

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Hartford**

**Minutes  
State Board of Education Meeting  
December 4, 2019  
(Approved January 8, 2020)**

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the State Board of Education (hereinafter "Board") met on Wednesday, December 4, 2019, in Plaza North Meeting Room C and D of the State Office Building, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, Connecticut.

**I. Call to Order**

Chairperson Allan Taylor called the meeting to order at 9:47 a.m.

Present: Allan B. Taylor, Chairperson  
Estela López, Vice Chairperson  
Erin D. Benham  
Milan Chand, Student Member  
Sophia H. Chin, Student Member  
Erik M. Clemons\*  
William P. Davenport  
Donald F. Harris, Jr.  
Malia K. Sieve  
Robert J. Trefry, Ex Officio

Absent: Mark Ojakian, Ex Officio

**II. Public Participation**

1. Thomas Stringfellow, a resident of Manchester, addressed the Board on several matters, including reading recommendations.

Moment of Silence – W.F. Kaynor Technical High School Students

Chairperson Allan Taylor announced that Commissioner Cardona shared that two students from W.F. Kaynor Technical High School in Waterbury were victims of homicide. Chairperson Taylor asked all in attendance to stand and have a moment of silence in memory of the two students.

The meeting continued with the agenda.

**III. Executive Session**

The Board did not meet in executive session.

#### **IV. Consideration of Minutes**

##### **A. November 6, 2019, State Board of Education Meeting**

Dr. López moved, Mrs. Benham seconded, that the Board adopt the minutes of the November 6, 2019, State Board of Education Meeting.

##### **VOTE ON**

MOTION:	In favor:	Benham, Davenport, Harris, López, Sieve, Taylor
	Opposed:	0
	Abstained:	0
	Absent:	Clemons

Motion carried unanimously.

#### **V. Items Requiring Action**

The Board considered agenda item V.A., In the Matter of Kevin Muhammad, Certification Action, at this time.

##### **A. In the Matter of Kevin Muhammad, Certification Action**

In consideration of agenda item V.A., In the Matter of Kevin Muhammad, Certification Action, Assistant Attorney General Kerry Colson was present to represent and counsel the State Board of Education. Legal Director Jessa Mirtle, Division of Legal and Governmental Affairs, and Nancy Pugliese, Chief of the Bureau of Investigations and Professional Practices, were present to represent the Commissioner of Education.

Chairperson Taylor questioned whether Mr. Muhammand was present at this meeting. Attorney Jessa Mirtle responded that they were not aware of Mr. Kevin Muhammand being present. Assistant Attorney General Kerry Colson questioned if Mr. Kevin Muhammand had received notice of the hearing. Attorney Jessa Mirtle responded in the affirmative that Mr. Kevin Muhammand had been provided with notice of today's hearing. It is duly noted in the meeting minutes that the Mr. Kevin Muhammand had been notified of the Board hearing.

The members of the Board were presented with a draft resolution to vote on the intended form of penalty. The Board engaged in questions and answers concerning the resolution on the floor.

Dr. López moved, Mr. Harris seconded, that pursuant to its authority under Section 10-145b (i) of the Connecticut General Statutes and Section 10-145d-612 of the Regulations for Connecticut State Agencies, based upon the evidence included in the written report of the Commissioner of Education

entitled Investigation Report in the Matter of Kevin Muhammad's Certification Action, the State Board of Education:

- Formally accepts this report;
- Determines by a roll-call vote that the professional certificate endorsed for biology grades 7 through 12 of the holder shall be revoked and the provisional certificate endorsed for intermediate administration and supervision for grades K through 12 of the holder shall be revoked;
- Certifies that each member has read the written report of the Commissioner;
- Bases this determination upon its conclusion that the evidence supports a finding of misconduct sufficient to revoke the professional certificate and revoke the provisional certificate and adopts the evidence and conclusions outlined in the written report of the Commissioner; and
- Directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

<b>Board Member</b>	<b><i>Roll Call Vote</i></b>			
	<b>In Favor</b>	<b>Opposed</b>	<b>Abstained</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Erin D. Benham	X			
Erik M. Clemons				X
William P. Davenport	X			
Donald F. Harris, Jr.	X			
Estela López, Vice Chairperson	X			
Malia K. Sieve	X			
Allan B. Taylor, Chairperson	X			

Motion carried unanimously.

#### Overview of Racial Imbalance

Prior to the Hamden panel presentation to the Board, Legal Director Jessa Mirtle introduced State Department of Education Attorney Laura Anastasio to provide a PowerPoint overview on the Racial Imbalance Statutes and Plans. Attorney Anastasio explained the historical significance of the Racial Imbalance Statute of 1969 and the definition of racial imbalance. This statute requires the CSBE to notify a school district if it finds that a school under its jurisdiction is racially imbalanced. Attorney Anastasio spoke on the regulations and on the calculation of racial imbalance, the content of racial imbalance plans, and State Board of Education considerations of the plans.

[\*Mr. Clemons arrived at the meeting at 10:22 a.m.]

The Board thanked Attorney Anastasio for the overview presentation.

**B. Consideration of Hamden Board of Education’s Plan to Address Racial Imbalance in Church Street School**

A panel consisting of Superintendent Jody Goeler, Hamden Public Schools and Chair Christopher A. Daur, Hamden Board of Education, presented a PowerPoint presentation to the Board on Hamden’s districtwide efforts to balance elementary schools.

Dr. López moved, Mr. Harris seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-226d of the Connecticut General Statutes, conditionally approves the Hamden Board of Education’s “2019 Plan to Address Racial Imbalance in Church Street School” conditioned upon the following:

1. That the Hamden Board of Education provide a detailed timetable for meeting interim progress benchmarks toward full implementation of its plan, including any such additional measures approved by the Hamden Board; and
2. That the Hamden Board of Education shall provide interim reports to the Commissioner on its progress in implementing the actions detailed in its timeline in December 2020 and December 2021;

and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

**VOTE ON**

<b>MOTION:</b>	In favor:	Benham, Clemons, Davenport, Harris, López, Sieve, Taylor
	Opposed:	0
	Abstained:	0
	Absent:	0

Motion carried unanimously.

**C. Consideration of Vernon Board of Education’s Plan to Address Racial Imbalance in Lake Street School**

Legal Director Jessa Mirtle provided an introduction that this was Vernon Board of Education’s first time appearing before the Board with a school racial imbalance plan. A panel consisting of Superintendent Joseph Macary, Vernon Public Schools, and Assistant Superintendent Robert Testa presented Vernon’s action plan for addressing racial imbalance issues to the Board. Vernon presented a handout to the Board. Discussion ensued concerning the education of parents and guardians about racial identification.

Mrs. Sieve moved, Mrs. Benham seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-226d of the Connecticut General Statutes, conditionally approves the Vernon Board of Education’s “2019 Plan to Address Racial Imbalance in Lake Street School” conditioned upon the following:

1. That the Vernon Board of Education provide a detailed timetable for meeting interim progress benchmarks toward full implementation of its plan, including any additional measures approved by the Vernon Board; and
2. That the Vernon Board of Education shall provide interim reports to the Commissioner on its progress in implementing the actions detailed in its timeline in May 2020 and May 2021;

and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

**VOTE ON**

MOTION:	In favor:	Benham, Clemons, Davenport, Harris, López, Sieve, Taylor
	Opposed:	0
	Abstained:	0
	Absent:	0

Motion carried unanimously.

**VII. Report of the Chair**

Chairperson Taylor reported that he attended the School Discipline Collaborative on November 22, 2019. He reported that the meeting was very constructive, Commissioner Cardona provided an excellent talk, and the student panel from Manchester was well received. Also in attendance were Mrs. Benham and Dr. López. Mr. Taylor thanked Deputy Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker for the leadership role of the program. Mrs. Benham referenced the timeline display of education from the School Discipline Collaborative that was currently on exhibit outside this meeting room.

Chairperson Taylor highlighted that the 2020 Teacher of the Year Reception and Ceremony will be held at the Bushnell. In attendance will be Commissioner Miguel Cardona, Chairperson Allan Taylor, Erin Benham, Milan Chand, Sophia Chin, William Davenport, and Robert Trefry.

**VII. Report of the Commissioner**

Commissioner Cardona highlighted the Historical Timeline of Public Education in the United States. The Commissioner thanked Deputy Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker and SERC for putting it together.

The Commissioner referenced his written report in the Board's supplemental folders. He highlighted the sharing of Miguel's Memo, a communication resource to SDE agency team; and the Commissioner's article, *A Tale of Two Living Rooms* (Connecting Students and the Instructional Core), how two different schools created living rooms for their students to meet the needs of the students.

He highlighted the following events:

- Governor's Workforce Council
- CCSSO Annual Policy Forum
- Presented: CT Reading Association, CT Student Attendance Symposium, CABE/CAPSS Convention, School Discipline Collaborative, SERC Parental Involvement Day, CTE Conference
- Meeting with approximately a dozen education partners to discuss partnership opportunities/vision

**Well Done!**

- CT Student Attendance Symposium
- Career & Technical Education Conference
- CCSSO Teacher Table
- School Discipline Collaborative
- NetStat Session

**Congratulations!**

**Commissioner's Summer Math Challenge**

- **Awardees Recognized for 2018**
  - Peck Place School, Orange Public Schools
  - North Haven Middle School, North Haven Public Schools
  - Riverview School, Unified School District 2
- **Awardees Recognized for 2019**
  - Bradley School, Derby Public Schools
  - Guilford High School, Guilford Public Schools
  - North Haven Public Schools
- **Governor's Summer Reading Challenge**
  - Elementary**
    - Alcott Elementary, Frisbie Elementary and Wakelee Elementary, Wolcott Public Schools
    - Booth Free School, Burnham School and Washington Primary, Regional School District 12
    - Kent Center School and Lee H. Kellogg Elementary, Regional School District 1
    - Sunnyside School, Shelton Public Schools
  - Middle**
    - Amity Middle School-Bethany and Amity Middle School-Orange, Regional School District 5
    - Ellington Middle School, Ellington Public Schools
    - Hillcrest Middle School, Trumbull Public Schools
    - Irving A. Robbins Middle School, Farmington Public Schools
    - Tyrrell Middle School, Wolcott Public Schools

- Abraham Baldwin Middle School, Guilford Public Schools
- Dr. Joseph S. Renzulli Gifted and Talented Academy, Hartford Public Schools

#### **High School**

- Norwich Technical High School

#### **Unique/Private Schools**

- Riverview School, Unified School District 2
- Saint Gregory the Great School-Danbury, Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic Schools
- St. Joseph School-Sprague, Roman Catholic Diocese of Norwich
- Talcott Mountain Academy, Avon, CT

#### **CABE/CAPSS Convention – November 15, 2019**

- CAPSS Superintendent of the Year
  - Kathleen Greider, Farmington Public Schools
- CABE President
  - Donald F. Harris, Jr.
- CABE Leadership Awards of Local Boards of Education
  - Commissioner Cardona reiterated the importance of local boards of education. He acknowledged and congratulated the local boards that CABE recognized as especially effective boards.

#### **Congratulations!**

On December 6, 2019, The Village for Families & Children will recognize Dr. Estela López as “Woman of the Year” at its 19th Annual Girl Within Luncheon.

#### **Staff Survey Response – Professional Learning**

In response to a Staff Survey that Commissioner Cardona conducted his first month, he highlighted the professional development series and the first session, Trauma-Informed Restorative Practices, being held on Friday, December 20, 2019. The Commissioner extended an invitation to members of the Board to attend.

#### **Social Media Campaign Update**

The Commissioner invited Communications Director Peter Yazbak to the table for a Social Media update. Mr. Yazbak spoke on the 52/52 Campaign to get 5,200 followers in 52 weeks for both Facebook and Twitter. He reported that good progress was being made.

Commissioner Cardona reiterated that we must promote the positive things going on in Connecticut, and our social media campaign is being used to promote our best practices.

Dr. Estela López and Mrs. Erin Benham were presented with certificates for being *Top Fans* for spreading and promoting the SDE's social media platforms.

### **VIII. Financial Matters**

Chief Financial Officer Kathy Demsey reported that the SDE budget was on track and in good shape this year. Ms. Demsey spoke on another Finance Department project. She stated that in response to requirements of ESSA to provide school-level financial data on our Web site and on the report cards as part of ESSA Plan, the SDE developed a system that was able to collect expenditures at the school level. Over the next year, Ms. Demsey will be working with Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan as to how to use the data and present it to be meaningful for the Commissioner, parents, local school boards, superintendents, legislators, and the SDE.

### **IX. Consent Agenda**

Mr. Davenport requested that agenda item IX.A., Report on Agricultural Science and Technology Education Graduates Five Years After Graduation, be removed from the Consent agenda for discussion. Mr. Davenport asked what was required to have all School Choice programs be required to perform a five-year graduate survey and explained the value of such a survey.

Commissioner Cardona thanked Mr. Davenport for his passion on this five-year graduation survey. The Commissioner stated that he was interested in learning more about how to mirror or replicate the graduation surveys for the other Choice schools. Mr. Trefry stated that a graduate survey plan was in the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System Strategic Operating Plan 2019-2020.

Mrs. Sieve moved, Mrs. Benham seconded, that the Board approve the following Consent agenda items: IX.B., Progress Report, Connecticut Relay Graduate School of Education, Alternate Route to Certification Program; and IX.C., Recommendation for the Adoption of the Educational Testing Service (ETS): Computer Science Test and ETS Recommended Cut Score.

#### **B. Progress Report, Connecticut Relay Graduate School of Education, Alternate Route to Certification Program**

[Consent Agenda Item – No Resolution]

#### **C. Recommendation for the Adoption of the Educational Testing Service (ETS): Computer Science Test and ETS Recommended Cut Score**

**RESOLVED**, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to subsection (b) of Section 10-145f of the Connecticut General Statutes, adopts the Educational Testing



Service (ETS) Praxis Test for Computer Science and the ETS recommended cut score for the test, effective January 2, 2020, for any person seeking certification in such area, unless the person meets requirements for an exemption from such testing requirements as provided in subsection (f) of Section 10-145f of the Connecticut General Statutes, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

VOTE ON

MOTION: In favor: Benham, Clemons, Davenport, Harris, López, Sieve, Taylor  
Opposed: 0  
Abstained: 0  
Absent: 0

Motions carried unanimously.

**A. Report on Agricultural Science and Technology Education Graduates Five Years After Graduation**

**RESOLVED**, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-65a (b) of the Connecticut General Statutes, receives the Report on Agricultural Science and Technology Education Graduates Five Years after Graduation.

VOTE ON

MOTION: In favor: Benham, Clemons, Davenport, Harris, López, Sieve, Taylor  
Opposed: 0  
Abstained: 0  
Absent: 0

Motion carried unanimously.

**X. Items for Discussion**

**A. Connecticut's Draft Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act (Perkins V) State Plan**

Reading and Literacy Director Dr. Melissa K. Wlodarczyk Hickey presented an overview of Connecticut's Draft Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act (Perkins V) State Plan to the Board with a PowerPoint. She explained that Perkins V is a principal source of federal funding to states that supports career and technical education (CTE) in secondary schools (high schools) and postsecondary schools (community colleges). Dr. Hickey emphasized that Connecticut's CTE State Plan is in alignment with the Connecticut State Board of Education's Five-year Comprehensive Plan (2016-21), *Ensuring Equity and Excellence for All Connecticut Students* and the Connecticut ESSA Plan. She reviewed the key themes that resonate throughout the Connecticut State Plan and highlighted the deliberate alignment to labor market needs. Dr. Hickey discussed Connecticut's vision regarding: Today's Skill-Tomorrow's Careers. She highlighted the 12 Connecticut Career Clusters that are supported by Perkins V funding. Dr. Hickey reviewed Connecticut's CTE State Plan Timeline.

Discussion followed. The Board thanked Dr. Hickey for her presentation.

## **B. Update on Priorities**

Commissioner Cardona explained to the Board that this month and in some future meetings, he would periodically update them on some progress and priorities as they relate to the Equity and Excellence Plan. He stated that the two focus areas this past month have been (1) Improving Climate/Culture and Student Connectedness; and (2) Strengthening Pathways with the goal of engaging students. The Commissioner invited Deputy Commissioners Charlene Russell-Tucker and Desi Nesmith to speak.

### Improving Climate/Culture and Student Connectedness

Deputy Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker spoke on the strategies of looking at exclusionary practices of suspension and expulsions disproportionately. She highlighted the strategy of the Connecticut School Discipline Collaborative membership and the concept of cross-sector leadership collaboration that is able to design sustainable solutions from working together. She also discussed next steps for the School Discipline Collaborative such as adding the power of the voice of students in the membership, working on family guides on suspensions and expulsions, learning from districts, and working with other stakeholders. The Connecticut School Discipline Collaborative continues to provide feedback and advise the Commissioner and the State Board of Education concerning strategies in transforming school discipline.

### Strengthening Pathways

Deputy Commissioner Desi Nesmith spoke on the creation of multiple pathways. He emphasized that college and career pathways is preparing for college *and* life beyond experience; it is not one or the other. Deputy Commissioner Nesmith shared and outlined some CSDE pathways:

- Establish workforce development standards for districts to align course work with workforce needs;
- Work with RESC Alliance for best practices because it is important to highlight, replicate and learn from those that are doing it well;
- Expose high school students to higher education possibilities earlier;
- Work in conjunction with the Governor's Workforce Council;
- Work with stakeholders (example of Perkins V); and
- Launch resources for Today's Skills-Tomorrow's Initiative.

Deputy Commissioner Nesmith invited Chief Strategic Planning Officer Keith Norton to share Bacon Academy's manufacturing program in Colchester as an example of a district and community college working together.

## **XI. Committee Reports**

### **A. Academic Standards and Assessment**

Mr. Clemons reported that the Committee met on November 18, 2019, and highlighted discussions on Digital Citizenship, Internet Safety and Media Literacy Guidelines, FAFSA, Summer Melt Research Study, and Lexiles and Quantiles. The next meeting will be on February 24, 2020.

### **B. Accountability and Support**

Dr. López reported that the committee would meet on December 11, 2019.

### **C. Finance, Audit, and Budget**

No report was presented.

### **D. Legislation and Policy Development**

Mrs. Benham reported that the committee met that morning. The committee continued a discussion on School Choice, and heard legislative proposals from Chief of Staff Laura Stefon.

### **E. Connecticut Technical Education and Career System Board**

CTECS Chairman Trefry stated that there was nothing further to report at this time since the Strategic Operating Plan presentation in November.

### **F. NASBE**

No report was presented.

Chairperson Taylor adjourned the meeting at 1:12 p.m.

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