

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Hartford**

**Legislation and Policy Development Committee Meeting  
May 3, 2017**

**Minutes  
(Approved 6/14/17)**

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the Board of Education Legislation and Policy Development Committee met in Plaza North Room J, State Office Building, Hartford, Connecticut, on May 3, 2017.

**I. Call to Order**

Committee Chair Joseph Vrabely called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m. Also present were Committee members: Erin Benham, Terry Jones and Robert Trefry

Ms. Maria Mojica was absent.

Also present for all or part of the meeting were the following Department of Education Staff members: Assistant to the Commissioner for Board Matters Pamela Charland, Chief of Staff Laura Stefon, Chief Operating Officer Charlene Russell-Tucker, Chief of Health/Nutrition, Family Services John Frassinelli, Education Consultant Scott Newgass, Legal Director Peter Haberlandt and Recorder Mildred Pagán.

Also in attendance were Dr. Judith Meyers, President and CEO of the Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut (CHDI) and Dr. Jeana Bracey, CHDI.

**II. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

On a motion made by Committee Chair Vrabely and seconded by Erin Benham, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes of the February 1, 2017 and April 5, 2017, Legislation and Policy Development Committee meetings.

**III. School Based Diversion Initiative (SBDI): Implementation and Outcome**

Committee Chair Vrabely commenced the meeting by announcing that something has come up and Mr. Haberlandt may not be able to present the topic of Rights of Transgender Students. He then turned to Ms. Russell-Tucker so that she may introduce the presenters. Ms. Russell-Tucker stated that the SBDI is a very important initiative that focuses on providing essential supports to schools, among other institutions, in the hopes of significantly reducing school-based juvenile arrests. She then introduced Dr. Jeana Bracey.

Dr. Bracey reiterated the importance of the initiative as well indicating that it is a partnership with the Departments of Education, Children and Families, Mental Health and Addiction

Services, and Court Support Services. She stated that a similar presentation was also made to the Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Commission. She explained that their goal is to bring awareness and serve as a support system to health providers, policymakers, schools, community organizations and state agencies; helping them understand through the presentation that there is a connection between juvenile arrests, suspensions and/or expulsions and children who have been exposed to trauma, have experienced trauma, and are underserved in the State of Connecticut. Dr. Bracey then introduced Dr. Judith Meyers, President of CHDI.

Dr. Meyers explained that CHDI is a non-profit organization that has been in existence since 2008. CHDI believes all children should have a strong start in life with ongoing supports to ensure their optimal health and well-being. She described the partnerships with different state agencies, child-serving organizations and child advocates and how they are coming together on this systemic endeavor. Dr. Meyers stated that they have done a lot of work around early childhood prevention and numerous training to health practitioners, as they work closely with the Connecticut Children's Medical Center. She indicated that the SBDI program focuses on three main goals:

- *Reduce* the number of discretionary arrests in school; reduce expulsions and out-of school suspensions.
- *Build* knowledge and skills among all school staff to recognize and manage behavioral health crisis in the school, and access needed community resources.
- *Link* youth who are at-risk of arrest to appropriate school and community-based services and supports.

Dr. Meyers expressed that among the first cohort of 18 schools completing the SBDI program from 2010-2015, court referrals decreased by 45% and Mobile Crisis Intervention Services (EMPS) referrals were up by 94% proving that the program works.

Dr. Bracey made a PowerPoint presentation on the topic of *Enhancing Supports to Reduce School-Based Arrests: The Connecticut School-Based Diversion Initiative*.

Committee members asked questions around juvenile statistics and whether there is a trend of repeated arrests among the same students. Dr. Bracey responded that although they do not have statistics on trends, they do see pathways that lead students to repeat offenses and that this is why this work is so important and needs more funding for future expansion to other schools in Connecticut.

Committee members expressed their appreciation and commended the presenters for the outstanding work they are doing for the children in Connecticut and thanked them for sharing their presentation with SDE.

**IV. Discussion Regarding Bylaws Amendments**

Committee Chair Vrabely indicated that he did not have nor has he received any proposed changes to the Bylaws. Therefore, there are no proposed changes to the Bylaws at this time.

**V. Update Regarding Guidance on Rights of Transgender Students**

This topic did not go forward.

**VI. Other Matters**

**VII. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:28 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Mildred Pagán, Recorder