

June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Commissioner Charlene M. Russell-Tucker  
Connecticut State Department of Education  
P.O. Box 150471  
Hartford, CT 06115-0471

Re: Formal Complaint Regarding Breaches of Professional Ethics by Superintendent  
Dr. Tamu Lucero

Dear Commissioner Russell-Tucker:

I write with a deep sense of urgency and concern regarding repeated, serious breaches of the Connecticut Code of Professional Responsibility for School Administrators by Dr. Tamu Lucero, Superintendent of Stamford Public Schools. This letter documents systemic failures in student safety, staff welfare, community trust, and ethical leadership which have been widely reported, corroborated, and persistently ignored by Stamford's district leadership.

The Stamford Education Association is requesting a formal investigation into Dr. Lucero's actions and omissions, which stand in direct violation of the principles of professional conduct that the State of Connecticut expects all educators, especially superintendents entrusted with public confidence, to uphold. It is our position that while teachers are often subject to swift scrutiny for breaches of professional conduct, school administrators appear to be held to a looser standard, despite their broader authority and influence. We are looking to the CSDE to ensure all education professionals in Connecticut are held to the same accountability measures. Should administrators be found in violation of these standards and responsibilities, and not be held accountable, the credibility of our profession and these standards would be at risk.

The following violations of the Code are submitted for your review:

1. Failure to Provide a Safe and Orderly Learning Environment (TOR Middle School, 2023-24) Violates: Sections (b)(1), (b)(4), (c)(2), (d)(1), (d)(4), (d)(5), (d)(9)
  - Teachers and staff repeatedly reported dangerous student behavior including threats, physical violence, and property destruction. Incidents included students throwing objects at staff (including a cell phone that resulted in a teacher being hospitalized), roaming halls without supervision, and verbally assaulting teachers.

These reports and multiple direct communications with central office, were ignored for months in violation of Connecticut Statute 10-233g (a) (2023) which states:

“Where there is a physical assault made by a student upon a teacher or other school employee on school property or in performance of school duties and such teacher or employee files a written report with the school principal based upon such assault, the school building principal shall report such physical assault to the local police authority.”

And Connecticut Statute 10-222d (2023) which states in part:

“(b) Each local and regional board of education shall develop and implement a safe school climate plan to address the existence of bullying and teen dating violence in its schools.”

- Following the hospitalization of a Turn of River Middle School teacher who was struck by a cell phone thrown at her by a student, the Stamford Education Association filed a formal grievance, forcing district leaders to finally respond to the failures noted above.
- On June 11<sup>th</sup>, the SEA requested information about who the Safe School Climate Coordinator was for the district, along with a list of all the Safe School Climate Specialists at each school site. On June 13<sup>th</sup>, the SEA learned that there was NO SAFE SCHOOL CLIMATE SPECIALIST listed for Turn of River Middle School. All other schools had one.
- Despite the documented breakdown in leadership at Turn of River Middle School, the building principal was not disciplined or put on a corrective plan but was instead promoted to a district-level position.
- The Associate Superintendent of Middle Schools, Lori Rhodes, was also not held accountable for failing to monitor, intervene and address the above-noted concerns. Instead, she was reassigned to the role of Associate Superintendent of High Schools beginning in the 2024-2025 school year.
- The Superintendent remained silent in public forums until compelled to act after a union grievance and media attention.
- The Stamford Education Association submitted a FOIA request to inquire whether disciplinary action was issued against either the building principal, Sherri Prendergast or Associate Superintendent Dr. Lori Rhodes by Superintendent Lucero. The information received from the district compliance officer on July 2, 2025, confirmed that no disciplinary action was taken.
- Documentation: CT Examiner article (July 2024), SEA grievance letters, teacher emails, and a formal letter of concern dated June 14, 2024.

## 2. Coercion and Lack of Transparency in High School Schedule Implementation (2024-25) Violates: Sections (b)(3), (d)(1), (d)(4), (d)(5)

- Multiple school leaders reported being pressured by central administration to publicly support a high school block scheduling model they did not agree with.

- Teachers and families were excluded from meaningful engagement in the process. Public protests, board petitions, and alternative proposals were ignored.
- This move demonstrates a disregard for democratic decision-making and community input, eroding trust and undermining professional collaboration.
- The Associate Superintendent of High Schools and creator of the controversial high school schedule, Dr. Lori Rhodes, used her position for personal gain, having written a book entitled “Equitable School Scheduling” that was published on November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024, two days after the tentative agreement between the Stamford Board of Education and the Stamford Education Association was signed on November 8<sup>th</sup>. Nevertheless, the Superintendent allowed her to continue to move forward with the schedule implementation despite community outcry by all affected stakeholders (parents, students, teachers).

### 3. Mishandling of Student Discipline and False Accusation (Westhill High School, 2024)

Violates: Sections (a)(2), (b)(4), (c)(2), (d)(1), (d)(5), (d)(9)

- A student was falsely accused by an assistant principal of attempted assault. Video evidence later disproved the claim, but no disciplinary action was taken against the administrator.
- The student suffered lasting trauma and transferred to another high school within the district, while administrators denied accountability. The district waited nearly a year to announce an investigation after having their hand forced at a public Board of Education meeting on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025.
- Because the administrator was not investigated, put on a leave or at minimum some sort of support plan, all the other high school students and staff had to continue going to school every day with the threat and fear that their school leadership could at any point falsely accuse them of misconduct. This fear has a direct negative impact on both teaching and learning and the health of the school climate.
- The Stamford Education Association submitted a FOIA request to inquire whether disciplinary action was taken against either the building principal or assistant principal by either Superintendent Lucero or Associate Superintendent Rhodes. The information received from the district compliance officer on July 2, 2025 confirmed that no disciplinary action was taken.

### 4. Misuse of Administrative Position and Potential Conflict of Interest

Violates: Section (d)(6)

- Dr. Lucero and other senior district officials are reportedly affiliated with a new charter school initiative while still serving in public administrative roles, suggesting a misuse of position for personal or political gain.
- This raises serious concerns about transparency, divided loyalties, and adherence to public service obligations.

The Connecticut State Department of Education must ensure that the same high standards of conduct demanded of classroom teachers are enforced for district

administrators. The ongoing issues within Stamford Public Schools under Dr. Lucero's leadership demonstrate a pattern of disregard for core ethical obligations: safeguarding students, engaging families, supporting teachers, and acting with integrity and transparency.

We respectfully request:

- A formal investigation into the violations outlined in this letter;
- A public statement from the Department reaffirming the Code of Ethics for all certified administrators;
- An assurance that the Department will hold administrators accountable to the same standards as teachers.

The failure to act undermines the public's confidence in our education system and leaves vulnerable students and educators unprotected. We ask you to intervene with the diligence, urgency, and impartiality that the situation demands.

Sincerely,