

# CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION Hartford

## Accountability and Support Committee

Thursday, February 18, 2021

This meeting was live streamed for public access. A link to the live stream was available on [the State Board of Education's Website](#) the morning of February 18, 2021.

### Minutes

(Approved on: May 18, 2021)

#### I. Call to Order

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State and posted on the agency's website, the Accountability and Support Committee (hereinafter "Committee") met virtually on February 18, 2021, via GoToMeeting. This virtual meeting was [livestreamed](#).

Committee Chairperson Dr. Estela López called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Committee Members Present: Dr. Estela López, Chairperson  
Erin D. Benham  
Donald F. Harris, Jr.  
Elwood Exley, Jr.  
Bonnie E. Burr

Committee Member Absent: None

Staff Present: Lisa Lamenzo  
Irene Parisi  
Leslie Navarrete  
Robert Kelly  
Felicia Canty  
Shakira Jacobs-Vazquez  
Iris White

Guests Present: Dr. Ellen Retelle Director, Integrated Day Charter School, Norwich  
June Morrone, Assistant Director, Integrated Day Charter School, Norwich  
Cheryl Blanchard, Board Chairperson, Integrated Day Charter School, Norwich  
Sarah Egan, JD, Connecticut's Child Advocate  
Martha Stone, JD, Founder & Executive Director of Center for Children's Advocacy

#### II. Approval of Minutes

Bonnie E. Burr moved, Erin Benham seconded, that the committee approve the minutes of the January 19, 2021 Accountability and Support Committee meeting.

Vote: In Favor: López, Benham, Harris, Exley, and Burr  
Abstained: 0  
Opposed: 0  
Absent: 0

### **III. Integrated Day Charter School, Norwich**

Lisa Lamenzo, Division Director for the CSDE Turnaround Office, provided an overview of the work to date with Integrated Day Charter School. During Integrated Day Charter School's last charter renewal, the CSDE identified mathematics and ELA as areas of focus for the charter school. Since then, Integrated Day Charter School has been strengthening teaching and learning, resulting in the school out performing their host district in ELA and mathematics when looking at school performance index and average percentage of growth targeted achieved in 2018-19. Ms. Lamenzo welcomed Director of Integrated Day Charter School Dr. Ellen Retelle, Assistant Director of Integrated Day Charter School June Morrone, and Board Chairperson Cheryl Blanchard to provide a progress update.

Integrated Day Charter School shared highlights, growth opportunities, and ongoing efforts to improve areas of focus. In particular, Integrated Day Charter School highlighted the school's ability to promptly create a COVID response committee to implement mitigation strategies before the peak of COVID in school year 2020 and the committee's readiness to plan for school year 2021, to leverage teacher voices for a seamless overhaul of the school's mathematics program, and to effectively provide educators of all grade levels with training and support on the NGSS Science Unit, contributing to Integrated Day Charter School's Smarter Balance growth targeted achieved progress. The charter school also noted how state and federal financial aid helped during COVID to purchase more devices for students to continue learning and to provide students with more academic support.

Integrated Day Charter School went on to discuss growth opportunities and their ongoing efforts to address focus areas. The charter school identified merging the school's responsive classroom approach with Yale RULER to strengthen social emotional learning efforts. Other mentioned growth opportunities included assessing the impact of the recently adopted mathematics program and addressing anticipated learning gaps as they plan for the 2022 school year, and finalizing the charter school's new research project curriculum, which is considered to be a critical learning component for Integrated Day Charter School students. Integrated Day Charter School also identified their in-house science center as a growth opportunity as they continue to expand it. Integrated Day Charter School continues to work on increasing their student diversity enrollment, particularly of Black students. Thus far, the charter school has been able to increase the enrollment of Black students from 12 percent to 20 percent, and plan to continue efforts. The charter school's efforts were commended by committee members.

Chair López opened the floor for questions and comments. The committee thanked Director Dr. Ellen Retelle, Assistant Director Ms. June Morrone, and Board Chairperson Cheryl Blanchard for the update.

### **IV. Office of the Child Advocate (OCA)**

Irene Parisi, Chief Academic Officer provided a brief overview on the ongoing conversations the CSDE and the OCA have concerning the current education landscape and ways to best serve Connecticut students. Ms. Parisi welcomed Attorney Sarah Egan of the Connecticut's Child Advocate and Attorney Martha Stone, the Founder & Executive Director of Center for Children's Advocacy to share their priorities and ideas that can facilitate further conversation, helping to continue the ongoing partnership between the CSDE and the OCA.

Since the closure of schools due to the pandemic, the OCA reported that they have been receiving concerns from families with children with disabilities including profound disabilities regarding COVID-related education barriers and denial of access to education by districts. The OCA noted that family concerns varied as districts across the state have addressed education differently during the pandemic. The OCA also spoke on systemic issues they are investigating that are impeding on children's right to access quality education. Attorney Sarah Egan stressed the rising level of isolation and the significant learning loss that this vulnerable population is facing due to COVID. She went on to discuss how the

CSDE has been assisting the OCA in identifying children with profound disabilities whose access to education is being impacted by COVID-related education barriers. The OCA provided recommendations to the committee for consideration. Recommendations included disaggregating chronic absenteeism data by disability category and then district and monitoring data more closely in order to help districts implement a methodology that ensures all children's right to access education regardless of disability, helping in the development of quantitative and qualitative assessments that capture the learning loss of children that are typically exempt from such assessments in order to better identify the students most in need; and moving the interagency wellness working group to being an executive working group with the charge of overseeing the allocation and support to districts in the use of ESSER funding. Attorney Sarah Egan called on Executive Director of Center for Children's Advocacy Martha Stone to share her recommendations with the committee.

Attorney Martha Stone's recommendation came from the assessment of Center for Children's Advocacy attorneys working in the field with impacted families and children. Some of the recommendations that the Center for Children's Advocacy proposed included developing a more accurate assessment of connectivity and more clear guidance from the CSDE on what counts as attendance specifically for high schools, and assisting urban districts with recruitment. Attorney Martha Stone also stressed that ESSER funding is an equity matter and it is necessary to approach ESSER in that lens.

Chair López opened the floor for questions and comments. The committee thanked Attorney Sarah Egan of the Connecticut's Child Advocate and Attorney Martha Stone, the Founder & Executive Director of Center for Children's Advocacy for the update.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Prepared by: Leslie Navarrete