Statement from the Conference on English Leadership Executive Committee Regarding Its Annual Convention in St. Louis, Missouri, on November 19–20, 2017

August 23, 2017

Each year the members of the Conference on English Leadership eagerly anticipate our Annual Convention. We look forward to the opportunity for literacy leaders to convene in one location so that we can learn, collaborate, and grow together. This year is no different.

Except that it is.

Over a year ago, CEL selected "Literacy Leadership for Access and Opportunity" as our convention theme. Little did we realize how critical these conversations about ensuring access to rich, diverse literacy experiences for our students would be, come November. But they are, and so the reason for our anticipation about the CEL Annual Convention has shifted. While the Convention will remain an opportunity to learn, collaborate, and grow, it will also be a call to action. CEL Convention attendees will engage in critical conversations about equity, race, and diversity issues that will prepare and empower us so we return to our schools ready to guide and support teachers as they create more inclusive, accepting learning environments.

In a NCTE blog post published on August 15, Jocelyn Chadwick, President of NCTE, stated, "We move forward, toward the controversy, toward any controversy that affects children's right to lifelong literacy and our teachers' right and ability to teach them." CEL moves forward, too. As literacy leaders, we move toward St. Louis with a renewed sense of purpose to unite our communities and to advocate for our students and their teachers. NCTE is in contact with the Missouri chapter of the NAACP and local agencies to create opportunities for members to engage in outreach efforts throughout the Convention. Please look for more details about these opportunities soon.

We hope you will join us for CEL's Annual Convention in St. Louis on November 19 and 20 as we move forward, toward the opportunity to be better and to lead better.