

Connecticut State Board of Education Hartford

State Board of Education Meeting February 2, 2022

(Approved March 2, 2022)

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, February 2, 2022, 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. The meeting was live-streamed: https://youtu.be/SxqD_a_TwPc.

I. Call to Order

Acting Chairperson Allan Taylor, called the meeting to order at 9:42 a.m.

Present: Allan B. Taylor, Acting Chairperson
Erin D. Benham, Vice Chairperson
Natalie Bandura, Student Member
Rishabh Bhandari, Student Member
Karen DuBois-Walton
Donald F. Harris, Jr.
Dr. Ken Klucznik (designee for Terrence Cheng, Ex Officio)
Martha Paluch Prou
Awilda Reasco
Malia K. Sieve
Robert J. Trefry, Ex Officio
Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Ex Officio

Absent: Bonnie E. Burr
Erik M. Clemons
Elwood Exley, Jr.

II. Public Participation

1. Dr. Katherine Roe, representative of the AACTE-CT, and Chair of the Education and Educational Psychology Departments, Western Connecticut State University, spoke on WCSU in collaboration with other AACTE-CT EPPs continued work to address shortages for teaching, administrators, and staff, and recruitment efforts to identify funding sources to attract and retain high-quality diverse candidates.

2. Meg Scata, Vice President of Government Relations of the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE), read CABE's statement supporting statewide masking in our schools.
3. Beth Salaris, of an educational staffing company (ESS), spoke on the clearance processing fees paid by substitutes hired directly by a school district and substitutes hired by a staffing agency.
4. Patricia Tavalozzi stated that she was speaking on behalf of teachers to have their voices heard against the mask wearing mandate.
5. Jennie Wiggins spoke on the need to end the mitigation in Connecticut schools.
6. Aaron McCool read a letter on behalf of Michael Cosenza a grade six teacher regarding the extension of the mask mandate.
7. Aaron McCool spoke against mask wearing.
8. Mary Galvin spoke against the mask and vaccine mandates.
9. Mary Yordon, vice president of AFT-CT, spoke in support of school mask mandates staying in place.
10. Jenny Gauthier, spoke on the importance of children and education. She then read a letter from an educator on the negative effects of the pandemic on children.
11. Glenn Lungarini, Executive Director of the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS), spoke on the prospect of local control and the need for direction that is consistent to implement.
12. Robert Goodrich, Executive Director of R.A.C.C.E. (Radical Advocates for Cross-Cultural Education), spoke on concerns regarding Waterbury Public Schools.
13. Shellye Davis, a paraeducator and divisional vice president of AFT-CT, spoke to request that CDC guidelines be used when considering any mask mandate.
14. Tom Stringfellow of Manchester, spoke on Black History Month, the recommendation of several books, diverse learning, and the need for informed COVID information.
15. Levi Van Gorder spoke on the wearing of masks in school.
16. Jen Van Gorder spoke against the mask and vaccine mandates.
17. Brianna Tirado spoke against the mask mandate.
18. Jazmine Alva stated that she was reading a statement from Jennifer Dube on the ending of the mask mandate and quarantine.

19. Jamie Bailey, spoke against the mask and vaccine mandates and parental rights.
20. Isabella Bailey loves school and wants to go to school.
21. Meagan Jones spoke against the mask mandates.
22. Lauren Vernalia spoke against the mask mandate and mask choice.
23. Susan Zabohonski spoke on the school mandates and local government control.
24. Jayden, via written statement, spoke in support of having mask choice.
25. Lexi Oiaho, spoke in support of mask choice.
26. Asher Jacobs spoke in support of mask choice.
27. Justine Rayna, spoke in support of mask choice.
28. Chari Norton read the statement of a teacher against mask wearing for children.
29. Annabelle Miner spoke on the need to unmask at school.
30. Aileen Abrams read a statement from an anonymous teacher against the continued mask mandates for children.
31. Kate Dias, president of CEA, requested consideration to maintain the mask mandate.
32. Joclyn DeLanaz, vice president of CEA, spoke in support of keeping the mask mandate.
33. Meredith Nielson spoke against the mask mandate, and local boards of education having the ability to make decisions in their own school communities.
34. Mona Colwell, spoke on policy of the Department of Public Health based on science and data.
35. Suzanne Jacobs, spoke in support of mask choice.

Acting Chair Taylor requested a motion for the minutes of January 19, 2022.

IV. Consideration of Minutes of the State Board of Education

Board Member Sieve moved, Board Member Reasco seconded, that the Board adopt the State Board of Education minutes of January 19, 2022.

Motion carried unanimously.

III. Executive Session

A. Discussion Regarding Pending Sheff v. O'Neill Litigation.

Acting Chair Taylor announced that the Board was going into executive session, and when it concluded, the Board would recess for lunch.

Acting Chairperson Taylor requested a motion to go into Executive Session. On a motion by Vice Chair Benham, seconded by Board Member Reasco, the Board voted unanimously to move into executive session at 11:56 a.m. for discussion regarding pending Sheff v. O'Neill Litigation. Present in executive session were Board Members Natalie Bandura, Erin Benham, Rishabh Bhandari, Karen DuBois-Walton, Donald Harris, Dr. Ken Klucznik, Awilda Reasco, Malia Sieve, Allan Taylor, and Robert Trefry. Also, present for executive session were Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker, Deputy Commissioner Desi Nesmith, Chief of Staff/Legislative Liaison Laura Stefon, Legal Director Michael McKeon, Staff Attorney Matthew Venhorst, Chief Strategic Planning Officer Keith Norton, Division Director for School Choice Robin Cecere, Assistant Deputy Attorney General Joseph Rubin (virtually), and Staff Assistant Aldith Dewar.

On a motion by Vice Chair Benham, Board Member Sieve seconded, that the Board voted unanimously to adjourn its executive session and reconvene in public session at 12:50 p.m.

Present: Allan B. Taylor, Acting Chairperson
Erin D. Benham, Vice Chairperson
Natalie Bandura, Student Member
Rishabh Bhandari, Student Member
Karen DuBois-Walton
Donald F. Harris, Jr.
Martha Paluch Prou
Awilda Reasco
Malia K. Sieve
Robert J. Trefry, Ex Officio

Absent: Bonnie E. Burr
Erik M. Clemons
Elwood Exley, Jr.
Dr. Ken Klucznik
Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Ex Officio

V. Report of the Commissioner

Commissioner Russell-Tucker referenced her written report in the Board's supplemental folders.

She highlighted the following:

- Talent Office continues to work with districts on the teacher shortage.
- Rapid Response Team in the Agency - collaborate internally to provide district support
- Monitoring of staffing within the agency
 - Retirement
 - Continued capacity to maintain key functions
- Reconvened AccelerateCT Task Force
- MOU with DAS SmART Unit

VII. Report of the Chair

No report was presented.

VIII. Financial Matters

No financial matters were presented.

IX. Consent Agenda

Acting Chairperson Taylor asked for a motion for the Consent agenda. Board Member Sieve moved, Board Member DuBois-Walton seconded, that the Board approve the following Consent agenda items: IX.A., Continuing Approval of Educator Preparation Provider, Western Connecticut State University, and IX.B., Continuing Approval of Educator Preparation Provider, Quinnipiac University.

A. Continuing Approval of Educator Preparation Provider, Western Connecticut State University

Resolved, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-145d-9(g)(1)(A) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, grants full continuing approval to Western Connecticut State University for the period February 2, 2022, through March 31, 2029, with annual monitoring conducted using program data from the Connecticut Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) Data Dashboard and Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) annual report, until Western Connecticut State University's 2028 CAEP site visit, for the purpose of certifying graduates from Western Connecticut State University in the following areas:

<u>Program</u>	<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Program Level</u>	<u>Program Type</u>
Elementary Education	K-6*	Initial	Undergraduate
Secondary Education:			
Chemistry	7-12	Initial	Undergraduate/Graduate
English	7-12	Initial	Undergraduate/Graduate
History	7-12	Initial	Undergraduate/Graduate
Mathematics	7-12	Initial	Undergraduate/Graduate
Biology	7-12	Initial	Undergraduate/Graduate
Spanish	7-12	Initial	Undergraduate/Graduate

Motions carried unanimously.

X. Items for Discussion

A. State Board of Education Five-year Plan

Chief Strategic Planning Officer Keith Norton introduced Jonathan Costa, Assistant Executive Director, EdAdvance, as lead in the development of the Board's Five-year plan. He noted that Mr. Costa had supported the current Five-year Plan.

Mr. Costa provided a strategic process overview for the development Board's Five-year Plan. He highlighted the three critical areas for development and the process for gathering of information to prioritize accomplishments for the next five years. Mr. Costa shared the timeline and introduced the ThoughtExchange platform.

Discussion was held.

Connecticut COVID-19 Education Research Collaborative (CCERC)

Commissioner Russell-Tucker briefly introduced CCERC.

B. Connecticut COVID-19 Education Research Collaborative (CCERC)

Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan and Dr. Morgaen Donaldson from the University of Connecticut presented to the Board on (1) the creation, purpose, and process of CCERC; and (2) to provide the findings of the CSDE's 2020-21 Summer Enrichment Evaluation. Mr. Gopalakrishnan explained that CCERC is a collaboration of researchers of public and private universities that conduct evaluation studies of COVID-19 related projects being funded through the State Department of Education.

Dr. Donaldson presented on the findings of the 2021 CT Summer Enrichment Program methodology that had awarded 210 Expansion and 25 Innovation grants. She reviewed the mixed methods evaluation, and camp enrollment.

A. Agency Update

Federal Funding Updates

Chief Financial Officer Kathy Demsey provided an overview of the total \$1.7 billion Connecticut funding received from ESSER I, ESSER II, and ARP, as well as the total amounts used by districts, and highlighted district investments by priority areas.

Educator Evaluation

Chief Talent Officer Shuana Tucker provided an update on the Educator Evaluation and Support 2022 Council (EES 2022) to re-imagine Connecticut's educator evaluation and support system. Chief Tucker reported that the EES 2022 timeline for extending flexibilities was on target with Phase II – Extending flexibilities to 2022-23 and developing updated guideline recommendations for implementation for 2023-24.

Voice4Change

- Madison Csejka, Commissioner's Office, reported that 201 proposals were submitted from 60 schools across 35 districts. The review process was underway and statewide voting day is Friday, March 11, 2022.
- Natalie Bandura shared that Voice4Change was well received at Staples High School in Westport. She highlighted the Voice4Change launch at Civic Leadership High School in Enfield. Ms. Bandura concluded that she is very excited for the campaigning process.
- Rishabh Bhandari shared that Voice4Change was well-received at Wilton High School in Wilton. He highlighted attending a Student Senate meeting; going to the student government; going to the music departments; and to the Video Production Studio. Mr. Bhandari concluded that student involvement for Voice4Change had revitalized school spirit and tradition.

Health and Safety

- Division Director John Frassinelli provided an update on vaccination requirements. He provided a vaccination update for Ages 5-11 Years and Ages 12-17 Years.
- Project COVID DeteCT – COVID testing screening program for students in classrooms has been expanded to allow for all K-12 to include Pre-K.
- Issued a survey on Narcan to districts.
- Communications Director Eric Scoville provided an update on the distribution of rapid test kits to districts across the state and distribution to school bus drivers through the CT School Transportation Association.

2022 Connecticut Kid Governor

Deputy Commissioner Nesmith attended the swearing-in ceremony of Makhi Ettienne-Modeste, Connecticut's newest Kid Governor. Mr. Ettienne-Modeste and his cabinet were sworn in at the Old State House. He is a student at John F. Kennedy School in Windsor.

Shoutout!

- Education Reform Now ARP-ESSER Report highlighted Connecticut's commitment to education in the planning for and investment of ARP ESSER funds.

XI. Committee Reports

A. Academic Standards and Assessment

No report was presented.

B. Accountability and Support

Committee Chair Benham reported that the committee will meet on February 10, 2022.

C. Finance, Audit, and Budget

Committee Chair Harris reported that meetings are quarterly. The committee should be meeting in March.

D. Legislation and Policy Development

Committee Chair Sieve reported that the committee met this morning. Chief Financial Officer Kathy Demsey presented an overview on the Office of Fiscal Analysis that models the more equitable ECS funding across all the choice options.

E. Connecticut Technical Education and Career System Board

CTECS Board Chair Trefry reported that the CTECS separation plan was presented earlier to the Board.

F. NASBE

No report was presented.

G. SERC

Committee Member Benham referenced her SERC report in the Supplemental Folders. She highlighted the last two pages of SERC's continued work on the African American/Black and Puerto Rican/Latino Course of Studies.

H. CT Remote Learning Commission

Board Member Karen DuBois-Walton provided an update. The commission met on January 25, 2022. The meeting focused on giving feedback for remote learning standards for grades 9-12 for districts. The next meeting will be on February 14, 2022.

Acting Chairperson Taylor adjourned the meeting at 2:24 p.m.

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