

Hispanic Heritage Month

Experiencing Belonging: “Share Your Story” Panel Discussion

PANELISTS



Marissa Perez Cardona is a college and career coordinator with the Meriden Public Schools. In a long career, she has worked for ESPN covering international soccer, supervised the Nurturing Families Network empowering first-time mothers, fought for universal health care in CT as a community organizer before President Obama’s Affordable Care Act, and worked for the Children First Initiative, connecting families to resources and support. Born and raised in CT, she was the first one in her family to achieve a college degree, graduating from the University of New Haven with a bachelor’s degree in Communications. She and her husband, U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona, have two children.



Sinthia Sone-Moyano is Connecticut’s Deputy Commissioner for Educational Supports and Wellness. In that role, she oversees the Office of Student Support Services, leading educational supports and wellness initiatives. She also serves as a board member of the Connecticut chapter of Prospanica as vice president of education. She holds a bachelor’s degree in public health from Southern Connecticut State University and a master’s degree in business management from Albertus Magnus College, as well as a certificate in executive leadership and educational leadership Prek-3 from the University of Connecticut, and in education leadership from Sacred Heart University.



Mario Oquendo, Jr. is the Chief of Staff and Public Information Officer for the Hartford Fire Department. Born in Chicago to Puerto Rican parents from Las Piedras, he was raised in the City of Hartford, and over 25 years he rose through the ranks of the HFD from firefighter to District Chief. He was the first Latino to serve as Captain of HFD’s Special Services Unit, and was part of the team that helped make HFD New England’s first Class One and Accredited Fire Department. He is a proud member of Hartford Firefighters Local 760, as well as a board member of the Hartford Society of Latin American Firefighters, National Association of Hispanic Firefighters, and Prospanica.

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