

Connecticut State Board of Education Hartford

State Board of Education Meeting September 1, 2021

(Approved October 6, 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") held a meeting on Wednesday, September 1, 2021, in Plaza North Meeting Room C and D of the State Office Building, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, Connecticut. Public access to the building allowed for public attendance at the meeting.

I. Call to Order

Acting Chairperson Allan Taylor, called the meeting to order at 9:39 a.m.

Present: Allan B. Taylor, Acting Chairperson
Erin D. Benham, Vice Chairperson
Natalie Bandura
Rishabh Bhandari
Bonnie E. Burr
Erik M. Clemons
Karen DuBois-Walton
Elwood Exley, Jr.
Donald F. Harris, Jr.
Estela López (via phone)
Martha Paluch Prou
Malia K. Sieve
Robert J. Trefry, Ex Officio
Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Ex Officio

Absent: Dr. Jane Gates, (designee for Terrence Cheng, Ex Officio)
Awilda Reasco

Oath of Office

Attorney Louis B. Todisco, Commissioner of the Superior Court, administered the Oaths of Office to the two newly appointed 2021-22 student members (i) Natalie Bandura, (ii) Rishabh Bhandari, and two reappointed Board members (iii) Donald F. Harris, Jr., and (iv) Allan B. Taylor. Copies of the Oaths of Office are enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

II. Public Participation

1. Megan Nevers, a parent, submitted a written statement on her opposition to mandated mask wearing for both unvaccinated and vaccinated children of any age. A copy of Ms. Nevers' written statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

2. Dr. Linda Dalessio, submitted a written statement concerning the masking of children in schools. A copy of Dr. Dalessio's written statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
3. Melissa Mitri, a parent, submitted a written statement for the removal of mask mandates for all schools in Milford for the 2021-22 school year. A copy of Ms. Mitri's written statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
4. Chris Lehew, a parent, submitted a written statement regarding remote learning. A copy of Chris Lehew's written statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
5. Dr. Stephen J. Hegedus, President, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, (AACTE-CT Chapter) and Dean, College of Education, Southern Connecticut State University, submitted a written statement and spoke on (i) CSDE's consideration of the inclusion of AACTE-CT in future press releases that involve such an announcement regarding leadership and/or significant policy changes, and (ii) AACTE-CT's collective commitment to the state's future teachers and education leaders. A copy of Dr. Hegedus' written statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
6. Robert M. Goodrich, RACCE (Radical Advocates for Cross-Cultural Education), submitted a written statement and spoke on RACCE's concerns with the Waterbury Board of Education. A copy of Robert Goodrich's written statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

III. Executive Session

Acting Chairperson Taylor requested a motion to go into Executive Session for the discussion of agenda item VI.A.

On a motion by Board Member Benham, seconded by Board Member Sieve, the Board voted unanimously to move into executive session at 9:53 a.m. to discuss a personnel matter. Present in executive session were Board Members Natalie Bandura, Erin Benham, Rishabh Bhandari, Bonnie Burr, Erik Clemons, Karen DuBois-Walton, Elwood Exley, Donald Harris, Estela López (via phone), Martha Prou, Malia Sieve, Allan Taylor, Robert Trefry, and Kelli-Marie Vallieres. Also, present for executive session were Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker, Chief Nancy Pugliese, Bureau of Investigations and Professional Practices, SDE Attorney Louis Todisco, Division of Legal and Governmental Affairs, and Staff Assistant Aldith Dewar.

On a motion by Board Member Burr, seconded by Vice Chair Benham, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn its executive session and reconvene in public session at 10:03 a.m.

Present: Allan B. Taylor, Acting Chairperson
Erin D. Benham, Vice Chairperson
Natalie Bandura, Student Member
Rishabh Bhandari, Student Member
Bonnie E. Burr

Erik M. Clemons
Karen DuBois-Walton
Elwood Exley
Donald F. Harris, Jr.
Estela López (via phone)
Martha Paluch Prou
Malia K. Sieve
Robert J. Trefry, Ex Officio
Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Ex Officio
Absent: Dr. Jane Gates, (designee for Terrence Cheng, Ex Officio)
Awilda Reasco

Acting Chair Taylor requested one motion for the State Board of Education minutes for IV.A., June 2, 2021, Meeting, IV.B., August 4, 2021, Special Meeting, IV.C., August 4, 2021, Retreat, and IV.D., August 19, 2021, Special Meeting. There were no objections.

IV. Consideration of Minutes of the State Board of Education

Board Member Harris moved, Vice Chair Benham seconded, that the Board adopt the State Board of Education minutes of IV.A., June 2, 2021, Meeting, IV.B., August 4, 2021, Special Meeting, IV.C., August 4, 2021, Retreat, and IV.D., August 19, 2021, Special Meeting.

Board member Prou requested to abstain from the vote due to being absent from the meetings.

VOTE ON

MOTION:	In favor:	Benham, Burr, Clemons, DuBois-Walton, Exley, Harris, López, Sieve, Taylor
	Opposed:	0
	Abstained:	Prou
	Absent:	Reasco

Motions carried unanimously.

V. Report of the Commissioner

Commissioner Russell-Tucker referenced her written report in the Board's supplemental folders and highlighted the following:

- Commissioner's Annual Back to School Meeting with Superintendents – August 11th
- Noted that 80 school districts were in session.
- Health and Safety Tuesdays continue weekly.
- Introduction of Eric Scoville the Department's new Communications Director.
- Convening of an All Staff Town Hall meeting on telework.
- Monday Messages from the Commissioner in Microsoft Teams.
- Virtual House Call for Parents and Families to talk with pediatricians, school medical experts, and other healthcare providers.

VI. Items Requiring Action

A. In the Matter of DB, Certification Action

Board Member DuBois-Walton moved, Board Member Prou seconded, the motion for agenda item VI.A., In the Matter of DB, Certification Action.

Chief Nancy Pugliese, Bureau of Investigations and Professional Practices sat before the Board. Chief Pugliese read the resolution aloud into the record of the minutes.

Chief Pugliese requested that for the Roll Call Vote, each Board member should first certify to the reading of the written report consistent with the drafted resolution and then state their vote.

RESOLVED, that pursuant to its authority under Section 10-145b(i) of the Connecticut General Statutes and Section 10-145d-613 of the Regulations for Connecticut State Agencies, based upon the evidence included in the written report of the Commissioner entitled In the Matter of DB, Certification Action, the State Board of Education:

- Formally accepts this report;
- Determines by a roll-call vote that the coaching permit held by Daniel Bugnacki shall be revoked;
- Certifies that each member has read the written report of the Commissioner;
- Bases this determination upon its conclusion that the evidence supports a finding of misconduct sufficient to revoke the certificate and permit and adopts the evidence and conclusions outlined in the written report of the Commissioner; and
- Directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Board Member	In Favor	<i>Roll Call Vote</i>		
		Opposed	Abstained	Absent
Erin D. Benham	X			
Bonnie E. Burr	X			
Erik M. Clemons	X			
Karen DuBois-Walton	X			
Elwood Exley, Jr.	X			
Donald F. Harris, Jr.	X			
Estela López	X			
Martha Paluch Prou	X			
Awilda Reasco				X
Malia K. Sieve	X			
Allan B. Taylor	X			

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Appointment of the Panel of Impartial Arbitrators under the Teachers' Negotiations Act

Attorney Laura Anastasio, Division of Legal and Governmental Affairs, presented to the Board. Board Member DuBois-Walton raised the issue of lack of equity and diversity of the candidates. Discussion ensued regarding the process and the types of organizations being contacted.

Vice Chair Benham moved, Board Member Prou seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to subsection (a) of Section 10-153f of the Connecticut General Statutes, recommends Susan Halperin, Richard Kosinski, William Logue, Dennis Murphy, Glenn Powell, Michael Ricci, Steven Rolnick, Gerald Weiner, and Linda Yelmini for appointment as impartial arbitrators representing the interests of the public in general, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

VOTE ON

MOTION:	In favor:	Benham, Burr, Clemons, DuBois-Walton, Exley, Harris, López, Prou, Sieve, Taylor
	Opposed:	0
	Abstained:	0
	Absent:	Reasco

Motion carried unanimously.

VII. Report of the Chair

Acting Chair Taylor spoke on his grandchildren being the next generation of his family being educated in Connecticut public schools.

VIII. Financial Matters

A. Mid-Term Budget Technical Adjustments

Chief Financial Officer Kathy Demsey reported to the Board that this year adjustments are being made to two accounts: (i) Interdistrict Cooperative Grants, and (ii) Interdistrict Magnet Schools.

Vice Chair Benham moved, Board Member Burr seconded, that the State Board of Education approves the Fiscal Year 2022-23 Mid-Term Budget Technical Adjustments and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

VOTE ON

MOTION:	In favor:	Benham, Burr, Clemons, DuBois-Walton, Exley, Harris, López, Prou, Sieve, Taylor
	Opposed:	0
	Abstained:	0
	Absent:	Reasco

Motion carried unanimously.

IX. Consent Agenda

There were no Consent items on the agenda.

X. Items for Discussion

A. Agency Update

Commissioner Russell-Tucker provided a summary of some activities at the agency:

ARP ESSER Update

Chief Financial Officer Kathy Demsey provided an update on the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds (ARP ESSER). She announced that on August 27, 2021, the United States Department of Education (USED) approved Connecticut's plan. She also noted that LEA applications for the use of funds were due to the Department on August 16, 2021.

Legislative Update

Chief of Staff/Legislative Liaison Laura Stefon provided a Legislative Session Summary:

- Public Act 21-2 created the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success within the CSDE under the leadership of the Academic Office; and
- Public Act 21-168 established an Office of Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities within the CSDE under the leadership of the Talent Office.

Vaccinations – Health and Safety

Division Director John Frassinelli provided an update on vaccination requirements under Executive Order 13D and the SDE's FAQ that was provided to school districts to clarify requirements and district responsibilities for covered workers in schools. Also, he spoke on **#Vax2SchoolCT Toolkit**. The Toolkit is a guidance of steps for school and district leaders to host COVID-19 clinics at Connecticut school districts.

Screening Testing – Health and Safety

Chief Nancy Pugliese spoke on the weekly screening testing programs available for K-12. A period of questions and answers followed.

Assessment Update

Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan presented a summary on the results of the 2020-21 statewide summative assessments. He reported that the assessment data shows the positive effects of in-person learning over hybrid and remote models: (i) students who learned in-person lost the least ground academically, (ii) those who learned in hybrid or remote models showed substantially weaker achievement and growth during the pandemic; and (iii) growth during the pandemic was weaker in all subjects, but observed differences were largest in mathematics.

X. Items for Discussion

A. SBE Goal 1 - College Enrollment, Credit Attainment and Remediation of High School Graduates (P20WIN Report)

Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan presented to the Board on the results from P20WIN for the High School Graduating Classes of 2010 through 2016. The scope of the report examined data and answered three studies:

1. Enrollment: What percentage of the graduating class enrolled in a Connecticut public university or community college (UConn, the four Connecticut State Universities, and 12 Connecticut community colleges) within 16 months of graduation?
2. Credit Attainment: What percentage of those who enrolled in a Connecticut public university or community college within 16 months of graduation earned at least one year's worth of credits (24 or more) within two years of enrollment?
3. Remediation: What percentage of those who enrolled in one of the four Connecticut State Universities or one of the 12 community colleges within 16 months of graduation took a remedial course within two years of enrollment?

Discussion ensued.

XI. Committee Reports

A. Academic Standards and Assessment

Committee Chair Clemons reported that the committee would be meeting on September 14, 2021.

B. Accountability and Support

Committee Chair López reported that the committee would be meeting on September 22, 2021.

C. Finance, Audit, and Budget

No report was presented.

D. Legislation and Policy Development

Committee Chair Benham reported that the committee met that morning and that SDE Attorney Laura Anastasio presented a review on Racial Imbalance procedures.

E. Connecticut Technical Education and Career System Board

CTECS Chairman Trefry reported that two students placed first at the National Skills USA Competition and earned Gold medals. Mr. Trefry announced that Superintendent Wihbey would be leaving CTECS and commended the Superintendent for his leadership which propelled CTECS forward.

F. NASBE

Mr. Exley reported that (i) on August 25, 2021, NASBE hosted a webinar on "Filling the Educator Pipeline" and Dr. Shuana Tucker, Chief Talent Officer was a guest speaker panelist; (ii) the NASBE September 2021 issue cover article is *The Role of Schools in Racial Justice*; and (iii) NASBE has requested that Mr. Exley to be the Northeast Regional Director.

G. SERC

Board Member Benham reported that (i) SERC is very busy with racial equity, (ii) rollout of IEP implementation to special education educators and seeking RFPs; and (iii) on August 23, 2021, SERC hosted the *Virtual House Call for Parents and Families: Return to School Safely During COVID-19*.

Acting Chairperson Taylor adjourned the meeting at 12:17 p.m.

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