

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

Accountability and Support Committee

Wednesday, November 8, 2017
450 Columbus Plaza North Hearing Room J
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: William Davenport
 Donald F. Harris, Jr.

Committee Erin D. Benham
Member Absent:

Staff Present: Desi Nesmith
 Leslie Carson
 Jennifer Webb
 Carla Ghostlaw

Guests Present: Dr. Reginald Mayo, Interim Superintendent of New Haven Public Schools
 Edith Johnson, Principal, Wilbur Cross High School
 Abby I. Dolliver, Superintendent of Norwich Public Schools
 Peter Camp, Principal of Uncas Network School

II. Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Dr. Lopez, seconded by Mr. Davenport, the committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the June 12, 2017, meeting of the Accountability and Support Committee.

III. Wilbur Cross High School, New Haven

Dr. Reginald Mayo, Interim Superintendent of New Haven Public Schools and Edith Johnson, Principal of Wilbur Cross High School provided background on Wilbur Cross High School's challenges and accomplishments. Wilbur Cross' focus this year is on improving their instructional data and social emotional outcomes. Some of the challenges they reported were student chronic absenteeism and instructional practice. Wilbur Cross will contract with Attendance Works for additional support to improve chronic absenteeism through use of online professional learning modules. This year, Wilbur Cross will continue to develop an English Learner Professional Development team comprised of teachers from Wilbur Cross and New Haven Public Schools.

Wilbur Cross' English Learner department will create modules that can be facilitated with teachers from across the district. Wilbur Cross has partnered with the ALIVE Program. The program helps students and teachers deal with trauma. This year a College and Career Center was opened with a part-time coordinator. Teachers at Wilbur Cross meet twice a week on grade level teams. This has been extremely helpful. They have accountability measures established to ensure teams are meeting, while holding administration accountable. Principal Johnson mentioned they are still using Khan Academy, which is a non-profit educational organization created in 2006 by educator Salman Khan with a goal of creating a set of online tools that help educate students. The school encourages students to use Khan Academy on their own to complete homework or to receive extra help. Principal Johnson is proud to have such a strong support team at Wilbur Cross and is happy with the great support that the Turnaround Office has provided. They will continue their efforts to improve the rate of chronic absenteeism.

Dr. Lopez thanked Interim Superintendent Mayo and Principal Johnson for the great work they are doing at Wilbur Cross. She hopes they can continue to share their wisdom with others.

IV. Uncas Network School, Norwich

Desi Nesmith, Chief Turnaround Officer, began with stating the effectiveness of new principal, Mr. Peter Camp. The Turnaround Office couldn't be happier with what Mr. Camp has done at Uncas School. He has provided great leadership, planning, true partnerships, and healthy discussions about what is happening at Uncas School and has followed through with next steps. There is a lot of energy among Uncas' staff. Uncas School demonstrated a 20 percent growth in English Language Arts (ELA). Uncas School has the second highest growth in ELA and math among the Commissioner Network Schools. The faculty at Uncas School has increased efficiency of their Tier II interventions. Interventionists assist in monitoring other aspects of the classroom and it allows everyone to have a much more coordinated approach. Teachers are collaborating and utilizing their time to collaborate. School community has also been strengthened through the implementation of Restorative Practices and the Choose Love Program.

Jennifer Webb, Turnaround Office Consultant, indicated she was impressed with the instruction she's observed in the classrooms; teachers are sharing best-strategies and are making it their own to fit the needs of their students. Teacher support builds the trust and capacity to do the work. Uncas School will continue engaging in professional development and will continue to provide support for individual student learning needs and engage in school climate trainings provided by the Connecticut State Department of Education to support the implementation of Restorative Practices and building a stronger school community. The Committee thanked Superintendent Dolliver and Mr. Camp for their great leadership and successful school year.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:21 p.m.