

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION Hartford

Accountability and Support Committee

Tuesday, October 20, 2020

This meeting was live streamed for public access. A link to the live stream was available on the [State Board of Education's Website](#) the morning of October 20, 2020.

Minutes

(Approved on: November 19, 2020)

I. Call to Order

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, and posted on the agency's website, the meeting was livestreamed and link to the live stream was available on the State Board of Education website for public access. Committee Chairperson Dr. Estela López called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Committee Members Present: Dr. Estela López, Chairperson
Erin D. Benham
Donald F. Harris, Jr.
Elwood Exley, Jr.
Bonnie E. Burr

Committee Member Absent: None

Staff Present: Lisa Lamenzo
Leslie Navarrete
Irene Parisi
Robert Kelly
Felicia Canty
Shakira Jacobs-Vazquez

Guests Present: Tyrone Elliott, Executive Director, The Bridge Academy, Bridgeport
Rachel Allison, Middle School Principal, The Bridge Academy, Bridgeport
Celeste Markle, Board Chairperson, The Bridge Academy, Bridgeport
Jill Johnson, Executive Director/Principal, Explorations Charter School, Winsted
Ginni Block, Board Chairperson, Explorations Charter School, Winsted

II. Approval of Minutes

Donald F. Harris, Jr. moved, Erin Benham seconded, that the committee approve the minutes of the September 17, 2020 Accountability and Support Committee meeting.

Vote: In Favor: López, Benham, Harris, Exley, and Burr
Abstained: 0
Opposed: 0
Absent: 0

III. The Bridge Academy, Bridgeport

Lisa Lamenzo, Division Director for the CSDE Turnaround Office provided an overview of the work to date with The Bridge Academy and their corrective action plan. The CSDE identified the academy's chronic absenteeism, suspension, academic performance in both ELA and Mathematics, and special education program as areas of focus for their corrective action plan. Ms. Lamenzo welcomed Executive Director and High School Principal of The Bridge Academy Tyrone Elliott and Board Chairperson Celeste Markle to provide a progress update.

Mr. Elliott shared key strategies and structures, including PBIS, implemented in collaboration with SERC that have showed promise in the reduction of student suspension. Moreover, Mr. Elliot and his executive team worked with the CSDE Turnaround Office to identify objectives linked to curriculum targets in order to tailor them to each special education student; they are reviewed monthly in staff and grade level meetings. To improve student achievement, The Bridge Academy adopted extended learning and increased intervention opportunities for student's requiring additional supports and for students with IEPs, and hired a full-time instructional coach who redeveloped the school's literacy and math curriculum.

With the help of the CSDE, the Bridge Academy used COVID funding to purchase student devices, increasing connectivity by 100 percent as soon as school went remote. Internet hot spots have been provided to all student as well. The Bridge Academy is using multichannel communication systems to monitor disengaged and at risk of being disengaged students and to support student reengagement and their families. According to the Academy's weekly survey, all students are currently engaged. Special education students have been gradually invited to participate in person for 4 days a week. Students who cannot participate in person, virtually work with a special education teacher and main stream teacher 5 days a week. Chairperson López opened the committee for questions of the presenters.

The committee thanked Executive Director and High School Principal of The Bridge Academy Tyrone Elliott and his executive team for their update and commended their progress and efforts.

IV. Explorations Charter School, Winsted

Lisa Lamenzo, Division Director for the CSDE Turnaround Office provided an overview of the work to date with Explorations Charter School and their corrective action plan. The CSDE identified the academy's chronic absenteeism, suspension, and academic performance in both ELA and Mathematics as areas of focus for their corrective action plan. Ms. Lamenzo welcomed Executive Director Explorations Charter School Jill Johnson and Board Chairperson Ginni Block to provide a progress update.

With the help of the CSDE, Ms. Johnson described how the school has taken advantage of the alternative practices and professional learning opportunities as well as early intervention tools to better prepare and teach the student population at Explorations Charter School. The charter school looks forward to participating in the CSDE Alternative Education Attendance Pilot Program that is commencing soon. Ms. Johnson mentioned that current school attendance data is showing that remote learning is helping to engage historically chronic absent student. Additionally, 100 percent of students have connectivity and are engaged either by remote and/or in-person. Explorations Charter School's attendance team and staff continue to work diligently to reengage students. The CSDE is in regular communication with the school; there are ongoing discussions to connect Explorations Charter School with other schools that serve the same student population to help with their areas of focus. Chairperson López opened the committee for questions of the presenters.

The committee thanked Executive Director Explorations Charter School Jill Johnson and Board Chairperson Ginni Block for their update and looks forward to Explorations Charter School's progress.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Prepared by: Leslie Navarrete