



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



January 16, 2025

Dear CASTL-K12 Leadership:

On behalf of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), I am writing to express our formal commitment to join the Collaborative for Advancing Science Teaching and Learning in K-12 (CASTL-K12). As the administrative arm of the Connecticut State Board of Education, the CSDE is dedicated to ensuring equal opportunity and excellence in education for all Connecticut students and view this partnership as a crucial step in advancing science education across our state.

Our commitment to CASTL-K12 is driven by three primary objectives:

1. Engaging with a nationwide community of practice focused on intentional science standards implementation.
2. Learning from diverse perspectives and experiences across different state contexts.
3. Contributing our state's unique insights, accomplishments, and challenges to this national dialogue.

The CSDE is enthusiastic about collaborating with CASTL-K12 partners to strengthen our science educator workforce. We envision this partnership as a catalyst for not only developing innovative recruitment strategies to attract diverse, talented individuals to science education, but as an opportunity to create sustainable professional learning pathways that support educators through their careers. To advance our efforts in establishing programs like these, the CSDE is joining other state agencies, institutes of higher education and the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to form a local Action Collaborative. This Collaborative will evaluate the impact of establishing mentorship and teacher apprenticeship programs, connecting experienced science educators with newcomers to the field; building collaborative networks between K-12 institutions and institutions of higher education to create seamless educator preparation pipelines; implementing evidence-based retention strategies to support and sustain high-quality science educators; and sharing best practices for creating supportive school environments that encourage science teacher leadership. CASTL-K12 will pursue four primary goals:

- develop a coherent strategy for supporting implementation of science standards across the states and districts;
- launch and coordinate a networked community of practice for stakeholders at all levels and across sectors;
- build on and share existing evidence-based policies, tools and examples; and
- develop a coherent communication and engagement strategy for advancing K-12 science and engineering education broadly.

The CSDE has already taken significant steps to prepare for this partnership, and have designated key representatives, including our Chief Academic Officer, State Science Lead, as well as the Connecticut 2024 Teacher of the Year, a National Teacher of the Year finalist and local science educator.

As shared in our application, our recent initiatives demonstrate our readiness to contribute meaningfully to this collaboration. We are particularly excited to participate in working groups and share our experiences in creating an integrated STEM model that aligns with workforce development needs while focusing on academic performance, student engagement, access, and equity.

The CSDE hereby commits to supporting the goals of the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine's Action Collaborative on Advancing Science Teaching and Learning in K-12 and looks forward to collaborating with fellow members to advance science teaching and learning across the United States.

Sincerely,



Charlene M. Russell-Tucker
Commissioner of Education

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