

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

**Minutes
Special State Board of Education Meeting
March 16, 2020
(Approved May 13, 2020)**

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the State Board of Education (hereinafter "Board") met on Monday, March 16, 2020, in 2 North Meeting Room B of the State Office Building, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, Connecticut, and via WebEx conference.

I. Call to Order

Vice Chairperson Estela López called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Present:

Estela López, Vice Chairperson
Erin D. Benham
Bonnie E. Burr (via WebEx conference)
Milan Chand, Student Member
Sophia H. Chin, Student Member
Erik M. Clemons
Karen DuBois-Walton (via WebEx conference)
Elwood Exley, Jr. (via WebEx conference)
Donald F. Harris, Jr.
Martha Paluch Prou (via WebEx conference)
Awilda Reasco
Malia K. Sieve (via WebEx conference)
Robert J. Trefry, Ex Officio

Absent: Allan B. Taylor, Chairperson
Mark Ojakian, Ex Officio

Vice Chairperson López explained that the purpose for the meeting were: (i) for the Commissioner to provide updates, and (ii) to inform new Board members of board functions.

II. CSDE Commissioner Update

Commissioner Miguel Cardona thanked the Board for the commitment of attending this meeting. He stated that due to unprecedented times and things changing rapidly, he wanted to utilize the meeting to update the Board. The focus of the meeting was the opportunity to

provide all, especially the new members an overview of the operations of the board and their roles as members.

- The Commissioner reviewed that Governor Lamont had closed all of Connecticut's public schools for two weeks.
- The CSDE will work with the districts with Federal Guidance as if school will be out longer.
- The CDC's guidance is closer for six to eight weeks.
- Scholastic reached out with free resources for school closure. Scholastic Learn at Home a free website that provides students with 20 days' worth of learning.
- The districts are encouraged to contact their Regional Education Service Center (RESC)
- The RESCs have offered to work with the districts.
- The Guidance from last week has changed differently

At this time, Vice Chairperson López requested a confirmation of all participants on the WebEx. The participating members were:

Bonnie E. Burr
Karen DuBois-Walton
Elwood Exley, Jr.
Martha Prou
Malia Sieve

Commissioner Cardona introduced Legal Director Jessa Mirtle. Legal Director Mirtle thanked the Board members for their support and patience during this unprecedented situation and that information was being shared as available. Legal Director Mirtle stated that she would discuss (i) boardsmanship, (ii) ethics, and (iii) FOIA.

Legal Director Mirtle provided an overview on:

- Board quorum
- E-mails: The appropriate use of e-mails, replying, attorney/client communication, and retention guidance.
- FOIA: Official work of the agency may be requested.

At this time, a new caller joined the WebEx. She identified herself as a reporter.

Ethics

- Statement of Financial Interests (SFI). Yearly request for financial disclosure must be electronically filed with the Office of State Ethics. This provides an opportunity to disclose an interest so as to not be adverse to Board decisions.
- Contributions to political campaigns. By statute, the Board members are collectively a department head. A department head has (i) limitations on political fundraising solicitations, and (ii) limitations on political contributions in Connecticut.
- Conflict of Interest.

Discussion ended.

Legal Director excused herself from the meeting.

Distance Learning

Mrs. Benham raised a concern regarding Distance Learning Applications. Commissioner Cardona explained that Supplemental Learning was not sufficient for extended time beyond two weeks. Whereas, Distance Learning is in lieu of on-site schooling.

The Commissioner stated plans submitted should take IDEA into account.

The meeting adjourned 11:41 a.m.

Prepared by: _____
Dr. Miguel A. Cardona, Secretary
State Board of Education