

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

Minutes
Special State Board of Education Meeting
August 11, 2020
(Approved September 2, 2020)

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State and posted on the agency's Web site, the State Board of Education (hereinafter "Board") met via GoToWebinar on Tuesday, August 11, 2020. A webinar link was provided to allow for public access to the Board's proceedings.

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Allan Taylor called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m.

Staff Assistant to the Board, Aldith Dewar, took an attendance roll call.

Present: Allan B. Taylor, Chairperson
 Estela López, Vice Chairperson
 Erin D. Benham
 Bonnie E. Burr
 Karen DuBois-Walton
 Elwood Exley, Jr.
 Donald F. Harris, Jr.
 Martha Paluch Prou
 Awilda Reasco
 Malia K. Sieve
 Robert J. Trefry, Ex Officio

Absent: Erik M. Clemons
 Mark Ojakian, Ex Officio

II. Public Participation

Access to public participation was provided via (i) e-mail communication submitted to SDE.StateBoard@ct.gov, and (ii) webinar registration as a speaker at the meeting. All written communication received was shared with the Board and posted on the Board's Web site.

1. Gwen Samuel, President and Founder CT Parents Union, spoke in opposition to agenda item III.A., 180 Day Waiver for the 2020-2021 School Year due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Provision of Hybrid and/or Remote Learning Models.
2. Michele Ridolfi O'Neill, CEA, spoke in support of agenda item III.B., Emergency Educator Certification Endorsements and requested that flexibility be balanced with maintaining the professional status of teachers. A copy of her written testimony is in the official file of the meeting.

III. Items Requiring Action

A. 180 Day Waiver for the 2020-2021 School Year due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Provision of Hybrid and/or Remote Learning Models

Dr. López moved, Mrs. Sieve seconded, the consideration of the resolution 180 Day Waiver for the 2020-2021 School Year due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Provision of Hybrid and/or Remote Learning Models.

Commissioner Cardona opened with gratitude to the Board members for their willingness to attend a special meeting with short notice. The Commissioner stated during this COVID-19 pandemic, policies and practices needed adjustments in order to transition away from executive orders. He expressed that the SDE Team had worked to identify areas that needed attention and three resolutions were being presented to the Board and was requesting favorable recommendations that would allow schools for in-person learning and the ability to staff our schools.

Legal Director Jessa opened with the number of actual school days and the hours of instruction and the disruption to education in Connecticut. Attorney Mirtle stated that we are recommending that local districts be allowed to determine the model for schooling due to the COVID-19 emergency, so long as this good faith decision is driven by the public health data and falls within the public health indicators published by the SDE and DPH.

Attorney Mirtle stated that the resolution being presented is asking to allow for local decision making flexibility for hybrid and remote learning decisions being based on the public health data. Attorney Mirtle displayed on the screen **Addendum 4 Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together, Interim Guidance for Decision-Making Regarding the Use of In-Person, Hybrid (Blended), or Remote Learning Models in Connecticut Schools during COVID-19**. Attorney Mirtle highlighted Page 2, Table 1 with the Leading and Secondary Indicators of COVID-19 Infection Levels in Communities for Consideration of Learning Models for School Reopening in Connecticut. Attorney Mirtle stated that this proposed resolution is linked to the indicators.

Discussion ensued regarding the language of the resolution, the 180 school days, equity, flexibilities, district boundaries, and guardrails to decision-making, accountability measures,

student achievement, and acceptable instructional time. Commissioner Cardona proposed two options to the Board to mitigate the concerns with some of the language with the proposed resolution.

Mr. Harris moved, Dr. López seconded, that the State Board of Education table agenda item III.A. being considered to allow Attorney Mirtle and Deputy Commissioner Nesmith to amend the language concerns of the proposed resolution before the close of the meeting. The Board unanimously agreed to the tabling of agenda item III.A.

III. Items Requiring Action

B. Emergency Educator Certification Endorsements

Commissioner Cardona introduced agenda item III.B. as another area that we are recommending flexibility. The Commissioner stated in these unprecedented times we must ensure the academic needs of our learners by providing an educator workforce that is prepared to meet our students as they return to school. We are seeking a favorable recommendation from the Board for the flexibility to allow certified teachers to work in areas not currently certified. He introduced Chief Talent Officer Shuana Tucker and Bureau Chief Christopher Todd.

Dr. Tucker expressed that as schools reopen with staffing needs for certified, authorized educators, they had numerous conversations with stakeholders, including superintendents, union representatives, teachers, administrators, and others in preparation for the reopening of schools and the flexibility to utilize certified teachers where needed. Dr. Tucker and Mr. Todd presented on the recommendation to adopt new emergency educator certification endorsements as temporary authorizations to provide additional flexibility for school districts to meet the unique staffing challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic for the 2020-21 academic year.

Dr. DuBois-Walton moved, Mr. Harris seconded, that the State Board of Education adopts the recommendation from the Connecticut State Department of Education to implement the following temporary certification endorsements: Emergency Generalist, PK-8 (#201), Emergency Generalist, 7-12 (#202), and Emergency Teacher of English Language Learners, PK-12 (#204), to allow an educator who currently holds an initial, provisional or professional teaching certificate to be eligible for Emergency Authorization during the 2020-2021 school year at the request of the LEA/District, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Discussion ensued regarding need for the emergency certification such as (i) a shortage area of teachers, (ii) the ability to utilize a certified teacher instead of a substitute, (iii) the mutual agreement between the teacher and district, (iv) the paraeducator utilizing 20 months of successful service in lieu of 12 credit and the reimaging of the paraeducator pathway, and (v) districts providing additional resources and supports.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

III. Items Requiring Action

C. edTPA Cut Score Waiver Recommendation

Commissioner Cardona introduced agenda item III.C. as another area that we are recommending flexibility. He introduced Chief Talent Officer Shuana Tucker and Dr. Katie Moirs. They presented on the recommendation to waive the edTPA cut score requirement for all Connecticut educator preparation provider (EPP) program candidates completing and submitting for scoring an edTPA portfolio during the 2020-21 academic year. The edTPA required that all initial certification candidates enrolled in a Connecticut EPP must complete and pass during the student teaching experience as an EPP program completion requirement.

Dr. López moved, Mrs. Reasco seconded, that the State Board of Education adopts the recommendation from the Connecticut State Department of Education to implement a waiver of the edTPA cut score for all Connecticut educator preparation provider (EPP) program candidates completing and submitting for scoring an edTPA portfolio during the period September 1, 2020 to August 31, 2021, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

III. Items Requiring Action - (continued)

A. 180 Day Waiver for the 2020-2021 School Year due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Provision of Hybrid and/or Remote Learning Models

Mr. Harris moved, Mrs. Reasco seconded, that Agenda item III.A., 180 Day Waiver for the 2020-2021 School Year due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Provision of Hybrid

and/or Remote Learning Models be removed from the table. Members unanimously agreed.

Deputy Commissioner Nesmith and Legal Director Mirtle returned to the Board. Attorney Mirtle presented an amended proposed resolution that was displayed on screen to allow members to view the new paragraph and the new language. The Board members consented to the amended resolution.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Cardona acknowledged and thanked the SDE staff for their hard work over the last month for conversations with stakeholders, education partners, universities, the Governor's office, and the legal department to enable today's resolutions. He stated that Connecticut is poised for in-person learning, and the foreseeable future is not static and we must react to data. The Commissioner stated that we are planning with three scenarios and we must have policy, practice, and accountability measures for each. He concluded with thank you for your flexibility and time.

Chairperson Taylor thanked Commissioner Cardona and the Department, all the teachers and educators, and board members in all of our districts. He stated that we are dealing with something that is unprecedented. Our kids need you desperately, and you continue to step up to it.

Mr. Harris moved, Mrs. Sieve seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. The Board members unanimously agreed.

Chairperson Taylor adjourned the meeting at 11:29 a.m.

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