

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

**Minutes
State Board of Education Meeting
February 6, 2020
(Approved March 4, 2020)**

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the State Board of Education (hereinafter "Board") met on Thursday, February 6, 2020, 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 11:07 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
Karen DuBois-Walton
Donald F. Harris, Jr.
Martha Paluch Prou
Awilda Reasco
Robert J. Trefry, Ex Officio

Absent: Bonnie E. Burr
Mark Ojakian, Ex Officio
Malia K. Sieve

Oath of Office

Chairperson Taylor announced that Governor Ned Lamont appointed four new members to the State Board of Education. Chairperson Taylor noted that Bonnie E. Burr would attend the March meeting.

Attorney Jessa Y. Mirtle, Commissioner of the Superior Court, administered the Oath of Office to the following newly appointed Board members: (i) Karen DuBois-Walton, (ii) Martha Justine Prou, and (iii) Awilda Reasco. Copies of the Oaths of Office are enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

Chairperson Taylor recessed the meeting at 11:13 a.m. for photo opportunities for the new Board members.

The meeting reconvened at 11:23 a.m.

II. Public Participation

1. Christina Trotochaud, a parent of two students at the Marine Science Magnet High School, expressed her concerns regarding the leadership of MSMHS's former principal. A copy of Ms. Trotochaud's written testimony is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
2. Tyanne Mateo, spoke concerning the resignation and leadership of the former principal of Marine Science Magnet High School (MSMHS). Ms. Mateo submitted a folder of petition complaint materials. The contents of the folder are enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
3. Latisha Porcher, a parent of two students at Elm City College Preparatory, spoke for renewal of agenda item, VI.C., Renewal of State Charter – Elm City College Preparatory, New Haven. A copy of Ms. Porcher's written testimony is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
4. Anais Nunez, a parent of two students, spoke regarding the renewal of agenda item VI.C., Renewal of State Charter – Elm City College Preparatory, New Haven.
5. Melissa Thomas, a teacher at Achievement First Bridgeport Academy Middle School, spoke for renewal of agenda item VI.D., Renewal of State Charter – Achievement First Bridgeport Academy, Bridgeport. A copy of Ms. Thomas's written testimony is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
6. Delia Perez, the parent of a student at Amistad Academy Elementary School, spoke regarding the renewal of agenda item VI.B., Renewal of State Charter – Amistad Academy, New Haven. A copy of Ms. Perez's written testimony is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
7. Brandi Brilliant, a Grade 7 math teacher at Achievement First, requested renewal for agenda item VI.D., Renewal of State Charter – Achievement First Bridgeport Academy, Bridgeport.
8. Ayesha Clarke, a parent of two students at Stamford Charter School for Excellence, requested an expansion of the school charter, and spoke in support of agenda item VI.A., Renewal of State Charter – Stamford Charter School for Excellence, Stamford.
9. Stephanie Smith, a parent of three students at Stamford Charter School for Excellence, requested an expansion of the school charter, and spoke in support of agenda item VI.A., Renewal of State Charter – Stamford Charter School for Excellence, Stamford.
10. Peter Cerreta, a founding teacher of Stamford Charter School for Excellence and board member, thanked the State Board of Education for the last five years and Kevin Fischer for his leadership. Mr. Cerreta spoke in support of agenda item VI.A., Renewal of State Charter – Stamford Charter School for Excellence, Stamford.

11. Anny Buartatagna, a parent of a student at Stamford Charter School for Excellence, requested an expansion of the school charter, and spoke in support of agenda item VI.A., Renewal of State Charter – Stamford Charter School for Excellence, Stamford.
12. Nadia Lopez, the parent of a student attending Stamford Charter School for Excellence, requested an expansion of the school charter, and spoke in support of agenda item VI.A., Renewal of State Charter – Stamford Charter School for Excellence, Stamford.
13. Oranna Moore, the parent of a student attending Stamford Charter School for Excellence requested an expansion of the school charter, and spoke in support of agenda item VI.A., Renewal of State Charter – Stamford Charter School for Excellence, Stamford.
14. Shuanna Green, the parent of a student attending Stamford Charter School for Excellence, spoke in support of agenda item VI.A., Renewal of State Charter – Stamford Charter School for Excellence, Stamford.
15. Teresa Brivett, a grandparent with two students attending Stamford Charter School for Excellence, requested an expansion of the school charter, and spoke in support of agenda item VI.A., Renewal of State Charter – Stamford Charter School for Excellence, Stamford.
16. Kevin Green, a parent of two children attending Stamford Charter School for Excellence, spoke in support of agenda item VI.A., Renewal of State Charter – Stamford Charter School for Excellence, Stamford.
17. Frantzca Telima, a parent of a student attending Stamford Charter School for Excellence, requested an expansion of the school charter, and spoke in support of agenda item VI.A., Renewal of State Charter – Stamford Charter School for Excellence, Stamford.
18. Sani Suleman, a parent of two students attending Stamford Charter School for Excellence, requested an expansion of the school charter, and spoke in support of agenda item VI.A., Renewal of State Charter – Stamford Charter School for Excellence, Stamford.
19. Wendy Carrillo, a parent of two children attending Stamford Charter School for Excellence, requested an expansion of the school charter, and spoke in support of VI.A., Renewal of State Charter – Stamford Charter School for Excellence, Stamford.
20. Lesly Galindo, a parent of a student attending Stamford Charter School for Excellence, requested an expansion of the school charter, and spoke in support of VI.A., Renewal of State Charter – Stamford Charter School for Excellence, Stamford.
21. Alejandra Morales, the grandmother of a student attending Stamford Charter School for Excellence, requested an expansion of the school charter, and spoke in support of VI.A., Renewal of State Charter – Stamford Charter School for Excellence, Stamford.

22. Victoria Phillipe, the parent of two students attending Stamford Charter School for Excellence, requested an expansion of the school charter, and spoke in support of VI.A., Renewal of State Charter – Stamford Charter School for Excellence, Stamford.
23. Dr. Charlene Reid, founder and former executive director of Stamford Charter School for Excellence, spoke on the initial intent of the school's charter application, requested an expansion of the school charter, and in support of VI.A., Renewal of State Charter – Stamford Charter School for Excellence, Stamford.
24. Melissa Franco, a resident of Bridgeport and the sister of two Achievement First students, spoke for the renewal of five full years for agenda item VI.B., Renewal of State Charter – Amistad Academy, New Haven. A copy of Ms. Franco's written testimony is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
25. Julia Leonard, a teacher at Amistad Academy, asked for support for the renewal of agenda item VI.B., Renewal of State Charter – Amistad Academy, New Haven.
26. Claudia Phillips, requested a full five-year renewal of agenda item VI.D., Renewal of State Charter – Achievement First Bridgeport Academy, Bridgeport.
27. Brittany Graham, requested the renewal of agenda item VI.B., Renewal of State Charter – Amistad Academy, New Haven.
28. Tashia Bernadel, teacher and parent of student at Achievement First Bridgeport Academy requested the renewal of agenda item VI.B., Renewal of State Charter – Amistad Academy, New Haven.
29. Thomas Stringfellow, a resident of Manchester, addressed the Board on several matters, including movie and reading recommendations.
30. Anne Manusky, spoke on the status of the Connecticut State ESSA Plan, and on the U.S. Department of Education's Educational Flexibility (Ed-Flex) Program. Ms. Manusky provided a handout on Ed-Flex. A copy of Ms. Manusky's handout is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
31. Rev. Ernestine Holloway, an advocate for inner city urban schools, shared her thoughts on public charter schools and the need for the Board to fix all public schools for all students to have educational opportunities.
32. State Representative Patricia Billie Miller, 145th District, submitted a letter of support for the charter school renewal of agenda item VI.A., Renewal of State Charter – Stamford Charter School for Excellence, Stamford. A copy of Representative Miller's letter is enclosed in the official file of the meeting.
33. State Representative Robert Sanchez, 25th District, submitted a letter of support for the charter school renewal of agenda item VI.A., Renewal of State Charter – Stamford

Charter School for Excellence, Stamford. A copy of Representative Sanchez's letter is enclosed in the official file of the meeting.

34. State Representative Hilda E. Santiago, 84th District, submitted a letter of support for the charter school renewal of agenda item VI.A., Renewal of State Charter – Stamford Charter School for Excellence, Stamford. A copy of Representative Santiago's letter is enclosed in the official file of the meeting.
35. State Representative Geraldo Reyes, Jr., 75th District, submitted a letter of support for the charter school renewal of agenda item VI.A., Renewal of State Charter – Stamford Charter School for Excellence, Stamford. A copy of Representative Reyes' letter is enclosed in the official file of the meeting.
36. State Representative Daniel J. Fox, 148th District, submitted a letter of support for the charter school renewal of agenda item VI.A., Renewal of State Charter – Stamford Charter School for Excellence, Stamford. A copy of Representative Fox's letter is enclosed in the official file of the meeting.
37. State Senator Douglas McCrory, 2nd District, submitted a letter of support for the charter school renewal of agenda item VI.A., Renewal of State Charter – Stamford Charter School for Excellence, Stamford. A copy of Senator McCrory's letter is enclosed in the official file of the meeting.

III. Executive Session

On a motion by Dr. López, seconded by Mrs. Benham, the Board voted unanimously to move into executive session at 12:49 p.m. to discuss pending litigation and personnel matters. Present in executive session were Board members Mrs. Benham, Mr. Chand, Ms. Chin, Mr. Clemons, Mr. Davenport, Dr. DuBois-Walton, Mr. Harris, Dr. López, Mrs. Prou, Mrs. Reasco, Mr. Taylor, and Mr. Trefry. Also, present for executive session were Commissioner Miguel Cardona, Deputy Commissioner Desi Nesmith, Deputy Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker, Legal Director Jessa Mirtle, SDE Attorney Robin Cecere, and Staff Assistant Aldith Dewar.

On a motion by Dr. López, seconded by Mrs. Benham, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn its executive session and reconvene in public session at 1:45 p.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
Karen DuBois-Walton
Donald F. Harris, Jr.

Martha Paluch Prou
Awilda Reasco
Robert J. Trefry, Ex Officio

Absent: Bonnie E. Burr
Mark Ojakian, Ex Officio
Malia K. Sieve

IV. Consideration of Minutes

A. December 4, 2019, State Board of Education Meeting

Dr. López moved, Mr. Davenport seconded, that the Board adopt the minutes of the January 8, 2020, State Board of Education Meeting.

VOTE ON

MOTION: In favor: Benham, Clemons, Davenport, DuBois-Walton, Harris,
López, Prou, Reasco, Taylor
Opposed: 0
Abstained: 0
Absent: Burr, Sieve

Motion carried unanimously.

V. Report of the Commissioner

Commissioner Cardona presented the following January activities:

- Visits to: Waterford Public Schools, Berlin Public Schools, Meriden Public Schools, CREC's Teacher Residency Program, Fair Haven School (New Haven), Danbury Public Schools
- Presented: Office of Early Childhood Staff Meeting, Educators for Excellence Teacher Supply Drive, Kid Governor Inauguration, CT Arts Administrators
- Meeting with various education partners to discuss partnership opportunities/vision (CAPSS, CAS, CABE, AACTE-CT, AFT-CT, DECD, CAA, MSSA/SCASA, DSS, DCF, CAUS, SEEK-CT, JFA-CT)
- Professional Development Opportunity – Mindfulness and Self Care

Well Done!

CSDE involvement in presentations throughout the state in January

- CT Kid Governor Inauguration
- Commissioner's Roundtable on Family & Community Engagement
- Accountability Updates and Balanced/Purposeful Assessment, *January 10, CAPSS Southern Connecticut Regional Superintendent's Meeting*
- Balanced/Purposeful Assessment, *January 13, Joint Meeting of CAPSS Assessment/Accountability and Teaching/Learning Committees*

- The Commissioner highlighted that CSDE Chief Strategic Planning Officer Keith Norton appeared on Better CT to discuss School Choice.

Congratulations!

Myra Stanfield

2020 Connecticut Kid Governor (Connecticut's 5th Kid Governor), Norfeldt Elementary School, West Hartford. Her platform is Standing Up for Animals in Need.

The Commissioner also shared another candidate's platform of preventing addiction to cell phones.

Cheers!

Friday Fun: Hot Chocolate for all! Commissioner Cardona and his Leadership Team distributed hot chocolate throughout the agency.

CSDE Press Release:

"Statement on Providing Educational Supports to Students Who Were Displaced by the Earthquakes in Puerto Rico." To date, there are 160 students from Puerto Rico who have entered Connecticut school districts. CSDE stands ready to assist districts as they enroll students who were displaced by the earthquakes.

CSDE Professional Learning Opportunity

Commissioner Cardona spoke on the success of the second professional development session, Introduction to Mindfulness and Self-Care, held on Thursday, January 23, 2020. He indicated that SDE staff would lead future PD sessions.

CSDE Legal Update

- Sheff Stipulation Agreement: Collaborative agreement that will create a pathway for desegregation lawsuit to transition out of the courts and into the educational space.
- Robinson v. Wentzell: Case against the State of Connecticut challenging the Hartford-region school choice program was withdrawn as a result of changes in how students are selected for choice program seats.
- Commissioner Cardona thanked the Attorney General's Office, the Governor's Office, and the SDE legal team.

Black History Month

"Those who have no record of what their forebears have accomplished lose the inspiration which comes from the teaching of biography and history" by Dr. Carter G. Woodson, the Father of Black History.

Promoting the Arts: Summer Przybyl - Photography
Daniel Hand High School, Madison

Commissioner Cardona was impressed with Miss Przybyl's artwork of garbage wrapped in plastic and then decorated with frosting and sprinkles: **Lead with Substance**. Commissioner Cardona equated the artwork to education: what are we giving to students? Are we investing in the core of education?

VI. Items Requiring Action

A panel consisting of Deputy Commissioner Desi Nesmith, Bureau Chief Lisa Lamenzo, Turnaround Office, Board Chairperson Debra Logan-Rabb, and Director and Principal Kevin Fischer presented an overview of agenda item VI.A., Renewal of State Charter – Stamford Charter School for Excellence, Stamford. Deputy Commissioner Nesmith stated that he was pleased to bring Stamford Charter School for Excellence forward for a full renewal.

Ms. Lamenzo thanked all the charter schools, the Board members who presided over the charter renewal hearings, and SDE staff members who participated in the charter renewal site visits.

A. Renewal of State Charter – Stamford Charter School for Excellence, Stamford

Mrs. Benham moved, Dr. López seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to subsection (g) of Section 10-66bb of the Connecticut General Statutes, renews the charter of Stamford Charter School for Excellence from July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2025, subject to the Commissioner's February 6, 2020, memorandum to the State Board of Education, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

VOTE ON

MOTION:	In favor:	Benham, Clemons, Davenport, DuBois-Walton, Harris, López, Prou, Reasco, Taylor
	Opposed:	0
	Abstained:	0
	Absent:	Burr, Sieve

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Renewal of State Charter – Amistad Academy, New Haven

A panel consisting of Deputy Commissioner Desi Nesmith, Bureau Chief Lisa Lamenzo, Turnaround Office, Co-CEO and President Dacia Toll, Achievement First, and Principal Brooke Williams presented an overview of agenda item VI.B., Renewal of State Charter – Amistad Academy, New Haven.

Discussion was held that encompassed related issues among (i) VI.B., Renewal of State Charter – Amistad Academy, New Haven, (ii) Renewal of State Charter – Elm City

D. Renewal of State Charter – Achievement First Bridgeport Academy, Bridgeport

A panel consisting of Deputy Commissioner Desi Nesmith, Bureau Chief Lisa Lamenzo, Turnaround Office, Co-CEO and President Dacia Toll, Achievement First, and Principal Samantha Lucky, Achievement First Bridgeport Academy presented an overview of agenda item VI.D., Renewal of State Charter – Achievement First Bridgeport Academy, Bridgeport. Discussion was held on the renewal of Achievement First Bridgeport Academy.

Mr. Davenport moved, Mrs. Benham seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to subsection (g) of Section 10-66bb of the Connecticut General Statutes, renews the charter of Achievement First Bridgeport Academy from July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2022, subject to the Commissioner’s February 6, 2020, memorandum to the State Board of Education, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

VOTE ON

MOTION:	In favor:	Benham, Clemons, Davenport, DuBois-Walton, Harris, López, Prou, Reasco, Taylor
	Opposed:	0
	Abstained:	0
	Absent:	Burr, Sieve

Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Cardona thanked Ms. Toll for her transparency during the discussion. He asked her to commit to working with the SDE staff and that the SDE looks forward to supporting her.

VII. Report of the Chair

Chairperson Taylor did not provide a report.

VIII. Financial Matters

X. Items for Discussion

A. Agency Update

A. Update on USDA Proposed Nutrition Standards

A panel consisting of Deputy Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker, Bureau Chief John Frassinelli, Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, presented an update on the USDA Nutrition Standards with an overview of the federal rulemaking

process, Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, School Nutrition Landscape from 2010 to now, USDA 2020 Proposed Rule, and the Connecticut Nutrition Environment.

The school meals proposed rule, will empower school nutrition professionals with more flexibility to serve appetizing and healthy meals that appeal to students' preferences and subsequently reduce food waste. The January 23, 2020, USDA Proposed Nutrition Standards had four areas of focus:

- Local program monitoring and review
- Meal Service (meal items, servings)
- Competitive Food Sales (a la carte sales)
- Reimbursable Meals

Mr. Frassinelli had a display tray of food. He demonstrated flexibilities with meal offerings by varying the food adjustments on the tray that could meet the food standards for the cafeteria and classroom.

X. Items for Discussion

A. Report on School Discipline

Deputy Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker, Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan, and Education Division Director Glen Peterson presented a report of analyses of trends in student disciplinary behaviors in Connecticut public schools. Over the past five years, Connecticut has made major strides in reducing exclusionary discipline.

The discussion included data collection, reporting, and the types of disciplinary incidents:

- In-School Suspension (ISS)
- Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)
- Bus Suspension
- Expulsion (EXP)

[William Davenport left the meeting at 3:38 p.m.]

All serious offenses and all incidents involving alcohol, drugs, or weapons must be reported. All bullying incidents must also be reported. The behaviors that are associated with the sanctions received by students are grouped into 10 categories. There was a review of:

- Sanctions and Incidents by grade level
- Suspension rates by grades
- Suspensions of Young Students, Pre-K through Grade 2

Mr. Peterson spoke on alternative community practices.

XI. Committee Reports

A. Academic Standards and Assessment

The next meeting will be held on February 24, 2020.

B. Accountability and Support

Dr. López reported that the committee will not meet in February 2020.

C. Finance, Audit, and Budget

No report was presented.

D. Legislation and Policy Development

Mrs. Benham reported that the committee did not meet that morning. The next meeting will be held on March 4, 2020.

E. Connecticut Technical Education and Career System Board

CTECS Chairman Trefry introduced Superintendent Jeffrey Wihbey. Mr. Wihbey reported that the CTECS Board held a meeting on January 15, 2020, a CTECS Foundation, internal transition (goal 4), and climate response team were items of discussion.

F. NASBE

No report was presented.

Chairperson Taylor adjourned the meeting at 4:10 p.m.

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