

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

Accountability and Support Committee

Monday, January 9, 2017
State Office Building, 165 Capitol Avenue, Room 307A
Hartford, Connecticut

Minutes

I. Call to Order

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, Committee Chairperson Dr. Estela López called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

Committee Dr. Estela López, Chairperson
Members Present: Erin D. Benham
 William Davenport
 Malia Sieve

Committee Robert J. Trefry
Member Absent:

Staff Present: Desi Nesmith
 Leslie Carson
 Kaylan Ricciardi
 Carla Ghostlaw

Guests Present: Abby I. Dolliver, Superintendent of Norwich Public Schools
 Billie Shea, Principal of John B. Stanton Elementary School
 Nancy Sarra, Superintendent of New Britain Public Schools
 Alejandro Ortiz, Principal of Frank J. DiLoreto Magnet School
 Peter Camp, Principal at UNCAS Network School

II. Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Dr. López, seconded by Ms. Sieve, the committee voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the November 7 and December 12, 2016, meetings of the Accountability and Support Committee.

III. John B. Stanton Elementary School, Norwich

Abby I. Dolliver, Superintendent of Norwich Public Schools, and Billie Shea, Principal of John B. Stanton Elementary School, updated the committee on their successes to date. They have been able to build a successful network school and maintain stability. Stanton School has created a professional development component and a shared leadership model where the majority of teachers who started with the leadership team are still there. The leadership team has done wonders for their students. Stanton School has done a great deal of work in terms of social and emotional learning and counseling. Superintendent Dolliver and Principal Shea also shared several strategies they have implemented over the past five years.

The network funding has also brought additional benefits such as a full-time school counselor and a full-time psychologist, bilingual support, and a part-time data analyst. They described the benefits of data teams. They have specific plan expectations that staff adhere to, including using Positive Behavioral Interventions Supports (PBIS). Every staff member is a mentor for their students. Also, they have created a school climate where grade level teachers visit classrooms as part of their professional development. They also discussed the wraparound services that focus on family engagement and student attendance. The total number of student suspensions has reduced significantly, from 45 suspensions in 2012-2013 to 2 suspensions during the 2015-2016 school year. In terms of the Smarter Balanced Assessment, the percentage of students at level 3 and above in ELA and Math has increased. The Committee was pleased to see the progress Stanton Elementary School has made.

IV. Frank J. DiLoreto Magnet School, New Britain

Dr. Nancy Sarra, Superintendent of New Britain Public Schools, and Alejandro Ortiz, Principal of Frank J. DiLoreto Magnet School, reported they are very proud of the work their students and staff have accomplished in making DiLoreto School “come alive”. They have developed the Alive program which includes classroom activities, stress reduction sessions, youth empowerment, and emotional literacy activities to support students. This program is designed to help students free themselves of barriers to academic achievement resulting from trauma. Strengthened school climate has resulted in the elimination of in-school suspension (ISS). Mr. Ortiz noted DiLoreto is a great school with a positive working relationship between staff and administrators. They have had one year of extended day for academic opportunities and professional development personnel with a summer program to help support the English learners. DiLoreto School has focused on an English Language Enrichment Program. Mr. Ortiz reported a decrease in chronic absenteeism. Mr. Ortiz also reported teachers are participating in peer observations developing a supportive learning community among staff. Teachers are going into the classrooms to support regular teachers. Professional development and a coaching model takes place once a month for every teacher. DiLoreto School has shown incremental growth for the last three years in their Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) assessments. Dr. Sarra also talked about the success they have had in moving students from English learner status to non-English learner status. DiLoreto School’s students are also part of a Spanish language development group that is taught to all students.

V. Charter Approval Preview, Booker T. Washington Academy

Desi Nesmith reminded the committee of the Booker T. Washington Academy (BTWA) charter renewal resolution going before the State Board for its consideration at the February 1, 2017, meeting. The committee was provided a brief history of the school. The charter renewal process was outlined including an on-site visit to the school and public hearing held in the City of New Haven (the host district) as required by law. It was noted that the CSDE renewal recommendation was not yet final pending final review of BTWA renewal application and supporting documentation and any on-site visit findings, charter school stakeholder interviews and public hearing testimony. Dr. López indicated that a deliberate and thorough review of each school up for renewal was a prudent approach for CSDE to undertake.

VI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.