

Statements From Leading Educator Ambassadors for Equity on Why They Joined the LEAE Initiative

Estella Owoimaha-Church (Global Teacher Prize Finalist - Top 50 in 2017)

“Quality, equitable education is a civil right that has been stripped from so many and those faced with inequity are most often without a seat at the table. While access and equity may not have been issues you faced in school, it is imperative you pull out the chair next to you and invite someone to sit and feast. I am honored to serve ECRA: LEAE and grateful for this opportunity to uplift students’ voices and ensure our community has a reserved seat at the table.”

Kelisa Wing (DoDEA State Teacher of the Year) – twitter @kelisa_12teach

“As a member of ECRA: LEAE, I am committed to being a voice for the voiceless, holding others accountable, and speaking the truth in love in order to ensure equitable opportunities for our most precious resource - our children!”

Brett Bigham (OR Teacher of the Year) – twitter @2014ORTOY

“As a teacher I have often seen bullying on the playground. Sadly, kids with special needs, LGBT youth and children of color are very often the focus of this bullying. In Washington, DC, under the guise of "governing", we have seen a surge of what is clearly, and plainly, the bullying of these vulnerable children by a government who does not see these children as equal to themselves. Were I to make a list of countries who have been governed by those who do not see equality when they look at people we will find evil. We will find concentration camps, nooses, slave labor and unmarked grave after unmarked grave. I know this sounds extremist, but right now, today, we have brown children locked in kennels and brown babies locked in cages. That does not happen in a country where leaders believe in equality. This is why I will step up as an LEAE. Because silence is acceptance and I refuse to be silent and accept this path our country has taken.”

Melissa Collins (Global Teacher Prize Finalist - Top 50 in 2018) – twitter @CollinsNBCT

“It is our moral duty as educators to provide a high-quality education to all children regardless of their circumstances. LCEA believes in giving voice to the voiceless and hope to the hopeless to impact change in schools. “

Megan Olivia Hall (MN Teacher of the Year) – twitter @MeganOliviaHall

“In America, we believe in liberty and justice for all, but we don’t have it yet. Too often, the circumstances of a child’s birth determines her future. Public education has the potential to manifest the American dream if we commit to inclusive and equitable practices that honor civil rights.”

Sydney Chaffee (2017 National Teacher of the Year, and MA Teacher of the Year) – twitter @SydneyChaffee

"All of our students deserve access to equitable, empowering learning experiences. That is their civil right--and their human right. I'm honored to join this group of teacher leaders to advocate for education."

Monica Washington (TX Teacher of the Year) – twitter @TexasTOY2014

"One goal of public education is to meet the needs of students regardless of background or socioeconomic status. The work of LEAE is especially important because our goal is to ensure that those who make policies regarding public education keep issues of education equity at the forefront of their work."

Gloria Robertson (OR Teacher of the Year) – twitter @GloriaOTOY17

"Providing an equitable and culturally responsive education matters! Why? Because it has the power to disrupt poverty and to change the fate of a family in just one generation. This is serious and life changing work that I am honored to do, and I have the privilege to learn and work with an elite group of teacher leaders who will serve ECRA: LEAE to create windows of opportunity to demonstrate and teach about this form of educational system which will build a better and stronger society for our country."