

Connecticut State Board of Education Hartford

State Board of Education Meeting November 2, 2022 (Approved December 7, 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, November 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 can be viewed here: [CT-N: State Board of Education November 2, 2022, Meeting.](#)

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Karen DuBois-Walton called the meeting to order at 9:38 a.m.

Present: Karen DuBois-Walton, Chairperson
Erin D. Benham, Vice Chairperson
Bonnie E. Burr
Erik M. Clemons
Elwood Exley, Jr.
Donald F. Harris, Jr.
Dr. Rai Kathuria (designee for Terrence Cheng, Ex Officio)
Patricia M. Keavney-Maruca, Ex Officio
Valli Pendyala, Student Member
Malia K. Sieve
Allan B. Taylor
Praja Tickoo, Student Member
Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Ex Officio

Absent: Martha Prou
Awilda Reasco

II. Public Participation

1. Christine Rosoti Randall, a resident and parent in Killingly, spoke in support of agenda item VII.B., Consideration of the Recommendation Regarding the Killingly 10-4b Complaint.
2. Kristine Cicchetti, Killingly High School parent, spoke on agenda item VII.B., Consideration of the Recommendation Regarding the Killingly 10-4b Complaint.
3. Brandon Grody, of Hartford, spoke on mental health issues and in support of agenda item VII.B., Consideration of the Recommendation Regarding the Killingly 10-4b Complaint.

4. Killian Young, a former student of Killingly High School, in support of agenda item VII.B., Consideration of the Recommendation Regarding the Killingly 10-4b Complaint.
5. Lisa Girard, a parent, spoke in support of agenda item VII.B., Consideration of the Recommendation Regarding the Killingly 10-4b Complaint.
6. Attorney Andrew Feinstein, a lawyer representing the concerned parents and citizens of Killingly, spoke in support of agenda item VII.B., Consideration of the Recommendation Regarding the Killingly 10-4b Complaint
7. John Flanders, Vice President, Special Education for Equity for Kids (SEEK), spoke in support of agenda item VII.B., Consideration of the Recommendation Regarding the Killingly 10-4b Complaint.
8. Attorney Deborah Stevenson, attorney representative of the Killingly Board of Education, read a statement from the Killingly Board of Education Chair Normand R. Ferron in opposition to agenda item VII.B., Consideration of the Recommendation Regarding the Killingly 10-4b Complaint.
9. Tom Stringfellow, of Manchester spoke on various topics.
10. Kate, Dias, president of the Connecticut Education Association (CEA), in support of agenda item VII.B., Consideration of the Recommendation Regarding the Killingly 10-4b Complaint.
11. Louis Rosado Burch, Legislative Coordinator, Connecticut Education Association (CEA), spoke against the Killingly Board of Education's decision to reject plans for a school-based mental health center.

III. Executive Session

Chair DuBois-Walton explained that the purpose of the Executive Session was to review and discuss the Board procedure with regards to the 10-4b complaint. She clarified that there would be no discussion of the content of the complaint until the Board was in public session.

Chair DuBois-Walton requested a motion to go into Executive Session for review of a written legal opinion pertaining to Section 10-4b provisions and procedures.

On a motion by Board Member Clemons, seconded by Board Member Harris, the Board voted unanimously to move into executive session at 10:11 a.m. Present in executive session were Board members Erin Benham, Bonnie Burr, Erik Clemons, Chair Karen DuBois-Walton, Elwood Exley, Donald Harris, Rai Kathuria (designee for Terrence Cheng), Patricia Keavney-Maruca, Valli Pendyala, Malia Sieve, Allan Taylor, Praja Tickoo, Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Also present for the Executive Session were Assistant Attorney General Darren Cunningham, Legal Director Mike McKeon, Chief of Staff/Legislative Liaison Laura Stefon, and Staff Assistant Aldith Dewar.

Executive session ended at 10:35 a.m. A five-minute recess followed before reconvening the public meeting.

On a motion by Board Member Taylor, seconded by Board Member Burr, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn its executive session and reconvene in public session at 10:40 a.m.

Present: Karen DuBois-Walton, Chairperson
Erin D. Benham, Vice Chairperson
Bonnie E. Burr
Erik M. Clemons
Elwood Exley, Jr.
Donald F. Harris, Jr.
Dr. Rai Kathuria (designee for Terrence Cheng, Ex Officio)
Patricia M. Keavney-Maruca, Ex Officio
Valli Pendyala, Student Member
Malia K. Sieve
Allan B. Taylor
Praja Tickoo
Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Ex Officio

Absent: Martha Prou
Awilda Reasco

Chair DuBois-Walton requested a motion for the minutes of October 12, 2022.

IV. Consideration of the October 12, 2022, Minutes of the State Board of Education

Board Member Harris moved, Board Member Sieve seconded, that the Board adopt the minutes of the October 12, 2022, State Board of Education Meeting.

VOTE ON

MOTION:	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 highlighted Board Member activities as follows:

- The October 12, 2022, SBE evening meeting that was held in Meriden.
- African American/Black and Puerto Rican/Latino Course of Studies District Implementation Showcase.
- Acknowledged Commissioner Russell-Tucker at the Annual Summer Learning Association meeting in Washington, DC.
- NASBE Annual Conference Presentation with Vice Chair Benham, Commissioner Russell-Tucker, and Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan.
- Release of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP Results).

Chair DuBois-Walton noted that in the interest of time and people in attendance, asked for the Board's approval to move the Action items forward on the agenda beginning with VII.A. The Board unanimously agreed.

VII. Items Requiring Action

A. Consideration of Fairfield Racial Imbalance Plan Amendment

Chair DuBois-Walton asked for a motion for agenda item VII.A. and read the resolution language aloud into the record of the minutes.

Legal Director Mike McKeon and CSDE Attorney Laura Anastasio moved to the table to present. Attorney McKeon shared that representatives from the Fairfield Board of Education and Fairfield Public Schools were in attendance to present to the Board and were invited to the table. Christine Vitale, Chairperson, Fairfield Board of Education, Superintendent Michael Testani, Dr. Stephen Tracey, Former Interim Superintendent, Dr. James Zavodjancik, Chief Academic Officer, Digna A. Marte, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, presented to the Board to address the Proposed Racial Imbalance Plan Amendment.

Superintendent Testani highlighted that a new and key component to the Plan is the Recruitment and Retention of a Diverse Teaching and Administrator workforce in Fairfield.

Board Member Sieve moved, Board Member Harris seconded, that in accordance with Section 10-226d of the Connecticut General Statutes, the State Board of Education ["State Board"] hereby approves the August 30, 2022, Plan Amendment to the Fairfield Board of Education's Racial Balance Plan on the absolute condition that the Fairfield Board provides periodic updates to the Commissioner of Education regarding the status and efficacy of such plan, which periodic updates shall be provided to the Commissioner of Education no less than every three months and further directs the Commissioner to inform the Fairfield Board of Education of the State Board's decision.

The Board engaged in questions and answers.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Consideration of the Recommendation Regarding the Killingly 10-4b Complaint

Chair DuBois-Walton asked for a motion for agenda item VII.B. and read the resolution language aloud into the record of the minutes. She recognized that Assistant Attorney General Darren Cunningham had joined the Board table.

Legal Director Mike McKeon presented to the Board. He opened by confirming that the Board members were in receipt of his investigative report and the Commissioner's report.

Legal Director McKeon commenced with the two pivotal dates of April 5, 2022, 57 residents of the Town of Killingly filed with the State Department of Education a section 10-4b complaint, and April 11, 2022, the Commissioner of Education determined that this submission constituted what the regulations refer to as "a substantial complaint." Legal Director McKeon presented a step-by-step summary on the 10-4b complaint that was filed by Complainants alleging that the Killingly Public Schools had failed to implement the educational interests of the State under CGS Sec. 10-4b by failing to adequately address mental health and social emotional needs of their students.

Board Member Taylor moved, and Board Member Sieve seconded that in accordance with Section 10-4b of the Connecticut General Statutes, as well as Section 10-4b-8 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, the State Board of Education ["SBE"] hereby finds that there is reasonable cause to believe that the Killingly Board of Education ["Killingly Board"] has failed or is unable to make reasonable provisions to implement the educational interests of the state of Connecticut, and in accordance with such finding, and pursuant to Sections 10-4b-8 and 10-4b-9 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, the SBE orders an inquiry before a duly designated hearing panel serving on behalf of the SBE, the scheduling and form of which hearing, shall be communicated in conjunction with this resolution to the Killingly Board by the Commissioner of Education.

The Board engaged in questions and answers for clarity, procedures, and timeline.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

VI. Report of the Commissioner and Agency Update

The Commissioner referenced her written report and highlighted the following items:

- Provided remarks at the FAFSA Challenge Kick-off Event.
- Commissioner and leadership staff met with New Haven Public Schools Administrators.
- Panel presenter: The Hunt Institute: Homeroom with Education Leaders Webinar.
- Convened a meeting of the Commissioner's Roundtable for Family & Community Engagement.
- Panel presenter: NSLA: State Summer Learning Network and the Policies that Guide Us.

The Commissioner then introduced the Agency Updates.

School Safety and Security Update

A panel consisting of Brenda Bergeron, Esq., Deputy Commissioner, Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS), and Director of Communications Eric Scoville presented on the focus and importance of school safety. Deputy Commissioner Bergeron spoke on DEMHS's responsibility of creating School Safety and Security Plans with local school districts, and explained the DEMHS Coordination regarding School Incidents with its five Regional Coordinators. Director Scoville reiterated that the key is constant collaboration with DEMHS and other agencies. The Board engaged in questions and answers.

CT's Approved PK-3 Core Comprehensive Reading Curricula Programs

Chief Academic Officer Irene Parisi and Interim Director Melissa Hickey presented on the standards and goal performance of reading at grade level by grade, and provided an overview on the historical timeline of the Public Act 21-2 of the June 2021 Special Session that required the CSDE to establish the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success. They also provided an update of the review and approval process of the PK-3 programs, as well as the implementation and waiver process, and the next steps of providing professional learning.

Special Education Office – CT-SEDS Launch: Training and Technical Assistance

Division Director Bryan Klimkiewicz and Jim McGlynn, Public Consulting Group (PCG), presented on the CT-SEDS Project. Mr. Klimkiewicz gave an overview on the implementation and commitment to aligning systems, procedures and practices for the state. Mr. McGlynn reported on statistics of increased usage as technical issues were resolved and the action plans implemented to increase support and response.

Regional School Choice Office Update

Chief Strategic Planning Officer Keith Norton presented on the Regional School Choice Office's Annual Fun Fair on October 22, 2022, at Dunkin Donut Park. He stated that the purpose is to prepare families for the December launch of the School Choice application for the 2023-2024 school year and the families being able to get needed information.

School Health, Nutrition and Family Services Update

Commissioner Russell-Tucker reported that she attended School Nutrition Association of Connecticut Annual Conference

- Division Director John Frassinelli provided two shoutouts to
 - SDE Child Nutrition Team
 - Service Directors who since the beginning of the pandemic have served close to 170 million meals.

Shoutouts!

- NASBE Annual Conference: Better Together: State Board and State Agency Collaboration
- The Regional School Choice Office (RSCO) Fall Fun Fair
- U.S. Department of Education Convening: Raising the Bar: Literacy & Math Series to Address Academic Recovery Leveraging Research to Boost Learning Recovery
- RESC Alliance Igniting Change Conference
- Annual Business Meeting of Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission – MIC, Chair Laura Anastasio

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan presented an analysis of Connecticut students on the NAEP scores that were released on October 24, 2022. He highlighted that NAEP is the only assessment barometer that measures state-level comparisons to other states and the nation as a whole. Mr. Gopalakrishnan stated that NAEP results confirmed the Connecticut's state assessment of 2021 for grades 3 through 8 and 11.

VIII. Financial Matters

There was no Financial Matters report.

IX. Consent Agenda

Chair DuBois-Walton called for a motion on the Consent agenda. Board Member Burr moved, Board Member Benham seconded, that the Board approve the following Consent agenda item: IX.A., Reappointment of Members of the Impartial Hearing Board Panel.

A. Reappointment of Members of the Impartial Hearing Board Panel

Resolved, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-186 (b) of the Connecticut General Statutes and Sections 10-145d-611 (h), 612 (h), 613 (f), 10-4-12 (f), and 10-4-22(c)(3) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, and other applicable provisions of law, hereby reappoints the following individuals to conduct hearings and render decisions as an impartial hearing board, or otherwise, on matters where they may be appointed to serve in accordance with law for the period of November 3, 2022, through October 31, 2025:

Jane Ford Shaw
Melinda A. Powell
Linda Anne Bulkovitch
Joane Merlain Olawale
Patrick L. Kennedy

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.

X. Committee Reports

A. Academic Standards and Assessment

Committee Chair Clemons reported that the committee will be meeting on December 12, 2022, at 3:30 p.m.

B. Accountability and Support

Committee Chair Benham reported that the committee will be meeting on November 16, 2022.

C. Finance, Audit, and Budget

Committee Chair Harris reported on the status of a committee meeting date and staffing.

D. Legislation and Policy Development

Committee Chair Sieve reported that the committee met with Hamden Public Schools on their Racial Imbalance Plan and requested an amendment.

E. Connecticut Technical Education and Career System Board

CTECS Chairperson Patricia Keavney-Maruca reported on the new CTECS Advisory Board's first meeting on October 19, 2022, and adopted the (i) CTECS Strategic Operating Plan, and (ii) Betty Sternberg, Executive in Residence and Director of Teacher Leader Fellowship Academy at Sacred Heart University has invited five CTECS teachers to present at the upcoming statewide Teacher Leader Conference on November 8, 2022. She highlighted a celebration of Manufacturing Month with a Women in Manufacturing Showcase Luncheon hosted at Emmett O'Brien; and a meeting with members of the CTECS leadership and the president of the Connecticut State Colleges and University System to explore future opportunities for cutting-edge education and trade-based partnerships.

F. NASBE

Board Member Exley reported on the NASBE Annual Conference 2022. Mr. Exley attended as a member on the NASBE Board, the Northeastern Area Director and chair of the Governmental Affairs Committee. He highlighted the CT delegation presentation: Better Together: State Board and State Agency Collaboration with Chair DuBois-Walton, Vice Chair Benham, Commissioner Russell-Tucker and Chief Performance Officer Gopalakrishnan. He also reported that student member Valli Pendyala participated on a NASBE-sponsored webinar panel on "*State Actions to Develop Youth-Adult Partnerships.*"

G. SERC

Committee Member Benham reported that there was no written SERC report. She noted that SERC continues to work on curriculum, professional development, and the IEP training with teachers.

Chair DuBois-Walton asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting, Board Member Sieve moved, Board Member Clemons seconded, that the meeting be adjourned.

Chair DuBois-Walton adjourned the meeting at 12:57 p.m.

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