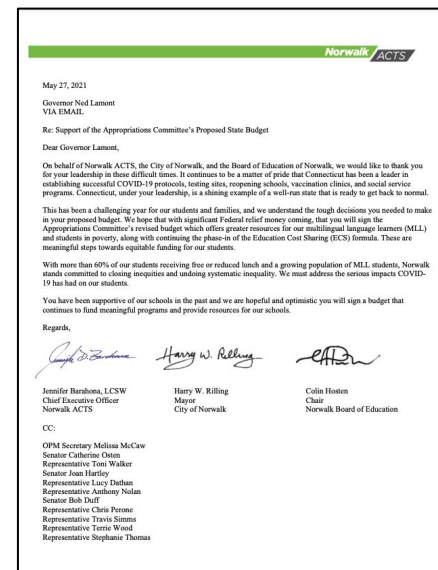
[Read the Letter to the Governor from Norwalk Leaders](#)

[Read the Letter to the Governor from CT Superintendents](#)

Issued Legislative Action Alert to NACTS Members




Representative Dathan echoes concerns in committee hearing



Co-authored letter to Governor from City of Norwalk, NPS, BOE, & NACTS urging to sign propose budget



Highlights from our Policy & Advocacy Efforts




General Assembly
January Session, 2021

Raised Bill No. 1034
LCO No. 4686

Referred to Committee on EDUCATION

Introduced by:
(ED)

AN ACT CONCERNING MINORITY TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION.



Substitute Senate Bill No. 1
Public Act No. 21-35

AN ACT EQUALIZING COMPREHENSIVE ACCESS TO MENTAL, BEHAVIORAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH CARE IN RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC.

Norwalk ACTS

SB 1034 An Act Concerning Minority Recruitment and Retention
Education Committee
Jennifer Barahona
March 17, 2021

Co-Chairs McCrory and Sanchez, and Members of the Education Committee,

I am writing in strong support of SB 1034, An Act Concerning Minority Recruitment and Retention

I am the CEO of Norwalk ACTS, a collective impact effort in Norwalk working to improve outcomes for children and youth, cradle to career. We provide data support to the Norwalk Public Schools and just yesterday released a disproportionality and equity dashboard that shows troubling trends in over-representation of students of color in discipline and special education as well as under-representation in areas of academically talented and gifted programs. Sections 4, 5, and 6 of this bill that address anti-bias training and education are absolutely critical if we are to make a difference in these trends that have been allowed to persist for far too long.

Norwalk is the middle of a strategic planning process and I am honored to be a member of the task force working on the development of the plan. The issue of minority teacher recruitment comes up in every conversation. We have heard loud and clear from students, parents, and educators that this is one of the highest priorities for the district. However, recruiting more BIPOC teachers into our district only creates further disparities in the districts they are coming from and does nothing to solve this issue across all our school systems. We must work deliberately and with urgency to create a pipeline of teachers to meet the demands in all of our communities.

I also happened to be married to a public high school teacher. My husband is among the rare group of Hispanic male teachers and I have the privilege of witnessing the influence he has had on hundreds of young people who still write to him years later. Without fail, they talk about his enthusiasm, deep connection and care of his students, and his ability to truly teach them Spanish that has made an enormous difference in their chosen careers. My husband benefited from the Alternative Route to Certification (ARC) program in the early 2000s and at the time it was the only feasible way for him to earn a living while becoming a certified teacher. Expansion of programs such as ARC are essential if we are to truly commit to increasing the number of minority teachers and thereby improving outcomes for our young students of color.

Jennifer Barahona, Chief Executive Officer, Norwalk ACTS
9 Mott Avenue, Norwalk CT 06850 / 203-956-0700 / jbarahona@norwalkacts.org

Norwalk ACTS

S.B. No. 1, An Act Equalizing Comprehensive Access to Mental, Behavioral and Physical Health Care in Response to the Pandemic
Public Health Committee
Jennifer Barahona
March 17, 2021

Dear Senator Abrams, Representative Steinberg, and Members of the Public Health Committee,

I am writing in strong support for SB 1 and particularly sections 6 and 7 that would declare racism as a public health crisis in the state and establish a commission to study the impact of institutional racism on public health and provide proposals to address disparities.

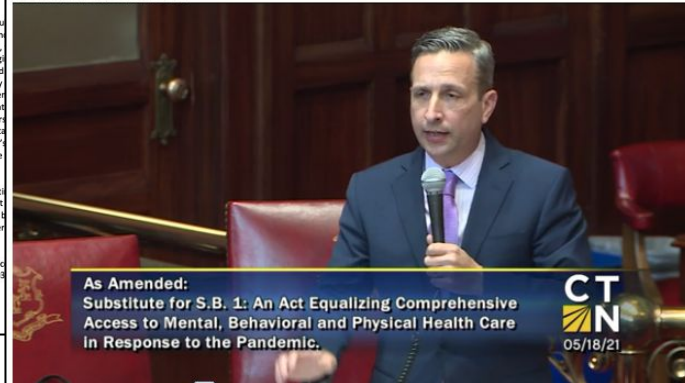
COVID has shone a light on an issue that many of us in the social sector have known for the entirety of our careers, that our systems are inequitable and the health outcomes for people of color are far worse than white counterparts. Our BIPOC citizens are facing two simultaneous health crises, one caused by a global pandemic and the other by ~~hundreds of years of structural racism that continue~~ to create inequities. As a resident of Fairfield, a resident of Fairfield, and a resident of Fairfield, I am writing to you to express my support for this bill. As a resident of Fairfield, I am writing to you to express my support for this bill. As a resident of Fairfield, I am writing to you to express my support for this bill.

Racism clearly meets the criteria of a public health crisis. It is a threat to the health of the community and a collective impact effort in Norwalk, improve outcomes for historically marginalized communities. We have heard loud and clear from students, parents, and educators that this is one of the highest priorities for the district. However, recruiting more BIPOC teachers into our district only creates further disparities in the districts they are coming from and does nothing to solve this issue across all our school systems. We must work deliberately and with urgency to create a pipeline of teachers to meet the demands in all of our communities.

The data could not be more clear. It is that racism is a public health crisis. We must address disparities and inequities. The children in our community are suffering. I urge you to join the increasing number of legislators who have declared racism a public health crisis.

Jennifer Barahona, Chief Executive Officer, Norwalk ACTS
9 Mott Avenue, Norwalk CT 06850 / 203-956-0700 / jbarahona@norwalkacts.org

Connecticut State Senate May 18th Session
Recorded On: 5/18/2021



Norwalk ACTS YOUTH TOWN HALL

Board of Education Candidate Forum

YOU ARE INVITED

Please join the students of the Center for Youth Leadership (CYL) at Brien McMahon High School for an online discussion with the candidates for the Board of Education. Students will be asking questions on various topics related to education, afterschool programming, and many more!

WEDNESDAY
10/27/21
7 - 8:30 PM

REGISTER AT
<https://bit.ly/NorwalkYTHOct27>

Scan me



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This discussion is made possible by Norwalk ACTS. It provides a safe space for youth to come together to share experiences, provide education, and explore equitable actions that can be taken within schools and the community

9 MOTT AVENUE / NORWALK, CT / 06850 / 203.956.0700 / NORWALKACTS.ORG

Written Testimony & Oral Testimony:

SB1 passed & SB1202 passed with 1034 language

Strategic Planning Process



Policy & Advocacy Task Force

Input from over

20

Community Members

Feedback across

6

Meetings (and a survey)

Purpose Statement & Guiding Principles



Policy & Advocacy Cornerstone Purpose Statement:

Engage, educate, and empower community members and partners to be civically active and advocate for equitable policies across the cradle to career continuum

Guiding Principles:

- Create an inclusive environment where community members are empowered to participate in civic discourse and self-advocacy
- Provide data, resources and trainings that educate community members on key issues and equip them to effectively advocate for change
- Engage community members in conversations about their visions for Norwalk and create opportunities for civic participation with policymakers and elected officials
- Support advocacy efforts that center the voices and lived experiences of community members along with quantitative data to influence change

Level of Engagement

Support

The policy is related to our mission. We will help advance this policy and support those taking the lead.

Advocate (3-4 Policies)

The policy strongly aligns with our mission, we will dedicate time and resources to helping the advancement of the policy.

Lead (1-2 Policies)

The policy is crucial to our mission. We are taking the position to advocate and support it at the highest level through multiple levels of advocacy engagement.

Support Example

What this could look like:

Policy Concept: Adopt Universal Mail in Voting in Connecticut

Why Support? While this policy falls outside of the scope of our mission, we may lend support to advocates of election reform to help ensure that all residents have safe and secure access to voting

Member Commitment for Support

- ▶ Sign on letter to delegation
- ▶ Calls to legislator's office
- ▶ Provide insight if applicable to backbone support on key stakeholders

Backbone Supports for Support

- ▶ Create and disseminate sign on letter
- ▶ Maintain communications with members and community on priorities
- ▶ Maintain templates for form emails/testimony
- ▶ Postcard/letter writing campaign organizing

Advocate Example

What this could look like:

Policy Concept: The allocation of funds to create a "Baby Bond" program which would allocate funding to a trust for a child born into poverty that would grow over the child's lifetime

Why Advocate? This policy may fall within our values and mission, we will advocate for the funding of this program to ensure that the children who need the most monetary support will receive these allocation of funds to prepare them for the future.

Member Commitment for Advocate

- ▶ Utilize connections with key stakeholders to identify key players and potential obstacles
- ▶ Recruit members from within organization or outside of it to help mobilization efforts
- ▶ Disseminate information on advocacy efforts - email form signups, sending testimony, attending events
- ▶ Continuously engage with decision makers

Backbone Supports for Advocate

- ▶ Identify coalitions and organizations working in the space to collaborate with and align work
- ▶ Provide a toolkit for advocacy - form emails, testimony examples, legislator office contacts
- ▶ Track legislative process and inform membership and community with details
- ▶ Call to Action sent out to membership and community

Lead Example

What this could look like:

Policy Concept: Expanding access to Mental Health Resources for children and young adults

Why Lead? This strongly resonates with our values and mission. We will lead the effort to ensure that all of Norwalk's youth population can receive and benefit from mental health care.

Member Commitment for Lead

- ▶ Engage with legislators to inform on key policy initiatives, leveraging key members to effectively communicate
- ▶ Utilize connections to spread awareness of policy initiatives
- ▶ Employ use of media outreach (e.g. social, news, letters to editor)

Backbone Supports for Lead

- ▶ Grassroots organization of the community
- ▶ Provide members and community with resources to understand the issue - fact sheets, visuals, etc.
- ▶ Provide a map for members with key decision makers connected to the issue







Norwalk ACTS Conversation Norms

Conversation Norms

1. Listen and be open to different perspectives and experiences.
2. Show respect and suspend judgment.
3. Disagreement is an opportunity to expand our perspectives.
4. Check your assumptions and assume positive intent.
5. Be purposeful and to the point.
6. Step up (please participate), step back (to allow other voices into the dialogue).

Upcoming Events in 2022 - Save the Dates!

All links will be shared in follow up email

		 FIGHTING GIRAFFES	<div><div>BACKBONE SUPPORT PROVIDED BY  United Way of Western Connecticut</div></div>		
<div>Legislative Forum with Norwalk’s Delegation</div>	<div>Youth Town Hall with Center of Youth Leadership</div>	<div><div>RESTORATIVE PRACTICES TRAININGS Winter 2022</div></div>		<div>Norwalk ACTS Quarterly Convening: Data</div>	
<div>January 20, 2022 8:30 am - 10 am (Virtual)</div>	<div>January 2022 TBD</div>	<div>School Climate Training January 27 & 28 8:30 am – 2 pm (Virtual)</div>	<div>Restorative Practices Training February 3 & 4 8:30 am – 2 pm (Virtual)</div>	<div>March 15 9:00-11:00 am</div>	

Closing

Please complete our optional plus/delta form to leave convening feedback (link in chat):

Norwalk ACTS

Quarterly Convening Plus/Delta Form

Please use this form to share feedback on how well our convening met your needs and what we should keep doing, or add to, our convening meeting format.

First and Last Name (optional)
Your e-mail:

Organization Name (optional)
Your e-mail:

How informative was this convening to your organization's role, responsibilities, and/or practice?
Not informative 1 2 3 4 5 Very informative

How engaging was this Convening?
Not engaging at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very engaging

What went well with today's convening? (Full)
Your e-mail:

What should we consider differently next time? (Detail)
Your e-mail:

Any questions or wonderings that were unanswered?
Your e-mail:

Submit

Sign up on our website for our newsletter!

September news & updates **Norwalk ACTS**

September 9th, 2021

Upcoming Events
See what's happening this month.

News You Can Use
[The Hour: Census Data: Norwalk Has the 7th Highest Population Increase in CT](#)
[CT Post: "In Their Own Words," Dallo Education Funds Storytelling Platform for CT Teachers](#)
[Chalk Talk: For Norwalk Schools, Resolving Equity Gaps Starts with a Mindset Shift](#)

Member Spotlight
[ALL OUR KIN](#)

All Our Kin is a nationally recognized nonprofit organization that trains, supports, and sustains family child care educators—transforming opportunities by ensuring that children and families have the foundation they need to succeed in school and in life.

Become a Norwalk ACTS member today!

FOLLOW US FOR OUR LATEST NEWS

DON'T MISS OUT!

Are you a member?
Please sign our digital **Memorandum of Agreement (MOA).**

Norwalk ACTS

Norwalk ACTS MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

The **mission** of Norwalk ACTS is to enrich and improve the lives and futures of all of Norwalk's children and youth, from cradle to career. In doing so, it is our **vision** that Norwalk will be the healthiest city in America for a child to grow up in - academically, socially/emotionally, and physically. Social justice and racial equity are core values of Norwalk ACTS. We are committed to continuing to disaggregate data to report on racial and economic disparities so that together we can deploy tools and resources to support adoption of equitable practices. This includes evaluating our internal operations and systems and building our own capacity to make measurable progress towards being a truly diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization. The Norwalk ACTS Membership, having adopted the principles of **Collective Impact** and the **StriveTogether Theory of Action** for building cradle to career civic infrastructure, is helping our community build an integrated system to address the academic, social emotional, and health/wellness needs of Norwalk's children.

Principles of Collective Impact

- Common Agenda
- Shared Measurement
- Mutually Reinforcing Activities
- Continuous Communication
- Backbone Support

StriveTogether Pillars

- Shared Community Vision
- Evidence Based Decision Making
- Collaborative Action
- Investment and Sustainability

Additionally, we incorporate these additional **eight practices** of Collective Impact:

1. Design and implement Initiatives with a priority placed on equity
2. Include community members in the collaborative
3. Recruit and co-create with cross-sector partners
4. Use data to continuously learn, adapt, and improve
5. Cultivate leaders with unique system leadership skills
6. Focus on program and system strategies
7. Build a culture that fosters relationships, trust, and respect across participants
8. Customize for local context

Our Collective Impact process, strategies, and Initiatives are aimed at the achievement or increase in the % of the following community level outcomes:

- Norwalk children enter kindergarten ready to learn.
- Norwalk students meet the goal level in 3rd grade reading.
- Norwalk students have the necessary skills to successfully transition from 5th to 6th grade.
- Norwalk students have the necessary skills to successfully transition from 8th to 9th grade.
- Norwalk students graduate from high school in 4 years ready for college, post-secondary training, or full-time employment.
- Norwalk graduates are career-ready with a college degree or professional certificate.