

Connecticut State Board of Education

Hartford

State Board of Education Meeting

December 1, 2021

(Approved January 19, 2022)

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State and posted on the agency's Web site, the members of the State Board of Education (hereinafter "Board") held a meeting on Wednesday, December 1, 2021, in Hearing Room IE of the Legislative Office Building, 300 Capitol Avenue, 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 9:35 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, Jr.
Donald F. Harris, Jr.
Martha Paluch Prou
Awilda Reasco
Malia K. Sieve
Robert J. Trefry, Ex Officio
Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Ex Officio

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

II. Public Participation

1. Barbara Johnson, spoke in support of agenda item VI.A., Adoption of the National School Library Standards.
2. Jenny Lussier, spoke in support of agenda item VI.A., Adoption of the National School Library Standards.
3. Justine Reyna, spoke on parental choice and rights on content of curriculum in the districts, and parental option to optout their children of certain topics.

4. Dr. Nancy DeJarnette, spoke on (i) the Board's adoption of the "Program Approval Methodology, Connecticut Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) Programs at its October 6th meeting; (ii) the CSDE's work with Educator's Rising; (iii) the University of Bridgeport pathway for students; and (iv) AACTE-CT's continued goal to develop and sustain strong relationships with the CSDE and CSBE. A written copy of Dr. DeJarnette's written statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
5. Michael Edwards spoke against the mask mandate, children wearing masks, and against the vaccine mandate.
6. Lauren Vernaglia spoke on actions concerning parents, residents, and the best interest of the students of Connecticut.
7. Jen Brown, spoke against the mask mandate, students' compliance with wearing masks correctly, and disciplinary actions.
8. Stephanie Efthimious, spoke on the qualities of being leader and against students wearing masks.
9. Melissa Cassidy, spoke about her 15-year career as high school teacher and Executive Order 13G, as well as the need to tackle teacher burnout in the school districts. A written copy of Ms. Cassidy's written statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
10. Susan Zabonhonski, spoke on the right to choose wearing a mask, the policy of Screen and Stay, and the need to focus on education.
11. Stephanie Weintraub, spoke on her concerns with the mask mandate, possible vaccination mandates, and parental rights to make medical decisions. A written copy of Ms. Weintraub's written statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
12. Annabelle Miner, shared her concern for the physical and mental health experiences of unmasking at school. A written copy of Ms. Miner's written statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
13. Dr. Ann Marie Mulready, spoke on "An Act Concerning the Right to Read and Addressing Opportunity Gaps." A written copy of Dr. Mulready's written statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
14. Patricia Johnson, posed questions on the mask mandate and usage concerns, students' ability to breathe in school, and vaccinations of students.
15. Lucas Johnson, spoke on his knowledge of COVID and the mask mandate in schools. A written copy of Mr. Johnson's written statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

16. Chari Norton spoke on the Screen and Stay initiative, and the testing process.
17. Jamie Bailey, spoke on the appointment of the Board members, and her concerns with her daughter's annual IEP meeting, curriculum content, and parental rights.
18. Ethan Stepney, spoke against the mask mandates in school.
19. Kristen Richie, spoke on revision of the school mask exemption language.
20. Jean Wiggin, spoke on the treatment of vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals in schools.
21. Angelo Nugrills, spoke against the mask mandates in schools and disregard for COVID protocols.
22. Ashley Pereira spoke on the ending of executive orders and freeing the students from the mask mandates. A written copy of Ms. Pereira's written statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
23. Jennifer Van Gorder spoke against the mask mandates, unmasking children, and on focusing on education.
24. Jessica Downes spoke on the COVID mandates in schools, vaccine clinics, and weekly COVID testing.

Vice Chairperson Benham extended an invitation to any members of the public in the overflow room who did not sign up for public participation to enter the main room if they wished to speak before the Board.

25. (Unnamed Individual) spoke on the rights of people, against mask mandates for kids, and on violations of sections of the Connecticut Constitution.
26. Alex O'choa spoke about his dislike of wearing masks.
27. Melissa Thom, spoke in support of agenda item VI.A., Adoption of the National School Library Standards.
28. Monna Coldwell, spoke on the quarantine policy, unvaccinated children, and rights for medical freedom.
29. Julie Yulo-Medeiro, spoke in support of agenda item VI.A., Adoption of the National School Library Standards.

III. Executive Session

No executive session was held.

Acting Chair Taylor requested a motion for the minutes of November 3, 2021, meeting.

IV. Consideration of Minutes of the State Board of Education

Vice Chair Benham moved, Board Member Harris seconded, that the Board adopt the State Board of Education minutes of November 3, 2021.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

V. Report of the Commissioner

Commissioner Russell-Tucker referenced her written report in the Board's supplemental folders and shared that more information will come under Agency Update. She highlighted the following:

- Remote Learning Commission – Dr. Karen DuBois-Walton will update
- Launch of Voice4change Initiative
- Convened Meeting of the CT School Discipline Collaborative
- Update on Screen and Stay Initiative
- Individual Meet and Greet with new CSDE Staff Members
- Arbitration Panel Focus Group meeting held on November 15, 2021.
- Attendance at the Annual CABE/CAPSS Convention.

Acting Chair Taylor requested a motion for agenda item VI.A. Adoption of the National School Library Standards.

VI. Items Requiring Action

A. Adoption of the National School Library Standards

Vice Chair Benham moved, Board Member Sieve seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-65a (b) of the Connecticut General Statutes, adopts the 2018 American Association of School Libraries (AASL) National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries.

[Acting Chairperson Allan Taylor left the room at approximately 11:29 a.m.]

Chief Academic Officer Irene Parisi and Reading/Literacy Director, Dr. Melissa Hickey, presented before the Board. Chief Parisi presented a background on the

development of the Standards and commended Dr. Hickey for spearheading the work with our partners. Dr. Hickey spoke on the exciting impact of moving this forward and expressed appreciation for the support of the Board.

Vice Chair Benham took over the governance of the meeting.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

Vice Chair Benham requested a motion for agenda item VI.B., Appointment to the Connecticut Advisory Council for Administrator Professional Standards.

B. Appointment to the Connecticut Advisory Council for Administrator Professional Standards

Board Member DuBois-Walton moved, Board Member Sieve seconded, that the State Board of Education (SBE), pursuant to subsection (b) of Section 10-144e of the Connecticut General Statutes, appoints the following individual to serve on the Connecticut Advisory Council for Administrator Professional Standards for a two-year term effective immediately and ending September 30, 2023:

Name	Affiliation	Representation	Term Ending
Jason Irizarry, Ph.D.	University of Connecticut	Dean, UConn Neag School of Education	Sept. 30, 2023

and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Chief Talent Officer Shuana Tucker and Education Consultant Sharon Fuller presented before the Board. Chief Tucker provided an introduction of Jason Irizarry, Ph.D.'s appointment.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

Vice Chair Benham requested a motion for agenda item VI.C., Reappointments to the Connecticut Advisory Council for Teacher Professional Standards.

C. Reappointments to the Connecticut Advisory Council for Teacher Professional Standards

Board Member DuBois-Walton moved, Board Member Burr seconded, that the State Board of Education (SBE), pursuant to subsection (b) of Section 10-144d of the Connecticut General Statutes, reappoints the following individuals to serve on the Connecticut Advisory Council for Teacher Professional Standards for a three-year term retroactively effective from October 1, 2020, and ending September 30, 2023, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Name	Affiliation	Representation	Term Ending
Marianne Downie, J.D.	The Hartford	Business and Industry	Sept. 30, 2023
James Carl, Ph.D.	Sacred Heart University	Teacher Preparation Program	Sept. 30, 2023

Chief Talent Officer Shuana Tucker and Education Consultant Sharon Fuller presented before the Board. Chief Tucker provided an introduction of the appointments of (i) Marianne Downie, J.D., Business and Industry representative, and (ii) James Carl, Ph.D., Teacher Preparation Program representative.

Chief Tucker noted that the Councils had met in May and were appreciative of Commissioner Russell-Tucker's support in assisting them in filling vacancies on the Councils.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

Vice Chair Benham requested a motion for agenda item VI.D., Re-Authorization of Emergency Educator Certification Endorsements.

D. Re-Authorization of Emergency Educator Certification Endorsements

Board Member Clemons moved, Board Member Prou seconded, that the State Board of Education adopts the recommendation from the Connecticut State Department of Education to extend, for the 2021-22 school year only, implementation of the following temporary certification endorsements, as allowable under Sec. 10-145d-619 of *Regulations Concerning State Educator Certificates, Permits and Authorizations* Emergency Generalist, PK-8 (#201), Emergency Generalist, 7-12 (#202), Emergency Teacher of English Language Learners, PK-12 (#204), and Emergency PK authorization for Comprehensive Special Education, K-12 (#205) to allow an educator who currently holds an initial, provisional or professional teaching certificate to be eligible for Emergency Authorization at the request of the LEA/District, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Commissioner Russell-Tucker spoke on the challenges around staffing shortages faced by districts. She commended both Chief Talent Officer, Dr. Shuana Tucker and Bureau Chief Christopher Todd for the work they have been doing to support districts.

Dr. Tucker and Mr. Todd presented before the Board. Dr. Tucker provided a historical overview of the Emergency Educator Certificate Endorsements and informed the Board that many districts are still facing staffing shortages.

[Acting Chairperson Allan Taylor returned to the room at approximately 11:36 a.m.]

There was a question and answer period concerning recruitment and retention.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

VII. Report of the Chair

Acting Chair Taylor commented on his older grandson attending public school and mask wearing.

VIII. Financial Matters

No financial matters were presented.

IX. Consent Agenda

Acting Chairperson Taylor asked for a motion for the Consent agenda. Board Member DuBois-Walton moved, Vice Chair Benham seconded, that the Board approve the following Consent agenda item: IX.A., Approval of 2021-2022 Annual Audit Plan.

A. Approval of 2021-2022 Annual Audit Plan

RESOLVED, that the State Board of Education adopts the Annual Audit Plan for the period of July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Russell-Tucker provided a summary of agency activities.

Screen and Stay Implementation

Division Director John Frassinelli provided an update on the Screen and Stay Program with survey responses of district implementation and student participation.

The Commissioner underscored that Screen and Stay was not a mandatory program and the purpose of the program was to keep as many kids in school as possible.

Vaccination Updates

Division Director John Frassinelli provided an update on vaccinations for (i) children ages 5-11, (ii) ages 12-17, and (iii) School Employees for both public and private schools.

MTR Dashboard

Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan provided a presentation on an educator diversity dashboard. He stated that he worked with Chief Talent Officer Dr. Shuana Tucker and her team to support local talent management efforts around educators of color. He clarified that this dashboard was not new data, but rather provides a visualization of the data, allowing districts to compare district and state data. The dashboard is being deployed in the EdSight secure platform and is accessible to authorized users in schools and districts.

There was a period of questions and answers.

Special Education Update

Division Director Bryan Klimkiewicz, provided an update on key topics in special education.

- State Performance Plan (SPP) Director Klimkiewicz shared that 16 stakeholder sessions, seeking input in the development of the SSP, have been held to date and there are four sessions remaining. Mr. Klimkiewicz thanked all stakeholders who have participated thus far. The report is due to the federal government in February 2022.
- Connecticut Special Education Data System (CT-SEDS) will house a new IEP form. Pilot districts have completed IEP quality training designed to support the transition for school districts. Focus groups are being held to get feedback.
- New Aspiring Leadership Program Partnering with UConn, the New Aspiring Leadership program is for directors of special education or pupil services in districts. It is designed to help administrators of special education to ensure greater stability and greater capacity.

Voice4Change

- Commissioner Russell-Tucker reported that after the launch of Voice4Change, there are 80 schools across 45 districts with over 60,000 students who are excited about the program. She thanked Student Member Natalie Bandura for her efforts in that regards.

Shoutouts!

Division Director John Frassinelli recognized the work of SDE staff to ensure that districts are authorized to be able to provide meals, as well as child nutrition directors and food service directors in the field who continue to do heroic work to make sure that kids are fed.

Shoutouts!

Legal Director Michael McKeon, announced that Laura Anastasio, Attorney, Division of Legal and Governmental Affairs was elected Chair of the Interstate Compact for Educational Opportunities for Military Children.

XI. Committee Reports

A. Academic Standards and Assessment

Committee Chair Clemons reported that the next meeting of the committee will be held on January 11, 2022.

B. Accountability and Support

Committee Chair Benham reported that the committee will be meeting on December 16, 2021, at 3:30 p.m.

C. Finance, Audit, and Budget

Committee Chair Harris reported that the committee met on November 4, 2021.

D. Legislation and Policy Development

Committee Chair Sieve reported that the committee met that morning in continuation of working with districts with Racial Imbalance, they heard from Greenwich Public Schools.

E. Connecticut Technical Education and Career System Board

CTECS Board Chair Robert Trefry reported that the CTECS Board held a Retreat in November to review "the imperatives" or the "principles" that guide the CTECS Board's decision-making.

F. NASBE

Board Member Exley reported that he attended the in-person NASBE Board meeting in Alexandria, VA. There are two new committees which will meet six times a year. The Equity Committee will include one member from each of the four regions of NASBE.

G. SERC

Committee Member Benham referenced her written SERC report in the Supplemental Folders. She summarized that there was an update on the African American/Black and Puerto Rican/Latino Course of Studies Update, and SERC also heard from Fund for Teachers.

H. CT Remote Learning Commission

Board Member Karen DuBois-Walton provided an update. She reported that the Commission met on November 22, 2021, and continue to move forward with their charge of developing a set of recommendations for how Connecticut may move forward with a remote learning school. The Commission heard from two different models: (i) Florida Virtual School, which is a standalone district; and (ii) from Virtual Virginia, a program of the Virginia Department of Education.

I. The World's Aerospace Alley

Board Member Prou presented to the Board on the Aerospace Components Manufacturers, Inc.'s (ACM Inc.) Aerospace Alley Tradeshow, which was held on Wednesday, November 10, 2021, in Hartford. It is an annual event with over 100 companies that support aerospace and manufacturing companies and allows students to engage with the different companies to learn about career opportunities. She highlighted that it was a great mix of schools with CTECS, Charter and Magnet schools represented, as well as local school districts.

Board Member Prou stated that the hope is that the students will have some exposure that will introduce them to the careers in their industry and not just the actual trades, but the business side as well. She thanked Vice Chair Benham for attending. Vice Chair Benham shared how dynamic and engaging it was to observe the students' engaging.

Acting Chairperson Taylor adjourned the meeting at 12:14 p.m.

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