

Connecticut State Board of Education

Hartford

Minutes of the **Academic Standards and Assessment Committee**

Tuesday, April 13, 2021

(Approved June 8, 2021)

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 virtually on Tuesday, April 13, 2021 via Microsoft. This virtual meeting was [livestreamed](#).

Eric Clemons called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

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

Staff Present: Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Performance Officer
Irene Parisi, Chief Academic Officer
Glen Peterson, Division Director
Kim Traverso, Education Consultant

Guests Present: Denise Tafuto, Naugatuck High School
Jennifer Robitaille, Aperture Education

- I. Members introduced themselves at the start of the meeting.
- II. **Approval of Minutes**
Erik Clemons made the motion to approve the February 9, 2021 minutes. Estela López seconded. All voted in favor. Eric Clemons abstained. Motion carried.
- III. **Universal Screener for Social-Emotional Learning**
Glen Peterson, Division Director opened up by giving a brief overview on how the research for Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) got started. He stated after a procurement process, Aperture Education was selected. Contracts were finalized and meetings are ongoing with Aperture Education. A press release as well as information guide written by Kim Traverso were disseminated for use of the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA).

Jennifer Robitaille, Director of Research and Development for Aperture Education, explained that Aperture Education is focused entirely on SEL. Their approach to SEL is strengths-based, and data driven, providing data to districts, schools, and teachers to inform the instruction of SEL and build student social and emotional skills. She

discussed the DESSA-mini, which serves as a screener for SEL as well as the full DESSA which can be administered to those identified using the screener. The full DESSA is the detailed follow-up assessment of a student's specific social and emotional competencies.

Denise Tafuto, SEL Coach Naugatuck HS and also Project Aware Coordinator's presented on the use of DESSA to build an SEL Framework in District. Teachers complete fall and spring screening using the DESSA mini. Students who score in the "need for instruction" range are assessed using the full DESSA which offers more in-depth and clearer profile of students' needs and strengths. Teachers get together to plan instruction and progress is monitored through the DESSA. Progress is shared with parents. She offered several suggestions including setting time aside for training, designating who will complete the ratings, and most of all remaining flexible with timelines and interventions.

IV. **Proposed Bills**

Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Performance Officer announced that the Governors Workforce Bill section 15 expects each district to have more students to take more rigorous courses while in high school. Another section proposed to add FAFSA completion as a graduation requirement (with exceptions) and allows for time during the school day to complete the FASFA. The bill also proposes to raise the age for withdrawal from high school to 18 years old. On students' success plan, bill mandates that CSDE collect data on students on the three components. There is a fiscal note being added to this bill, the governor's office is exploring ways to set up support for districts so that there would be no cost to have from districts prospective. Irene Parisi, Chief Academic Officer, discussed the other proposed bill which expects the CSDE to publish guidance for virtual learning. It expects a full audit of virtual learning from March 2020 to June 2021 and also opens the door for virtual learning days to count as school days.

V. **School and District Accountability Waiver**

Connecticut received approval from the US Department of Education on its request for an accountability waiver for the 2020-21 school year. While the state assessment will continue to be administered, there will be no formal accountability – no accountability index, no school categories, and no new schools identified as Turnaround or Focus. Reporting of assessments results this year will look different from those in past years.

VI. Motion to adjourn Erik Clemons, seconded by Dr. López. The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

Prepared by: Shondel Edwards