

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

Minutes
State Board of Education Meeting
October 7 2020
(Approved November 4, 2020)

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State and posted on the agency's Web site, the members of State Board of Education (hereinafter "Board") met on Wednesday, October 7, 2020, in Plaza North Meeting Room C and D of the State Office Building, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, Connecticut, and via GoToWebinar. A GoToWebinar registration link was provided to allow for public attendance to the virtual meeting. This virtual meeting was livestreamed (<https://youtu.be/GySdmM9oaoQ>.) to allow for public access.

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
Bonnie E. Burr
Erik M. Clemons
Karen DuBois-Walton (via GoToWebinar)
Elwood Exley, Jr. (via GoToWebinar)
Donald F. Harris, Jr.
Dr. Jane Gates for Mark Ojakian, Ex Officio (via GoToWebinar)
Martha Paluch Prou (via GoToWebinar)
Awilda Reasco (via GoToWebinar)
Malia K. Sieve (via GoToWebinar)
Robert J. Trefry, Ex Officio (via GoToWebinar)

Absent: None

II. Public Participation

Chairperson Taylor stated that one public participation was received.

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 will be posted on the Board's Web site.

1. Dr. Stephen J. Hegedus, President, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, (AACTE-CT Chapter) and Dean, College of Education, Southern Connecticut State University, spoke on the work of the AACTE-CT organization in preparing teachers and educators in Connecticut.

III. Executive Session

The Board did not meet in executive session.

IV. Consideration of Minutes

A. July 14, 2020, State Board of Education Meeting

Dr. López moved, Mrs. Benham seconded, that the Board adopt the minutes of the September 2, 2020, State Board of Education Meeting.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

V. Report of the Commissioner

Commissioner Cardona thanked everyone for attendance both in-person and virtual at the meeting for their time. He noted that it was nice being able to get back in the routine of back-to-school events. The Commissioner presented a PowerPoint during his report.

Commissioner Cardona provided an updated summary of some of the September activities at the agency. He highlighted the following:

Updates for September

- Weekly educational partnership meetings with CABE, CAPSS, CAS, AFT-CT, and CEA.
- Several visits to districts to see students learning.
- CABE Back to School meeting with Chair Taylor and Vice Chair López.
- Several interviews with English and Spanish media outlets.
- Speaker at Manufacturing Kick-off Event: Asnuntuck Community College.

Professional Support Series and Webinars

- Successfully navigating FAFSA completion during COVID – CSDE/Higher Heights Youth Empowerment.
- Educator Support Flexibilities to adjust what we need to be supportive of districts and students.
- Bureau of Special Education's Back-to-School Conference.
- The Academic Office:
 - Reimagined CT Classrooms Statewide Webinars
 - RESC Alliance Engagement Series
 - CT Arts Administrators Association
- The Performance Office:
 - Learning Model and Enrollment Weekly Data Collection
 - Tracking Attendance for State Reporting in Local Reporting System

Weekly Health and Safety Support Structures

- Rules Subcommittee – a partnership led by CSDE, DPH, and Yale School of Public Health
 - Members are subject matter experts.
 - Provide guidance and advise on school reopening, school safety and wellness, COVID transmission, regional implementation concept and technical guidance.
- DPH/CSDE COVID-19 Health and Safety Tuesdays
 - Tuesday morning calls with health experts, epidemiologists, and local health directors to answer calls to districts.

The Commissioner reported that these are some of the supports that we provide. He commended Deputy Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker for organizing both of these programs. He noted that Connecticut was receiving inquiries from another state to model some of Connecticut's supports.

Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month

- Honoring the contributions of Hispanic-Americans in Connecticut and the Country
- A Playlist of resources was shared with districts

Congratulations to CT 2020 National Blue Ribbon Schools

George Hersey Robertson School, Coventry – *Exemplary High Performing*

- Superintendent – Dr. David J. Petrone
- Principal – Ms. Jennifer DeRagon
- In 2018-19, students achieved 90.6% of their math growth targets

Norton Elementary School, Cheshire – *Exemplary High Performing*

- Superintendent - Dr. Jeffrey F. Solan
- Principal – Mrs. Kelly Grillo
- Educators gradual release of responsibility framework to design instruction requiring students to be active participants with greater independence

South Street School, Danbury – Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing

- Superintendent - Dr. Sal V. Pascarella
- Principal – Mrs. Carmen Vargas-Guevara
- School-wide daily 30-minute WIN (What I Need) block is a key structural piece in place to meet the needs of all students whether intervention or acceleration

Northeast Elementary School, Vernon – Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing

- Superintendent - Dr. Joseph Macary
- Principal – Dr. Brenda L. Greene
- Relationships and Culture

Updates for October

- The Commissioner provided an update on COVID-19 positive confirmed cases reported by public school districts since August 27, 2020. He then provided an update of cases from October 1, 2020, to October 7, 2020. He indicated that the cases are not necessarily spreading within the schools, but are being reported by the schools. It is important to know that all cases are counted even fully remote students are counted.
- The Commissioner reviewed the Health Indicators for consideration of school learning model. Check EdSight's Supporting Student Participation Page for most current information:
<http://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>.
- The Commissioner provided an update on the District Learning Model and student participation numbers for the week of September 21-25, 2020.

October - Celebrating Manufacturing Month

Commissioner Cardona and Chief Academic Officer Irene Parisi visited Phoenix Manufacturing, a women-owned, privately held precision machined components manufacturer located in Enfield, CT. Board Member Martha Prou provided the tour. The visit was part of Celebrating Manufacturing Month. The Commissioner stated that we need to make sure that our school systems are meeting the work demands of places like Phoenix Manufacturing.

VI. Items Requiring Action

A. Adoption of the Firearm Safety Guide for Connecticut Schools

Division Director John Frassinelli together with Social Worker Education Consultant Scott Newgass presented an overview to the Board. The Firearm Safety Guide for Connecticut Schools is in response to the passing of Public Act 19-5, known as Ethan's Law, in 2019. It strengthens the storage of firearms in the home and firearm safety programs in public schools. The section of the Public Act to be discussed is that the State Board of Education develop guidance for schools to develop curriculum to provide education to students at all levels around firearm safety. The guidance is intended to provide resources for developmentally

appropriate content for educating students from elementary, middle, and high school. The Board engaged in questions and answers.

Dr. López moved, Mrs. Benham seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Public Act No. 19-5, approves the Firearm Safety Guide for Connecticut Schools and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Adoption of the Connecticut Comprehensive School Counseling Framework Position Statement

Division Director John Frassinelli together with School Counselor Education Consultant Kimberly Traverso presented an overview to the Board. In response to Public Act 19-63, *An Act Concerning Guidelines For A comprehensive School Counselor Program*, the CSDE in collaboration with the Connecticut School Counselor Association (CSCA), developed the Kindergarten to Grade 12 Connecticut Comprehensive School Counseling Framework (CCSCF). The framework provides a blueprint for certified school counselors to ensure services and programming in academic, social-emotional learning, post-secondary education, and career readiness areas. The Board engaged in questions and answers.

Dr. López moved, Mrs. Benham seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Public Act 19-63, *An Act Concerning Guidelines For A Comprehensive School Counselor Program*, adopts the Connecticut Comprehensive School Counseling Framework Position Statement, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

VOTE ON

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

C. Inclement Weather During the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Provision of Hybrid and/or Remote Learning Models

Legal Director Jessa Mirtle presented an overview to the Board. She acknowledged and thanked Bureau Chief Nancy Pugliese and Dr. Stephanie Knutson who have been fielding responses from constituents, educators, families, and superintendents.

Legal Director Mirtle stated that since the Board passed its resolution authorizing school districts the flexibility to transition to hybrid and remote models where required by the pandemic and public health data, school districts have contacted CSDE to seek clarity as to how to treat days in which school buildings should be closed due to inclement weather with hybrid and remote models during the 2020-2021 school year. With the guidelines, school districts may transition to a fully remote model on a given day due to inclement weather with the consideration of when power or connectivity may present a barrier.

Dr. López moved, Mr. Harris seconded, that during the 2020-2021 school year only, the SBE instructs the SDE to develop guidelines with a limited exception, within which school districts may implement remote learning due to inclement weather, and to issue guidance to support districts in determining the appropriate approach to inclement weather days during this pandemic in light of the prior SBE resolution.

The SBE directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action, including issuing guidance from the SDE as necessary to implement this resolution.

VOTE ON

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

VII. Report of the Chair

Chairperson Taylor did not provide a report.

VIII. Financial Matters

A. Budget Options

Mrs. Benham moved, Mr. Clemons seconded, the motion for agenda item VIII.A., Budget Options.

In the absence of Chief Financial Officer Kathy Demsey, the report was deferred to Roger Persson, Chief of Fiscal and Administrative Services. The report overview was presented by

Education Consultant Leah Grenier. Ms. Grenier shared that the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) has directed state agencies to prepare budget options that would result in at least a 10 percent reduction.

The Board engaged in questions and answers. Discussion ensued regarding School Choice funding. Deputy Commissioner Desi Nesmith spoke on the prioritization for funding for choice as an umbrella, and noted that there had been charter school closures. Questions were raised regarding the funding numbers for the Technical High School System and Vocational Agriculture.

Commissioner Cardona requested that in the absence of Chief Financial Officer Kathy Demsey that the conversation surrounding the budget options be postponed to a later date in order for the Board members questions to be sufficiently answered.

Mr. Harris moved, Dr. López seconded that, the motion be postponed to either a special meeting, or the next Board meeting. The Board agreed unanimously.

The Budget Options motion was postponed to a future meeting.

IX. Consent Agenda

Chairperson Taylor asked for a motion for the Consent agenda.

Mrs. Benham moved, Mr. Harris seconded, that the Board approve the following Consent agenda items: IX.A., Approval of New Educator Preparation Program: University of Connecticut, American Sign Language Education, IX.B., Adoption of 2019-2020 Annual Audit Plan, and IX.C., Adoption of 2020-2021 Annual Audit Plan.

A. Approval of New Educator Preparation Program: University of Connecticut, American Sign Language Education

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-145d-9(g)(3)(A) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, grants full approval for the period October 7, 2020, through November 30, 2022, to the University of Connecticut (UCONN), with annual progress monitoring conducted using program data from the Connecticut Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) Data Dashboard until UCONN's Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) 2022 site visit, for the purpose of certifying graduates from UCONN in the following new certification area:

Program	Grade Level	Program Level	Program Type
American Sign Language (Other World Language)	7-12	Initial	Undergraduate/Graduate

and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

B. Adoption of 2019-2020 Annual Audit Plan

RESOLVED, that the State Board of Education adopts the Annual Audit Plan for the period of July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

C. Adoption of 2020-2021 Annual Audit Plan

RESOLVED, that the State Board of Education adopts the Annual Audit Plan for the period of July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

VOTE ON

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

Motions carried unanimously.

X. Items for Discussion

A. Agency Update

Commissioner Cardona introduced agenda item X.B., Increasing the Racial, Ethnic, and Linguistic Diversity of the Connecticut Educator Workforce Update and Next Steps. He shared that at a prior SBE meeting, a request was made for updates on the prior past goals and the progress made towards those goals.

B. Increasing the Racial, Ethnic, and Linguistic Diversity of the Connecticut Educator Workforce Update and Next Steps

Chief Talent Office Dr. Shuana Tucker and Bureau Chief Christopher Todd presented an update on the Department's efforts and strategies to focus on increasing the diversity of the Connecticut educator workforce and share the next steps of the Talent Office.

In 2016, the Connecticut State Board of Education adopted a Five-Year Comprehensive Plan, *Ensuring Equity and Excellence for All Connecticut Students*, initiating the development of strategies to increase the number of educators of color from 8.3% to 10% by 2021 (1,000 certified educators of color within 5 years). Goal #3 of the State Board Comprehensive Plan states, "All students deserve access to great teachers and school leaders."

Department priority, legislative action, and partnerships have guided the Department. Additionally the Minority Teacher Recruitment Policy Oversight Council has provided guidance, input and support. The CSDE Talent Office has implemented a variety of strategies to (1) increase the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of the educator workforce; and (2) diminish vacancies in persistent certification shortage areas. These strategies can be broken down into three primary focus areas:

- Strategy 1 – Increasing Pathways to Certification
 - Strategy 2 – Supporting Districts and Local Education Agencies (LEAs)
 - Strategy 3 – Supporting Candidates
- Educators Rising – was developed by teachers for teachers. This program introduces high school students early on to careers in education and diversifies pipelines to the state's teacher workforce.
 - Teaching Fellowship Program is designed to create enhanced learning environments for both the CCSU Teacher Candidates, as well as K-12 students. The goal of the program is to enhance teacher innovation and teaching quality.

Vice Chair López thanked Dr. Tucker and Mr. Todd for the thorough update. She stated that as a whole it showed the commitment of the Department and also shows that there are multiple parts that are connected and all must be intentional to make this commitment whole.

Deputy Commissioner Desi Nesmith stated that while he has seen the work that was being done and talked about different components and different parts, Board Member Woody Exley has been quietly doing this work for over 20 years through the Alma Exley Scholarship program. (Mr. Exley manages the Alma Exley Scholarship Program, which encourages greater diversity in the teaching profession. Established in 1995, the program provides support and recognition to outstanding college students of color preparing for careers in education.) Deputy Commissioner Nesmith referenced that both he and the Commissioner were recipients of the scholarship. There was a moment of applaud given to Mr. Exley.

Deputy Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker thanked the Board of calling this out as a priority and goal in its Five-Year Comprehensive Plan and using the data to inform the efforts going forward.

XI. Committee Reports

A. Academic Standards and Assessment

Dr. López reported that the committee met on September 14, 2020. She highlighted that Ms. Irene Parisi presented on the African American/Black and Puerto Rican/Latino course of studies.

B. Accountability and Support

Dr. López reported that the committee met on September 17, 2020. Dr. Iline Tracey, Superintendent of New Haven Public Schools and her executive team provided an update

on the districts reopening plan through remote learning. Dr. López reported that the committee would be meeting on October 20, 2020.

C. Finance, Audit, and Budget

Chairperson Taylor reported that the committee met on September 15, 2020. The committee reviewed the 2019-20 and 2020-21 internal audit plans.

D. Legislation and Policy Development

Mrs. Benham reported that the committee met this morning. The committee had an update edTPA and educator preparation programs and continued a discussion on the racial equity statement. Dr. Adrian Wood presented, and Karen DuBois-Walton and Malia Sieve will work with Dr. Wood to refine the statement and bring it back to the committee. Due to lack of time, there was a slight update on the Five-Year Comprehensive Plan.

E. Connecticut Technical Education and Career System Board

Superintendent Jeffrey Wihbey provided an updated enrollment report. He reported that 17 schools, with the exception of Danbury opened in hybrid mode. He reported that CTECS had reached a 16.7% rate for special education students. The upcoming recruitment process will be done virtually. The CTECS board will be voting on an updated admissions policy and review policy and procedure.

F. NASBE

Mrs. Benham reported that there was need for a NASBE liaison. She also reported that NASBE was holding a virtual New Member Orientation on October 20th and it was recommended for new members. Chair Taylor directed Staff Assistant Aldith Dewar to follow-up with the NASBE information to the Board.

G. SERC

Mrs. Benham presented a report. She highlighted that there were numerous professional development opportunities provided by SERC. A question was raised regarding the African American/Black and Puerto Rican/Latino Studies and a brief discussed followed.

Chairperson Taylor adjourned the meeting at 12:33 p.m.

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