

VI.B.

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION Hartford

Minutes State Board of Education Retreat January 7, 2016 (approved February 3, 2016)

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the State Board of Education (hereinafter "Board") met on Thursday, January 7, 2016, at 22 Liberty Street, Meriden, Connecticut.

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Pro Tem Estela Lopez called the meeting to order at 1:20 p.m.

Present: Theresa Hopkins-Staten, Vice Chairperson
Erin D. Benham
Erik M. Clemons
William P. Davenport
Terry Jones
Estela López
Maria Mojica
Malia K. Sieve
Robert J. Trefry, Ex Officio
Joseph J. Vrabely, Jr.
Stephen Wright

Absent: Allan B. Taylor
Susannah M. Beyl, Student Member
Timothy J. Noel-Sullivan, Student Member
Mark Ojakian, Ex Officio

II. Review of Stakeholder Engagement and Analysis of Information Collected to Inform Development of State Board of Education's Strategic Plan

Jonathan Costa, Director of School and Program Services at Education Connection and retreat facilitator, referred Board members to the preliminary draft report, "Equity and Excellence in Education for All Connecticut Students, Phase III: Data Analysis." Mr. Costa summarized the process to date with regard to the Board's comprehensive planning, including the themes of inquiry for inquiry for educational equity and excellence; the methodology of data collection and

analysis; survey findings and survey open-ended question analysis; representative analysis; focus group analysis; and trends and themes in the data. He noted approximately 6,700 individuals responded to the on-line survey, which was available over a 12-week period in both English and Spanish. He noted that 46 focus groups, tailored for different audiences, were convened across the state, and included representatives of nearly every Connecticut town. Board members reviewed the most identifiable response trends that surfaced from a preliminary focus group analysis.

III. Discussion and Prioritization of Board's Goals

Board members engaged in a discussion of how the preliminary findings factor into the Board's development of a five-year comprehensive plan for education. Members spoke about the balance between equity and excellence, noting that the focus should be on equal outcomes, recognizing that some students will need greater access and supports to achieve desired results.

Mr. Costa summarized the five identified "most critical systemic needs" and invited Board members to reflect on what pertinent information should fall under each related category (implications of responses; supporting external data; State Board of Education policy considerations; and advocacy considerations). Commissioner Wentzell noted the importance of the Board's direction on measures to use to determine accomplishment of goals, and the Board's preference in terms of receiving reports on actions and outcomes.

Discussion ensued. Members recommended the following:

- Add a "preamble" to include language that introduces the Board's vision and its goals and describes what has already been accomplished since major reform legislation was enacted;
- Center the "five identified most critical systemic needs" on the Board's themes of equity and excellence;
- Ensure that equity is prominently addressed upfront;
- Be specific and clear when stating the goals and intended outcomes;
- Avoid subjective verbs and present goals in a way that they can be measured to determine progress;
- Include specific, actionable steps to achieve goals that will enable us to monitor progress and hold ourselves accountable for the desired results;
- Write the document in user-friendly language that will engage a diverse audience;
- Incorporate the benefits of personalized learning;
- Remove words that could be interpreted as negative (e.g., underperforming);
- When using the term "assistance," include not only financial assistance, but specific ways to achieve systemic, sustainable improvements;
- Review the use of the phrase "all students" as some concerns pertain to a particular subset of students; develop specific targets for these students based on data; and
- Review the format of the report to ensure that is inviting and easy to follow.

IV. Next Steps

Mr. Costa and his staff stated that they will rewrite the document based on the Board's direction for further discussion.

V. Adjourn

By unanimous consent, the retreat was adjourned at 3:48 p.m.

Prepared by: _____
Dianna R. Wentzell
Secretary