

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

The Legislation and Policy Development Committee

Wednesday, October 6, 2021, 8:30 a.m.

Erin D. Benham, Chair

Donald F. Harris, Malia K. Sieve, Bonnie E. Burr (via conf. call), Karen Dubois-Walton, Robert Trefry
and Elwood Exley, Jr.

Minutes

(Approved November 3, 2021)

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the Board of Education Legislation and Policy Development Committee met in person on October 6, 2021.

I. Call to Order:

Committee Chair Erin Benham called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. Also present were, Irene Parisi, Academic Office Bureau Chief, Keith Norton, Office of Strategic Planning Bureau Chief; Laura Anastasio, Attorney, Legal Affairs Office and Eric Scoville, Communications Director.

Presenters:

Administrative school staff from West Hartford Public Schools – Tom Moore, Superintendent, Dr. Roszema Haskins, Director of Equity Advancement and Principal Juan Melián of Smith STEM School.

II. Approval of Minutes – September 1, 2021

Review and approval of the minutes of September 1, 2021 were postponed to the next committee meeting.

III. Racial Imbalance Update of West Hartford Public Schools

Members from the West Hartford Public Schools District presented the committee with steps the school district used to become more racially balanced. This was the first school to come before this committee regarding racial imbalance.

IV. Summary of Presentation from West Hartford Public Schools

Staff from the West Hartford Public Schools gave a detailed presentation summarizing the actions the West Hartford Board has taken to address the racial imbalance at Charter Oak Academy and Smith School. Although Charter Oak is still imbalanced, the absolute imbalance has decreased dramatically in recent years. Smith School is no longer on the list of imbalanced schools. The West Hartford Board anticipates that Charter Oak will drop below an imbalance of 25% by the end of this school year due to the district's changing demographics and the school expansion project that created more space to accommodate students from outside the school's attendance zone. The district has taken significant steps in increasing the diversity of school staff and teacher assistants. In addition, the district has implemented diverse themes and curricula, which promote high interest in both Charter Oak and Smith. The Charter Oak's theme as an international baccalaureate school has attracted many families of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. Charter Oak also has lower teacher to student ratios, which have contributed to the improvement of student academic performance. Committee members asked the West Hartford Superintendent to return to a

meeting of the Committee in the spring to discuss the district's progress and review the racial imbalance statistics for the 2021-22 school year.

V. Adjournment

The Committee adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

The Connecticut State Department of Education is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer.