

# Connecticut State Board of Education Hartford

## State Board of Education Meeting

April 6, 2022

(Approved May 4, 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, April 26 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 by Connecticut Network (CT-N): [CT-N: State Board of Education April 6th Meeting](#).

### I. Call to Order

Chairperson Karen DuBois-Walton called the meeting to order at 9:41 a.m.

Present: Karen DuBois-Walton, Chairperson  
Erin D. Benham, Vice Chairperson  
Natalie Bandura, Student Member  
Bonnie E. Burr  
Erik M. Clemons  
Elwood Exley, Jr.  
Donald F. Harris, Jr.  
Dr. Kenneth Klucznik (designee for Terrence Cheng, Ex Officio)  
Malia K. Sieve  
Allan B. Taylor  
Robert J. Trefry, Ex Officio  
Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Ex Officio

Absent: Rishabh Bhandari, Student Member  
Martha Prou  
Awilda Reasco

### II. Public Participation

1. Hamish MacPhail, Director of Policy and Research, ConnCAN, spoke in support of agenda item XI.C., An Enhanced Educator Certification Reciprocity Policy.
2. Melanie Wilde-Lane. Executive Director, Connecticut Association of School Based Health Centers, spoke in support of school districts having school based health centers in their districts, including support for the Killingly school district.

3. John Flanders, Vice President, SEEK-CT (Special Education Equity for Kids of CT) and member of the Connecticut Association of School Based Health Centers, spoke on having vital resources to support social emotional mental health resources in schools and school based health centers being an important resource; the actions of the Killingly board of education; and laws that involve the mental health of students.
4. Dr. Madeline Negron, Past President of the Connecticut Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (CALAS), and Chief of Academics in the Hartford Public Schools, spoke in support of XI.C., An Enhanced Educator Certification Reciprocity Policy.
5. Kristine Cicchetti, a resident of Killingly and parent of two high school students in Killingly, spoke on the actions of Killingly board of education, Generations Family Health Center, and non-academic services that align with the social emotional and mental health needs of the students of Killingly High School.
6. Julianna Morrissette, a senior at Killingly High School, spoke on the actions of the Killingly board of education, the survey presented to students, and the student support recommendations of the state.
7. Christine Rosati Randall, a Killingly resident and a parent of a Killingly High School student, spoke on the mental health state of Killingly students and the need for intervention, the actions of Killingly board of education, and community support for Generations Family Health Center.
8. Lisa Girard, a parent, spoke on Generations Family Health Center, and the actions of Killingly board of education.
9. Alyssah Yater a senior at Killingly High School, spoke on the actions of the Killingly board of education, and the need for supports for students struggling with mental health issues.
10. Rosemary Falcones, a graduate of Great Oaks Charter School, Bridgeport, spoke in support of agenda item VII.C., Renewal of State Charter – Great Oaks Charter School, Bridgeport.
11. Janelle Provencher, a resident of Killingly, parent of a second grader, and second grade teacher in Killingly, advocated for students in need of service and spoke on the actions of Killingly board of education regarding school based health centers.
12. Claudia Phillips/Maria Soto. Ms. Phillips read a letter on behalf of Bridgeport parent, Mrs. Maria Soto. Mrs. Soto wrote in support of agenda item VII.C., Renewal of State Charter – Great Oaks Charter School, Bridgeport.

13. Jonathan Soto, on behalf of the Dominican American Coalition of Connecticut and Latinos for Educational Advocacy and Diversity, spoke in support of agenda items VII.A., Renewal of State Charter – The Bridge Academy, Bridgeport, and VII.C., Renewal of State Charter – Great Oaks Charter School, Bridgeport.
14. Ramona Santelisis, a Bridgeport resident, and representative of Dominican American Coalition of Connecticut, spoke on charter school renewals.
15. Robbie Goodrich, Executive Director of RACCE, spoke on the status of Waterbury's application for use of ESSER funding.
16. Christopher Wethjie, Human Resource Director, East Hartford Public Schools, spoke in support of agenda item XI.C., An Enhanced Educator Certification Reciprocity Policy.
17. Fran Rabinowitz, Executive Director, CAPSS, spoke in support of agenda items XI.C., An Enhanced Educator Certification Reciprocity Policy; and XI.D., Connecticut K- 8 Model Curricula; and on the value of school based health centers for providing physical and mental supports to students.
18. Patrice McCarthy, Deputy Director and General Counsel, CBE, spoke on CBE's support of agenda item XI.C., An Enhanced Educator Certification Reciprocity Policy.
19. Cynthia Ross-Zweig, Paraeducator Council President, CSEA, spoke on setting paraeducator professional development training standards across the state. Ms. Ross-Zweig expressed her thankfulness for paraeducator recognition.
20. Tom Stringfellow of Manchester, spoke on several matters, including reading recommendations.

### **III. Executive Session**

The Board did not meet in executive session.

Chair DuBois-Walton asked for a motion to amend the agenda and move agenda item VII.E. Recognition of Paraeducators to this place in the agenda. Vice Chair Benham moved, and Board Member Sieve, seconded. The Board voted unanimously in agreement.

### **VII. Items Requiring Action**

#### **E. Recognition of Paraeducators**

Commissioner Russell-Tucker expressed appreciation for being able to recognize the paraeducators in our state for their great work supporting students and our teachers.

A resolution was presented before the Board to recognize the work of the paraeducators. Chair DuBois-Walton read the resolution into the record of the minutes as follows:

**To Be Proposed:**

Whereas, National Paraprofessional Appreciation Day is celebrated annually on the first Wednesday of April; and

Whereas, Paraeducators are instrumental in supporting students in the various aspects of the educational process; and

Whereas, Paraeducators collaborate with teachers and related service providers to support the diverse needs of students; and

Whereas, Paraeducators take pride in their profession and are dedicated to supporting their students, families, and school communities; and

Whereas, Paraeducators welcome opportunities to engage in professional learning to build upon their existing skills and knowledge of best practices pertinent to their specific roles; and

Whereas, Paraeducators recognize the importance of their role in maximizing student engagement to ensure students experience positive outcomes; therefore be it

**Resolved,** That the Connecticut State Board of Education extends its gratitude and appreciation to all Connecticut Paraeducators for their dedication and service to the students and families of the State of Connecticut.

Approved unanimously this 6th day of April, two thousand twenty-two.

Board Member Sieve moved, and Board Member Harris seconded, that the Board accept the Resolution for the Recognition of Paraeducators.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

Paraeducator leadership representatives were each presented with a copy of the resolution.

- Shellye Davis, AFT-CT
- Cynthia Ross-Zweig - CSEA
- Tricia Santos – AFSCME
- Cindy Knudsen – CEUI (was not able to attend)

#### **IV. Consideration of Minutes of the March 2, 2022, State Board of Education**

Vice Chair Benham moved, Board Member Sieve seconded, that the Board adopt the State Board of Education minutes of March 2, 2022.

##### **VOTE ON**

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

Motion carried unanimously.

#### **V. Report of the Chair**

Chair DuBois-Walton welcomed everyone and acknowledged the wearing of purple in support of Governor Ned Lamont's proclamation of April being designated as the Month of the Military Child.

She highlighted Board Member activities as follows:

- Acknowledgement of the public participation comments concerning the Killingly Board of Education.
- Confirmed that the SBE received 10-4b complaint on behalf of Killingly residents.
- The need for another Board Member to join Vice Chair Benham on the School Discipline Collaborative.
- Congratulated the student members, Natalie Bandura and Rishabh Bhandari on their favorable confirmation votes in the Connecticut legislature.
- Recognition to the student members for their leadership contributions to Voice4Change.
- Vice Chair Benham, Board Member Exley, and Chair DuBois-Walton traveled to Washington, DC for the NASBE 2022 Legislative Conference.
- Vice Chair Benham scoring proposals for Fund for Teachers; attendance at several committee meetings around educator evaluation and support; and the CT School Discipline Collaborative.
- Woody Exley on the Alma Exley Scholarships Virtual Celebration on April 5, 2022.

#### **VI. Report of the Commissioner**

Commissioner Russell-Tucker acknowledged her confirmation vote and thanked the Board for instilling their trust in her leadership. She referenced her report in the Board's supplemental folders. She highlighted the following items:

- Acknowledgement that the 10-4b complaint for Killingly has been filed with the SDE and staff has reached out to the district.
- The matter of children and staff social emotional well-being being critical to education.
- Elevated her big *audacious goal* to ensure that every school building in the state have the necessary support for academic success.

- Clarified that the Waterbury’s ESSER application was conditionally approved with her letter linked to the application.
- State Agency Retirements for SDE and CTECS
- Partnership with DAS SmART Unit for recruitment services
- Launched Legislator Headlines newsletter to keep policymakers informed of key CSDE initiatives.
- Meeting with CT School Counselor Association, CT National Association of Social Workers, CT Association of School Psychologist.
- Working with CCSSO on agency culture.
- Panelist on the Hill’s Future of Education Summit.

Board members provided comments on the follow up for the Killingly district matter.

**VII. Items Requiring Action** (continued)

**A. Renewal of State Charter – The Bridge Academy, Bridgeport**

A panel consisting of Deputy Commissioner Desi Nesmith, Turnaround Office Division Director Lisa Lamenzo, Board Chair Peggy Bud, and Executive Director Tyrone Elliott presented to the Board. The Board engaged in questions and answers.

Board Member Burr moved, Board Member Exley seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to subsection (g) of Section 10-66bb of the Connecticut General Statutes, renews the charter of The Bridge Academy from July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2025, subject to the Commissioner’s April 6, 2022, memorandum to the State Board of Education, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

**VOTE ON**

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

Motion carried unanimously.

**B. Renewal of State Charter – Explorations Charter School, Winsted**

A panel consisting of Deputy Commissioner Desi Nesmith, Turnaround Office Division Director Lisa Lamenzo, Board Chair Ginni Block, and Executive Director Jill Johnson presented to the Board. The Board engaged in questions and answers.

Board Member Taylor moved, and Board Member Harris seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to subsection (g) of Section 10-66bb of the Connecticut General Statutes, renews the charter of Explorations Charter School from July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2024, subject to the Commissioner’s April 6,

2022, memorandum to the State Board of Education, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

**C. Renewal of State Charter – Great Oaks Charter School, Bridgeport**

A panel consisting of Deputy Commissioner Desi Nesmith, Turnaround Office Division Director Lisa Lamenzo, Board Chair Susan Briggs, and Executive Director John Scalice presented to the Board. Discussion ensued. The Board engaged in questions and answers.

Board Member Sieve moved, Vice Chair Benham seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to subsection (g) of Section 10-66bb of the Connecticut General Statutes, renews the charter of Great Oaks Charter School-Bridgeport from July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2024, subject to the Commissioner's April 6, 2022, memorandum to the State Board of Education, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

**D. Appointments to State Board of Education Five-year Strategic Planning Committee**

Chief Strategic Planning Officer Keith Norton presented an update to the Board on the Strategic Planning process with EdAdvance. Mr. Norton reported that the Board was provided an updated timeline that included retreats in June and October. Mr. Norton reviewed the statutory requirement of establishing a five-year plan and an advisory committee.

Board Member Sieve moved, Board Member Taylor seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-4 (c) of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS), approves the appointment of the following individuals to the State Board of Education

Five-year Strategic Planning Committee and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Name	Affiliation
Frances Rabinowitz	Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS)
Robert Rader	Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE)
Jan Hochadel	American Federation of Teachers (AFT-CT)
Kate Dias	Connecticut Education Association (CEA)
Millie Arciniegas	Hartford Parent University and member of the Commissioner’s Roundtable on Family and Community Engagement
Ann Smith	African Caribbean American Parents of Children with Disabilities (AFCAMP) and member of the Commissioner’s Special Population Roundtable

**VOTE ON**

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

Motion carried unanimously.

**IX. Consent Agenda**

Chair DuBois-Walton asked for a motion on the Consent agenda. Board Member Taylor moved, Vice Chair Benham seconded, that the Board approve the following Consent agenda items: IX.A., Appointments to Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) Program Approval Review Committee, IX.B., Request for Finance Advisory Committee Action (CTECS), and IX.C., 180-Day School Year Waiver Request – Norwich Public Schools.

**A. Appointments to Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) Program Approval Review Committee**

**Resolved,** That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-145d-9(f)(1) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, appoints the following individuals to serve on the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) Review Committee for the approval of Connecticut educator preparation provider (EPP) programs, effective April 6, 2022, through March 31, 2025, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.



Name	Affiliation	Representation	Term Ending
Mel Horton	Sacred Heart University	EPP	March 31, 2025
Megan Mackey	Central Connecticut State University	EPP	March 31, 2025
Camille Cooper	Yale Child Study Center/Yale School of Medicine	Community	March 31, 2025
Shannon Marimón	ReadyCT	Community	March 31, 2025

**B. Request for Finance Advisory Committee Action (CTECS)**

**Resolved**, That the State Board of Education approves the request for Finance Advisory Committee action to transfer funds from the CTECS Personal Services Account to the CTECS Other Expenses Account, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

**C. 180-Day School Year Waiver Request – Norwich Public Schools**

**Resolved:** That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-15 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the State Board of Education denies the Norwich Board of Education’s request to shorten the 2021-2022 school year by two days from the statutorily mandated 180 school days to 178 days, and hereby directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Motions carried unanimously.

**X. Committee Reports**

**A. Academic Standards and Assessment**

Committee Chair Erik Clemons reported that the committee met on March 8, 2022.

**B. Accountability and Support**

Committee Chair Benham reported that the committee will next meet on April 14, 2022.

**C. Finance, Audit, and Budget**

Committee Chair Harris reported that the committee met on March 16, 2022.

**D. Legislation and Policy Development**

Committee Chair Sieve reported that the committee met this morning. The committee is focused on Racial Imbalance and need to announce the importance of reaching racial balance.

**E. Connecticut Technical Education and Career System Board**

Interim Superintendent Dr. Ellen Solek reported. CTECS is focused on the separation plan and legislative process; engagement in minority recruitment; and work on Strategic Plan. Six Platt Tech students and instructors selected to present special IT projects at the Annual NASA Convention in Houston, TX.

**F. NASBE**

Board Member Exley highlighted the NASBE Legislative Conference 2022.

**G. SERC**

Committee Member Benham referenced her SERC report in the Supplemental Folders. She highlighted ongoing Professional Development series.

Fund for Teachers. Board Member Benham reported that Division Director Lisa Lamenzo, Teacher in Residence Nicole Jones, and she were scorers for proposals.

**X. Items for Discussion**

**A. Agency Update**

Voice4Change

The Commissioner reported 54 schoolwide winners.

COVID-19 Health & Safety Update

Division Director John Frassinelli provided the following updates:

- Vaccinations for Ages 5-11 Years and Ages 12-17 Years
- Project COVID DeteCT
- DPH Flyer on weeklong Vaccination Clinics Week
- Test kit distribution survey

Child Nutrition Programs

Division Director John Frassinelli reported that well over 100-million meals have been served. USDA School Meal Waiver Authorities expire June 30, 2022.

CSDE Ways Documents

Commissioner Russell-Tucker highlighted the CSDE Ways Documents.

Shoutouts!

- Jennifer Michalek - Noyce Math Teacher Leaders Cohort Kick-off
- Danbury High School Visit– Senator Kushner, Representative Godfrey, Representative Gucker, Superintendent Walston, Principal Donovan
- Connecticut COVID-19 Education Research Collaborative (CCERC) – Nationally Recognized
- Second Annual EdRising Conference

Congratulations!

2022 Milken Educator Award – Laura Baker-Coronis, Ansonia High School

**B. 2020-2021 Report on Student Discipline in Connecticut Public Schools**

Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan and Division Director John Frassinelli, Student Supports presented the report on the analyses of trends in student disciplinary behaviors in Connecticut public schools. This report is a legislative requirement of C.G.S. Section 10-233n. They highlighted the impact of the pandemic on the data, and the partnerships with entities to provide professional development support to the districts.

**C. An Enhanced Educator Certification Reciprocity Policy**

Chief Academic Officer Shuana Tucker and Bureau Chief Christopher Todd presented to the Board. Chief Tucker announced that the CSDE will offer an enhanced reciprocity pathway to educators who hold valid and active out-of-state certification in 13 designated states and territories. Discussion ensued.

The Commissioner announced that Bureau Chief Todd would be leaving the Agency. She thanked him for being a champion in the work. Mr. Todd responded that it has been his privilege and honor to serve the Department, the students, and educators of Connecticut.

**D. Connecticut K- 8 Model Curricula**

Chief Academic Officer Irene Parisi presented to the Board. The CSDE has designed a statewide K-8 model curricula that is aligned with high-quality instructional materials in alignment with Public Act 21-2. Chief Parisi recognized her CSDE Academic colleagues, and thanked Doug Casey, Executive Director, Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology for partnering. She highlighted the CT Learning Hub for accessing educational resources.

Chair DuBois-Walton adjourned the meeting at 1:23 p.m.

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