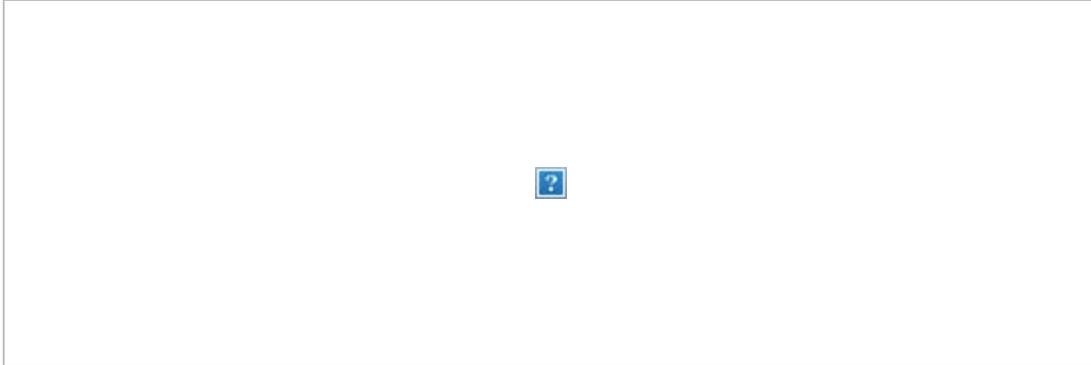


From: Corliss Ucci
To: [David Petrone](#)
Subject: Students Coming From Puerto Rico
Date: Monday, October 16, 2017 10:11:16 AM



To: CAFE Member Boards and Superintendents

From: Robert Rader, CAFE Executive Director and Fran Rabinowitz, CAPSS Executive Director

October 13, 2017

They Are Our Children, Too!

The hurricanes which decimated Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and other islands in the Caribbean will have significant consequences that will last for years, not only for those directly impacted, but for states, such as Connecticut, which has long had many citizens of Puerto Rican and Virgin Island background.

We are expecting children from the islands to come to Connecticut and stay with family and others who will take them in. Many will be considered "homeless" and may be in critical need of housing, medical help and clothing. Because of what they have been through, some will need mental health help—trauma will affect them.

These are United States citizens and while Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are not states, anyone from these territories has as much right to Constitutional protections and legal benefits as any other American citizens.

The students who will show up at our schools are our children, too.

CAFE, CAPSS and the State have already started on ensuring that the influx of those children will be as smooth as possible. Even though funding and other resources from the State are difficult to access without a State budget, we have started discussing the establishment of a CAFE/CAPSS/SDE Task Force aimed at helping districts ensure that these students receive the help and the education that they need.

When homeless children show up, districts are required, under the McKinney-Vento Act to provide these students a free, appropriate education by, according to SDE, by "removing barriers to their enrollment and attendance in school and supporting their educational success."

So, what do Board Members and Superintendents need to know to support these new students and their districts?

1. Help your community understand that these children are ours and that to best help them and their families at this difficult time, a warm welcome will be much more beneficial than an overly bureaucratic, cold entrance to school.
2. Reach out to your other local governmental officials, public agencies and other support providers in your community and ensure that they understand what these students and the district will need to succeed.
3. Understand that your staff is under great pressure already, because of the ongoing failure to pass a budget. Ensuring that these children are well-taken care of puts additional responsibilities on their plates. Let them know that you will do whatever you can to make this difficult burden easier to bear.
4. There are many logistical issues that will confront the school district as these children become a part of your district. They will need to be examined by health experts, immunized if they haven't been and placed in appropriate settings if they have a disability. SDE is working with other State departments, including the Departments of Health and Children and Families to smooth the way.
5. SDE is providing information, at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/site/default.asp>, for Superintendents, Board Members and the public on how to ease the transition for students and districts.

Once again, CAFE and CAPSS are dedicated to ensuring a healthy, safe, thoughtful transition for these children and our members. These children may very well end up going through our school systems to a career or college. They, like all our other children are key to the future of Connecticut.

Let's work together to ensure that we give them what they need to succeed!