

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Hartford**

**Minutes  
Special State Board of Education Meeting  
May 19, 2021**

(Approved June 2, 2021)

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 via GoToWebinar on Wednesday, May 19, 2021. A GoToWebinar registration link was provided to allow for public attendance to the virtual meeting. This virtual meeting was livestreamed ([https://youtu.be/i1TSd6t\\_x2o](https://youtu.be/i1TSd6t_x2o).) to allow for public access.

**I. Call to Order**

Vice Chairperson Estela López called the special meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Staff Assistant to the Board, Aldith Dewar, took an attendance roll call.

Present: Estela López, Vice Chairperson  
Erin D. Benham  
Erik M. Clemons  
Elwood Exley, Jr.  
Donald F. Harris, Jr.  
Martha Paluch Prou  
Awilda Reasco  
Malia K. Sieve

Absent: Bonnie E. Burr was not present at the time of roll call.  
Dr. Karen DuBois-Walton  
Dr. Jane Gates, Ex Officio  
Robert J. Trefry, Ex Officio

**II. Overview and Discussion of CT's Federal Plan: American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund**

Acting Commissioner Russell-Tucker welcomed the Board and colleagues of the Department to the meeting and expressed appreciation for their time. She stated that the purpose of the meeting was to keep the Board informed on what was occurring around the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ARP ESSER), and to hear Board members' voices for input and feedback on the state plan.

**Overview of Connecticut's ESSER**

Acting Commissioner Russell-Tucker provided a review of Connecticut's ESSER funding:

ESSER 1 - \$111 million – (Survive). In the height of the pandemic. Districts focused on PPE, disinfections.

ESSER 2 - \$492 million – (Thrive). How to plan for the future and make sure students can thrive.

ARP ESSER - \$1.1 billion – (Transform). It is about transformation.

### **Overview of ARP ESSER**

Acting Commissioner Russell-Tucker stated that Connecticut has to develop a state plan for the ARP ESSER funding.

- There was a set-aside of \$110 million specifically to address the required reservation:
  - \$55 million to address learning loss
  - \$11 million for summer enrichment
  - \$11 million for after school program grants that went out to the community
- \$995 million was allocated to LEAs. The LEAs also have a 20% reservation to address learning loss.

### **State-Level Priorities Revisited: Reimagining Schools to Transform Students' Lives**

Acting Commissioner Russell-Tucker reviewed the five State-Level Priorities:

- Learning Acceleration, Academic Renewal, and Student Enrichment
- Family and Community Connections
- Social, Emotional, and Mental Health of Students and School Staff
- Strategic Use of Technology, Staff Development, and Digital Divide
- Building Safe and Healthy Schools

### **Requirements of the ARP ESSER State Plan**

Fellow Tanya Budler stated that one of the key components of the plan is meaningful stakeholder engagement consisting of (i) Board input, and (ii) general public forums.

Acting Commissioner Russell-Tucker shared that the CSDE set up opportunities which will provide feedback by working with SERC to host two public forums to solicit public comment on the ARP ESSER State Plan and will inform development of the plan.

- Thursday, May, 20, 2021, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- Friday, May 21, 2021, from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.
- Stakeholder Input Form that can be submitted to the CSDE.

Ms. Budler presented on the purpose of the Public Forums. She stated that USED provided a template to complete our state plan and that we are looking feedback in five specific areas:

- Describing the State's Current Status and Needs
- Safely Reopening Schools and Sustaining their Safe Operation
- Maximizing State-Level Funds to Support Students
- Supporting LEAs in Planning for and Meeting Student Needs
- Supporting the Educator Workforce

Ms. Budler presented that these five areas were pooled into three buckets to elevate discussion.

Commissioner Russell-Tucker presented the three areas:

- RESPONDING to the education community's needs
- SUPPORTING LEAs and the educator workforce
- SAFELY REOPENING SCHOOLS and sustaining their operation in AY 21-22

[Vice Chair López noted that Board member Bonnie Burr had joined the meeting]

The Board then engaged in a series of questions and answers which captured the following discussions:

- Attendance and engagement
- Changing guidance and information on health and safety guidance
- Changing approach to the use of executive orders and the rules compared to what is guidance
- Community engagement and innovations; creating new partnerships with stakeholders and entities from the community
- Family engagement
- Social Emotional Learning
- Quality of application submissions
- Building renovations, air circulation, and physical buildings
- Measurement of the preparedness of local districts with funds
- Charting of best practices
- Underserved students
- Aspect of addressing outcomes
- Stakeholder feedback from public forums

Acting Commissioner Russell-Tucker stated that she would continue to update the Board as necessary.

Vice Chairperson López adjourned the meeting at 10:23 a.m.

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Secretary  
State Board of Education