

Connecticut State Board of Education
Hartford

Minutes of the Academic Standards and Assessment Committee Meeting
Monday, June 22, 2020

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State and posted on the agency's website, the Academic Standards and Assessment Committee (hereinafter "Committee") met on Monday, June 22, 2020 via GoToMeeting. This virtual meeting was livestreamed (https://youtu.be/n02E_L5HE60) to allow for public access.

I. Introductions

Committee Chair Erik Clemons called the meeting to order at 2:40pm.

Members of the committee introduced themselves, as many are new:

Present: Erik M. Clemons, Chair
Estela López
Martha Paluch Prou
Awilda Reasco
Malia K. Sieve

Absent: none

Staff Present: Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Performance Officer
Irene Parisi, Chief Academic Officer
Gladys Labas, Director of Equity and Language

II. African American/Black and Puerto Rican/Latino Course of Studies

Dr. Gladys Labas and Ms. Irene Parisi gave an update on the progress surrounding the development of curriculum for a new course focused on African American/Black and Puerto Rican/Latino studies, pursuant to Public Act 19-12, approved in June of 2019. A course description, including scope, sequence, and course objectives must be submitted to the General Assembly, along with a report of the course development and review, by mid-January 2021. Districts will be required to offer the course to students in the 2022-23 school year and may begin offering the course in the 2021-22 school year, however the course will not be a graduation requirement for students. Everyone present acknowledged the timeliness of this work given the extraordinary events of the last few weeks. Ms. López suggested that this work needed to have a clear communication plan so that parents and teachers understand the importance of this course; she stressed the importance of finding allies within the schools to make this clear. Ms. Reasco suggested reaching out to higher education partners across the board. Ms. Sieve, Ms. Prou, and Mr. Clemons all expressed concern that students may not take the course if it isn't a graduation requirement. Mr. Clemons suggested that the course themes also include beauty and dignity rather than focus solely on times of struggle.

III. Federal Waiver and Next Generation Accountability System Implications

Mr. Ajit Gopalakrishnan provided an update to the committee on the effect that COVID-19-related closures had on school accountability. CT's Next Generation Accountability System is a composite of 12 indicators, many of which were significantly disrupted by COVID-19. Large scale assessments, including SAT, Smarter Balanced, and the Next Generation Science Assessment, could not be administered, so there will be no data on achievement, academic growth, assessment participation, or physical fitness for the 2019-20 school year. Achievement, growth, college/career readiness, and postsecondary entrance are all impacted in 2020-21. Questions need to be answered about the definition of an absence in a distance learning environment for upcoming years. The United States Department of Education has provided a waiver for school accountability for the 2019-20 school year, so data will be released for those indicators where data are available, but not for the accountability index as a whole. New Turnaround and Focus School identification will likely be postponed one and two years, respectively. Ms. López asked if any data was available on student learning during the distance learning period, and Mr. Gopalakrishnan discussed several district surveys that were given during that time and a report that is forthcoming. Ms. Sieve expressed interest in seeing the breakdown by student groups in this data, and Mr. Gopalakrishnan explained that student-level data was not available. Ms. Reasco expressed concern about the widening opportunity gap, especially if SAT testing is not made available again. Ms. Prou expressed concerns about continued extended periods of full-time distance learning.

IV. Adjournment

Committee Chair Erik Clemons adjourned the meeting at 4:01 pm.

Prepared by Danielle Bousquet