Tips for Reducing Weight Bias

- **Educate students about the multiple causes of obesity**
  Genetic, biological, environmental & behavioral factors all contribute to obesity.

- **Emphasize positive associations with obese people**
  Challenge negative stereotypes that place blame and stigma on obese individuals.

- **Increase awareness of how the media perpetuates weight bias**
  The media stereotypes overweight individuals and communicates unrealistic ideals of thinness.

- **Use examples of weight bias to evoke empathy in your students**
  Discuss examples of weight bias among youth, and encourage students to intervene and stand up for their peers.

- **Be sensitive to potentially embarrassing situations**
  Are the desks or chairs in your classroom large enough to accommodate your overweight students?

- **Do not allow weight-based teasing in your classroom**

- **Question your own assumptions and use of language about weight**
  Be aware of disparaging comments about your own or other people’s weight. Challenge your own assumptions about body weight.

- **Intervene to reduce teasing of overweight students**
  Be alert to both overt and subtle forms of peer harassment and intervene when you see weight-based teasing.

- **Encourage overweight students to succeed in school activities**
  Encourage students of all weights to participate in sports teams, student council, and extracurricular activities.

- **Include examples of overweight role models in your teaching**
  Help your students challenge weight-based stereotypes and learn that many overweight individuals are successful and accomplish important goals.

- **Treat the importance of weight tolerance as you would racial or religious tolerance**

- **Emphasize the importance of HEALTH, rather than being thin**
  The goal for all children is improved health through physical activity and healthy eating, regardless of their weight

For more information on weight bias, please visit www.UConnRuddCenter.org