

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Hartford**

**Legislation and Policy Development Committee Meeting  
March 2, 2016**

**Draft Minutes**

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the Board of Education Legislation and Policy Development Committee met in Room 119, State Office Building, Hartford, Connecticut, on March 2, 2016.

**I. Call to Order**

Committee Chair Theresa Hopkins-Staten called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m. Also present were committee members Robert Trefry, Joseph Vrabely, Erin Benham, Maria Mojica and Terry Jones\*.

Also present for all or part of the meeting were the following Department of Education staff members: Chief Operating Officer Charlene Russell-Tucker; Bureau Chief John Frassinelli; Legal Director Peter Haberlandt; and Paralegal Michael Wallace.

Also in attendance from the Center for Children’s Advocacy were Attorney Kathryn S. Meyer; Attorney Martha Stone; and Director of Racial Justice Project, Leon Smith.

\*Mr. Jones arrived at 8:42 a.m.

**II. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

On a motion made by Mr. Vrabely, seconded by Ms. Benham, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes of the February 3, 2016, Legislation and Policy Development Committee meeting.

**III. Center for Children’s Advocacy – Overview of Legislative Agenda**

Committee Chair Hopkins-Staten introduced and welcomed Ms. Kathryn Meyer, Ms. Martha Stone and Mr. Leon Smith from the Center for Children’s Advocacy (CCA).

Ms. Stone expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to meet again with the Legislation and Policy Development Committee. She stated that CCA works on behalf of Connecticut’s most vulnerable children and is focusing a lot of its attention on student expulsions, adding that CCA has found that students of color are expelled more often and for lesser offenses. In addition, Ms. Stone commented that CCA has found that the expulsions of students of color are for longer periods of time and it is often harder to

get these students re-admitted to school. Ms. Meyer added that, in CCA's view, these children need a structured plan to transition them back into the schools.

Ms. Stone expressed her wish to have a dialogue with the State Department of Education to develop legislative language that addresses expulsion issues, adding that time is of the essence.

Mr. Smith stated that there needs to be a sense of fairness and a leveling of the playing field. He commented that policymakers should look at the impact that violence has on students and noted that a lot of inner city children have suffered trauma from violence they have seen or experienced.

Ms. Meyer spoke about CCA's proposed Bill 316, which would post "Care line" information in all public schools. She stated that California and Florida used models that have been successful with this issue. There was a discussion and some participants noted that the idea of posting the information would be a good start but more would need to be done.

Lastly, Mr. Smith talked about the Sickle Cell Bill which would require school staff to be educated about this disease.

Handouts were presented and they are enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

#### **IV. Update on Child Nutrition Programs**

Time did not allow for the committee's discussion of this item. Board member Terry Jones noted that this was an important topic and the Committee should find some time to talk about it at a later date.

#### **V. Other Matters**

None

#### **VI. Adjourn**

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

Prepared by:

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Michael Wallace, Paralegal