

Connecticut State Board of Education
Hartford

The Legislation and Policy Development Committee
Wednesday, October 12, 2022, 4:00 p.m.

Committee Members

Malia K. Sieve, Chair
Karen Dubois-Walton, Donald F. Harris, Bonnie E. Burr,
Martha Paluch Prou, Elwood Exley, Jr., and Valli Pendyala

Minutes

Approved November 2, 2022

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the Board of Education Legislation and Policy Development Committee met in person on October 12, 2022.

I. Call to Order

Committee Chair Malia K. Sieve called the meeting to order. Also attending the meeting were Committee Members Karen DuBois-Walton, Donald F. Harris, Bonnie E. Burr, Elwood Exley, Jr., and Valli Pendyala. In addition, the following individuals from the CSDE were in attendance: Michael McKeon, Director of Legal and Governmental Affairs; Irene Parisi, Chief Academic Officer; and Jennifer Michalek, K-12 Math Education Consultant.

Presenters:

Irene Parisi, Chief Academic Officer
Jennifer Michalek, K-12 Math Education Consultant

II. Preliminary Matter

Ms. Sieve noted that a review and discussion of the Hamden Board of Education's racial imbalance status was originally on the meeting agenda but that Hamden's representatives were not able to be present.

III. Review and Discussion: Mathematics Equity Position Statement

Ms. Parise began the presentation, giving background on the creation of the Mathematics Equity Position Statement. Ms. Michalek subsequently discussed the need to modernize Math instruction. She noted that there are aspects of Math curriculum that are outdated but still continue to be taught. Ms. Michalek stressed the importance of focusing on student strengths rather than concentrating on student deficits, and on creating structural alternatives to tracking. Ms. Michalek noted the need to prioritize Math in order to put it on equal footing with literacy, including the implementation of high-quality curriculum and the use of more efficacious assessments to improve student learning.

In the context of discussing tracking, Ms. Michalek noted that a study had found that students of color did much better in Algebra I when it was offered in tenth rather than eighth grade. Ms. Parisi added that a reliance upon the tracking system that has been in place results in academic segregation. Mr. Harris questioned how a student would be able to take Statistics before graduation

if Algebra I did not start until tenth grade. Ms. Burr inquired as to whether other states or countries have adopted this approach. Ms. Michalek responded that states such as Oregon have created new pathways to more advanced Math courses. Further supporting the reconsideration of when Algebra I is offered are studies that have shown that students who fail Algebra I do not graduate. Mr. Harris observed that school counselors will need to be “reprogrammed.” Ms. Sieve agreed with Ms. Michalek’s recommendations. Dr. Dubois-Walton expressed concern about the problem of allowing students to opt out of Math because a student claims not to be good in it.

Ms. Michalek concluded her presentation by noting that the Mathematics Equity Position Statement had been shared with many stakeholders, including RESCs, and that it was research based. Ms. Sieve called for a motion, and Mr. Harris moved, and Dr. Dubois-Walton seconded, that the Committed refer the position statement to the full State Board for its consideration. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Discussion: 2022-2023 Policies, Goals, Areas of Focus and Process

Ms. Sieve then raised the potential goals and areas of focus for the Committee that was discussed at its September 7, 2022, meeting. Ms. Sieve noted that she would consult with the Commissioner and with Keith Norton, the CSDE’s Chief Strategic Planning Officer, regarding the Board’s five-year plan. She added that the issue about a possible statewide education tax in place of allocating municipal property taxes toward education would be tabled. Dr. Dubois-Walton stated that she would like the Committee to review all of the components of Open Choice programs, and the other Committee members agreed that they would like to elevate this issue before the Committee.

With respect to the other topics raised at the September 7 meeting, it was deemed that the updating of the Board bylaws would be a rather simple task, and that the others, including reengagement of students who were possibly “lost” during the pandemic – including a consideration of graduation rates -- the status of the CSDE’s work toward diversifying teachers, and the status of the Black and Puerto Rican Studies course would be the subject of further discussion.

V. Adjournment

The Committee adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

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