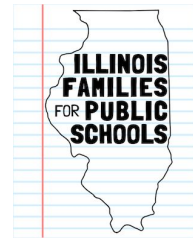


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12 February 2021

**Testimony submitted for Joint Committee on Administrative Rules**

23-24-20-14574 JE

Title 23 Part 24

Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards for All Illinois Educators

We support the new standards proposed by the Illinois State Board of Education which, if enacted, would offer those studying to be teachers to take a class to better understand cultural diversity and would also allow more professional development on inclusivity for practicing teachers.

These new standards are not a curriculum or a doctrine, but a set of standards to better prepare teachers to relate to and understand the vast experience of Illinois' students. The claim made by groups opposing these standards that these updated standards mandate political activism is simply factually inaccurate. Instead they are simply asking teachers to understand their students better and recognize them more fully. These standards ask that teachers take a course in cultural diversity and examine how race and other factors may influence a student's perspective. They do not ask for any particular political ideology to be taught or mandated in a course.

There is nothing politically divisive about being inclusive and recognizing that we come from different backgrounds and might not have the same lived experience as one another. According to the ISBE Illinois Report Card, 48% of students in Illinois public schools are white, and 52% are students of color. These standards acknowledge that students' lived experiences are valuable and relevant to their understanding of the world and their studies. Denying this leads to poorer educational outcomes. Moreover, it does a great disservice to an emphasis on critical thinking and whole-child approach that we want educators to embrace.