

Connecticut State Board of Education Hartford

State Board of Education Meeting

May 4, 2022

(Approved June 1, 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, May 4, 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/hwp0jvg08gQ>.

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Karen DuBois-Walton called the meeting to order at 9:39 a.m.

Present: Karen DuBois-Walton, Chairperson
Erin D. Benham, Vice Chairperson
Bonnie E. Burr
Erik M. Clemons
Elwood Exley, Jr.
Awilda Reasco*
Malia K. Sieve
Allan B. Taylor
Robert J. Trefry, Ex Officio

Absent: Natalie Bandura, Student Member
Rishabh Bhandari, Student Member
Donald F. Harris, Jr.
Kenneth Klucznik (designee for Terrence Cheng, Ex Officio)
Martha Prou
Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Ex Officio

II. Public Participation

1. Tom Stringfellow of Manchester, spoke on Juneteenth, racism, historical matters, and reading recommendations.

III. Executive Session

The Board did not meet in executive session.

Chair DuBois-Walton asked permission of the Board to amend the agenda and move item VII.D. Recognition of Teacher Appreciation Week to this point in the agenda. The Board unanimously agreed.

VII. Items Requiring Action

D. Recognition of Teacher Appreciation Week

Chair DuBois-Walton invited guest teacher representatives (i) Kate Dias, President of CEA, (ii) Jan Hochadel, President of AFT-CT, and (iii) Kim King, 2022 CT Teacher of the Year, Mansfield Public Schools, to the Board table.

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

To Be Proposed:

Whereas, Teacher Appreciation Week is celebrated annually during the first week of May; and

Whereas, Teachers continue to go above and beyond during the pandemic to ensure continuity of education for their students in addition to keeping students engaged and connected to their school communities; and

Whereas, Teachers work to provide a safe, nurturing educational environment that ensures the best possible outcomes for all students; and

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

Whereas, Teachers continue to both lead and utilize professional learning to stay current with effective strategies to meet the needs of students; and

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved, That the Connecticut State Board of Education extends its gratitude and appreciation to all Connecticut Teachers for their dedication and service to the students and families of the State of Connecticut.

Approved unanimously this 4th day of May, Two Thousand Twenty-Two.

Chair DuBois-Walton entertained a motion for the Board to adopt the resolution.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

Vice Chair Benham read aloud the Official Proclamation by Governor Ned Lamont into the record of the minutes as follows:

Whereas, through their dedicated efforts to ensure our children learn the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in college, careers, and life, Connecticut’s teachers are vital in building the future; and

Whereas, because of the pandemic and evolving education requirements, teacher must be constantly learning so they may adapt to meet the ever-changing needs of young people in our schools;

Whereas, teachers play an essential role in shaping our children into conscientious engaged, and civically minded adults – supporting them through their youth, and teaching lessons that have an impact on students which they will carry through life; and

Whereas, the teaching profession benefits from educators who are empowered to lead within and beyond the classroom – allowing them to prepare young people to become contributing members of our community, thereby strengthening our democracy; and

Whereas, there are thousands of dedicated educators working in Connecticut’s schools – putting in countless hours and extra effort to help student achieve, thusly preparing them for further education, the workforce, and their civic duties; and

Whereas, all teachers are sincerely valued and appreciated; now

Therefore, I, Ned Lamont, Governor of the State of Connecticut – in recognition and in thanks to the many teachers whose continued commitment makes a difference in the lives of children in Connecticut’s schools – do hereby officially proclaim the week of May 2nd – 6th, 2022 to be

Teacher Appreciation Week
in the State of Connecticut.

The teacher representatives each addressed the Board on the teaching profession.

IV. Consideration of Minutes of the April 6, 2022, State Board of Education

Board Member Burr moved, Board Member Taylor seconded, that the Board adopt the State Board of Education minutes of April 6, 2022, with the requested edits.

Board Member Sieve requested that on page nine, under X.D., Legislation and Policy Development, "announce" should be replaced with "articulate." Board Member Exley spoke on the use of "Dr."

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

V. Report of the Chair

Chair DuBois-Walton welcomed everyone. She spoke on being honored to serve on a Board that supports and takes the time to honor CT educators.

She highlighted Board Member activities as follows:

- The Board's evening meeting will be held in the fall.
- The June Retreat to work on five-year strategic plan.
- The Remote Learning Commission's set of implementation recommendations.
- Vice Chair Benham had attended numerous meetings, including the Governor's Roundtable for the CT model curriculum rollout.
- Vice Chair Benham will attend the Research Showcase at Integrated Day Charter School.

VI. Report of the Commissioner

Commissioner Russell-Tucker referenced her report in the Board's supplemental folders. She highlighted the following items:

- Agency Staffing: Retirements for SDE and CTECS, and Position Refills.
- Agency Update will share new DPH/CSDE guidance of April 21, 2022.
- Tuesday Health and Safety Meeting with access to DPH and CSDE to answer questions.
- Attended with Commissioner Beth Bye the Early Childhood Parent Cabinet inaugural meeting and press event.
- Voice4Change update report.
- Attended Paraeducator Listening Session/Roundtable.
- Provided opening remarks at the Increasing Educator Diversity Symposium held at Quinnipiac University, Hamden.

- Provided opening remarks at the IT Girlz event at A.I. Prince, Hartford, with Superintendent Solek, Principal Mello, and Patricia Mann, educator.
- Killingly 10-4(b) update.

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

A. Adoption of the MBA Research Standards for Business Management and Administration, Finance, Marketing

A panel consisting of Chief Academic Officer Irene Parisi, Director of Reading and Literacy Melissa Hickey, and Education Consultant Suzanne Loud presented to the Board. The Board engaged in questions and answers.

Vice Chair Benham moved, Board Member Burr seconded, that the State Board of Education, adopts the MBA Research Standards for Business Management and Administration, Finance, and Marketing.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Litchfield-Regional School District 6 Temporary Regional School Study Committee Final Report

A panel consisting of Legal Director Mike McKeon, CSDE Attorney Matthew Venhorst, Superintendent Chris Leone, Region 6 and Litchfield Public Schools, and Co-Chairs William Davenport and Stephen Tracy, Litchfield-Regional School District 6 Temporary Regional School Study Committee, presented to the Board. The Board engaged in discussion with the panel.

Board Member Sieve moved, and Vice Chair Benham seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-43 of the Connecticut General Statutes, hereby accepts the recommendations of the Litchfield-Regional School District 6 temporary regional school study committee -- and in accordance therewith shall certify to the town clerks of Goshen, Litchfield, Morris, and Warren that such recommendations have been approved and shall have sent a copy of such certification to the Litchfield-Regional School District 6 temporary regional school study committee -- and directs the Commissioner to take such actions as are necessary to effectuate this resolution.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Receipt of Racial Imbalance Report

A panel consisting of Legal Director Mike McKeon and CSDE Attorney Laura Anastasio presented an overview on racially imbalanced schools and pending school districts to the Board. Discussion ensued on the need to articulate the message on the importance of equity in the CT schools and a shared mindset around the importance of addressing racially imbalanced schools. Discussion ensued.

*[Board Member Awilda Reasco arrived at approximately 10:55 a.m.]

Board Member Sieve moved, Vice Chair Benham seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Sections 10-226a and 10-226b of the Connecticut General Statutes, accepts the Racial Imbalance Report for the 2021-22 school year, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

IX. Consent Agenda

Chair DuBois-Walton asked for a motion on the Consent agenda. Vice Chair Benham moved, Board Member Sieve seconded, that the Board approve the following Consent agenda items: IX.A., Request for Finance Advisory Committee (FAC) Action; IX.B., Approval of Commissioner's Network Extension for Wexler Grant Community School, New Haven; IX.C., Approval of Commissioner's Network Extension for Windham High School; Windham; IX.D., Approval of Commissioner's Network Extension for Roosevelt School, Bridgeport; IX.E., Reauthorization of Emergency Educator Certification Endorsements; and IX.F., Approval of Charter Management Agreement – Great Oaks Charter School, Bridgeport.

A. Request for Finance Advisory Committee (FAC) Action

Resolved, That the State Board of Education approves the request for Finance Advisory Committee action to transfer funds from the Open Choice Account to the Excess Cost Account, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

B. Approval of Commissioner's Network Extension for Wexler Grant Community School, New Haven

Resolved, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes, approves the continued participation of Wexler-Grant Community School, New Haven, in the Commissioner's Network for an additional and final year commencing July 1, 2022, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action, including, but not limited to, expending such funds as may be necessary to execute and implement the foregoing.

C. Approval of Commissioner's Network Extension for Windham High School, Windham

Resolved, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes, approves the continued participation of Windham High School, Windham, in the Commissioner's Network for an additional and final year commencing July 1, 2022, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action, including, but not limited to, expending such funds as may be necessary to execute and implement the foregoing.

D. Approval of Commissioner's Network Extension for Roosevelt School, Bridgeport

Resolved, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes, approves the continued participation of Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School, Bridgeport, in the Commissioner's Network for an additional year commencing July 1, 2022, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action, including, but not limited to, expending such funds as may be necessary to execute and implement the foregoing.

E. Reauthorization of Emergency Educator Certification Endorsements

Whereas, on March 10, 2020, Governor Lamont declared public health and civil preparedness emergencies throughout the State of Connecticut in response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus in the United States and Connecticut; and

Whereas, on several occasions since March 10, 2020, acting pursuant to legal authority conferred by the Connecticut General Statutes, and in response to the continued need to respond adequately to the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Lamont renewed the declarations of public health and civil preparedness emergencies and also issued new declarations of public health and civil preparedness emergencies; and

Whereas, with proper protective measures in place, in-person learning provides the best environment for educating our students, and attending school in person provides children with meaningful access to necessary supports for mental health and wellness as well as access to nutrition, shelter and socialization;

Whereas, the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 endemic continue to give rise to unprecedented staffing challenges for schools, with an expectation of continued high levels of vacancies for certified staff members in Connecticut public schools statewide and the Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification continues to trend well above pre-pandemic level requests for temporary authorizations and permits; and

Whereas, the consequent potential for these statewide staffing shortages to continue or to reemerge at equal or greater levels in Connecticut public schools beyond the current school year; now therefore be it:

Resolved, That the State Board of Education adopts the recommendation from the Connecticut State Department of Education to extend, for the 2022-23 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.

F. Approval of Charter Management Agreement – Great Oaks Charter School, Bridgeport

Resolved, The State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-66tt of the Connecticut General Statutes, approves the contract for whole school management services between Great Oaks Charter School – Bridgeport Inc. and Great Oaks Foundation Inc. and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

VOTE ON

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

Motions carried unanimously.

X. Committee Reports

A. Academic Standards and Assessment

Committee Chair Erik Clemons reported that the committee will meet on May 10, 2022.

B. Accountability and Support

Committee Chair Benham reported that the committee will next meet on May 19, 2022.

C. Finance, Audit, and Budget

The committee meets quarterly and last met on March 16, 2022.

D. Legislation and Policy Development

Committee Chair Sieve reported that the committee met this morning. There was a report on what it means to be absent; and an update from West Hartford on its Racial Imbalance Plan.

E. Connecticut Technical Education and Career System Board

Interim Superintendent Dr. Ellen Solek reported. She thanked Commissioner Russell-Tucker for speaking at the IT Girlz event at A.I. Prince. She highlighted the CTECS schools' participation with Voice4Change; provided an updated on the six Platt Tech students and instructors return travel from the Annual NASA Convention in Houston, TX; and that CTECS will attend the Teacher of the Year Recognition Award Ceremony.

F. NASBE

Board Member Exley reported on the NASBE Regional Directors invitation for Board members to join the NASBE Government Affairs and Public Education Physicians Committees.

G. SERC

Committee Member Benham referenced her SERC report in the Supplemental Folders. She highlighted SERC's Dismantling Systemic Racism: 2022 Virtual Conference on Race, Education and Success being held on Friday, May 6, 2022.

XI. Items for Discussion

A. Student Attendance and Engagement

Commissioner Russell-Tucker introduced that during the charter school renewals, there was much conversation around attendance, and that the Board should have an understanding of where we are and what is happening on the ground.

Division Director John Frassinelli shared that the SDE has been working on absenteeism and attendance for a very long time with the Commissioner leading this work for over a decade. He noted that the SDE continues to strive to reduce the levels of chronic absenteeism and work with the districts for best practices. Hedy Chang, Executive Director, Attendance Works, presented on Connecticut within the national context. Ms. Chang expressed appreciation for the partnership with CT, and recognized Education Consultant Kari Sullivan Custer. Ms. Chang elevated CT and highlighted that the key for CT was in 2008 when it provided a standard definition for being absent; and that CT was the only state in the nation collecting data throughout the pandemic. Ms. Chang concluded that CT's work has been a long journey guided by an understanding and commitment to educational equity.

Superintendent Dr. Leslie Torres-Rodriguez, Evette Avila, Chief of Schools, Hartford Public Schools, and Principal Rachel Allison, The Bridge Academy presented from the perspectives of local school districts.

B. Connecticut Computer Science Plan Update

Chief Academic Officer Irene Parisi, Director of Reading and Literacy Melissa Hickey, and Executive Director Shannon Marimón, ReadyCT presented to the Board. They reported on updates on the State Plan that was adopted by the Board to move CT forward around computer science. They highlighted (1) joint partnership between CSDE and ReadyCT; (2) Computer Science Course Guide to help districts; (3) Lt. Governor's Computer Challenge; (4) Computer Science Education Week; (5) Professional Learning; (6) Two Paths to Cross Endorsement; (7) Progress on Policy; and (8) Continued Priorities.

C. Fairfield Racial Imbalance Plan Update

Legal Director Mike McKeon, CSDE Attorney Laura Anastasio, Superintendent Mike Cummings, Fairfield Public Schools, Christine Vitale, Chairperson, Fairfield Board of Education, Executive Director Dr. Zakia Parrish, Operations and Processes, and Member and Board Liaison Jen Jacobson, Fairfield Board of Education came before the board. It was noted that Vice Chairperson Nicholas Aysseh was unable to attend. Fairfield Public Schools presented a revised timeline for its plan to correct racial imbalance at McKinley Elementary School. Discussion ensued. The Board expressed the need for making the correction of racial imbalance a priority.

Chair DuBois-Walton requested a motion for Fairfield to amend their Plan and submit it to the Board in three months. Discussion ensued. A motion was moved and seconded that Fairfield amend their Plan to include timeline goal dates to be in compliance and the Amended Plan be due to the State Board of Education in three months.

The Motion carried unanimously.

D. Agency Update

Voice4Change

Madison Csejka, Office of the Commissioner, reported on 59 winners announced with Lt. Governor on April 8, 2022. The next steps were to disperse funding and work with students, districts, and schools to bring the proposals a reality.

COVID-19 Health & Safety Update

Division Director John Frassinelli provided the following updates:

- DPH/CSDE updated Guidance for Schools – April 21, 2022

- Board Member Burr shared that that Friday, May 6, 2022, is School Lunch Hero Day

CSDE/SBE Site Visits

Deputy Commissioner Nesmith highlighted team visits to two Commissioner's Network schools: North End Middle School, Waterbury and Pulaski Middle School, New Britain

Shoutouts!

- Charles H. Barrow STEM Academy, North Windham
 - Named a 2022 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School.
- New Model Curricula Rollout with Governor Lamont, Berlin High School, Berlin
- Chief Talent Officer Shuana Tucker provided highlights of the Educator Diversity Symposium
- IT Girlz, A.I. Prince Technical High School, Hartford
- Office of Early Childhood Parent Cabinet Inauguration

New EdSight Public Dashboard

- Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan provided a demonstration on the upgraded features on the EdSight public portal. He also recognized the contributions of active and recently retired members of his team.

Chair DuBois-Walton adjourned the meeting at 2:11 p.m.

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