

Connecticut State Board of Education
Hartford

Minutes of the **Academic Standards and Assessment Committee**
Tuesday, June 8, 2021, Meeting
(Approved on September 14, 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, June 8, 2021 via Microsoft. This virtual meeting was [livestreamed](#).

Eric Clemons called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m.

Present: Erik Clemons, Chair
Awilda Reasco
Malia K. Sieve
Martha Paluch Prou

Absent: Estela López

Staff Present: Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Performance Officer
Irene Parisi, Chief Academic Officer

Guests Present: Jason Mitchell, Director for Strategic Initiatives, Apex Learning
Debra Stecher, Manager for Implementation Success, Apex Learning
Melissa Hart, Apex Learning
Andy Schaefer, Director, Defined Learning
Lisa Wolf, Director of Products, Defined Learning

- I. Members and guests introduced themselves at the start of the meeting.
- II. **Approval of Minutes**
Motion to approve the April 13, 2021 minutes was moved by Martha Paluch Prou and seconded by Awilda Reasco. All voted in favor. Motion carried.
- III. **Statewide Digital Curricula Partnerships**
Irene Parisi, Chief Academic Officer noted that it is a matter of equity to ensure that all students and teachers have access to high quality curricula and the right digital tools. The CSDE procured both Apex Learning and Defined Learning and is making them available to all learners statewide at no cost to districts.
 - 1) **Apex Learning**
Jason Mitchell, Director for Strategic Initiatives gave an overview on Apex Learning's professional development and their dedicated support team across the state, while

Debra answered questions. Apex's goal is to help students grow. They push all students to achieve their fullest potential, regardless of their current levels of achievement. Students receive effective researched based instruction in a blended and virtual environment. Districts are also supported with opportunities to flex as situations change. The entire cadre of implementation success professionals will help schools plan, prepare, implement, and sustain this program.

2) Defined Learning

Andy Schaefer, President of Defined Learning stated that it was an honor to be working with the State and with Apex Learning and even though it has only been a couple weeks, Connecticut schools have really embraced the new resources. Defined Learning's specialty is project-based learning and the instructional model is the performance task. To enhance the relevance of learning for students, everything is done through the lens of career building to reinforce core academic standards.

Lisa Wolf, Director of Products, stated Defined Learning is focused on project-based learning and the entire content library at Defined Learning is available to all educators for use within their classrooms so they have access to hundreds of cross-curricular projects. This is an online resource which is designed to engage students in career awareness through project and problem-based performance tasks. Educators have access to professional development on-line which is self-paced.

IV. Connecticut COVID-19 Education Research Collaborative (CCERC)

Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Performance Officer gave an overview of the new research collaborative that has been established to evaluate activities funded through the Elementary and Second School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER). This collaborative is called the Connecticut COVID-19 Education Research Collaborative (CCERC). This is a unique collaboration of researchers employed at colleges and universities across Connecticut.

Dr. Morgan Donaldson from the University of Connecticut described how UCONN will serve as the coordinator and fiscal agent for this collaborative. She described how the CCERC was organized, the priorities for projects, the process for researchers to get involved, and the considerations for selection of research teams.

Motion to adjourn was made by Erik Clemons. The meeting was adjourned at 10:58 a.m.

Prepared by: Shondel Edwards