

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

**The Legislation and Policy Development Committee
Wednesday, December 6, 2023, 8:30 a.m.**

Committee Members

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

Minutes

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the State Board of Education Legislation and Policy Development Committee met in person on December 6, 2023.

I. Call to Order

Committee Chair Malia K. Sieve called the meeting to order at 8:35. In addition to Ms. Sieve, also present at the meeting were Committee Members Karen DuBois-Walton, Donald F. Harris, and Elwood Exley, Jr., as well as State Board student members Yasmeen Galal and Connor Cowan. Also in attendance from the CSDE: Charles E. Hewes, Deputy Commissioner for Academics and Innovation; Laura J. Stefon, Chief of Staff; Irene Parisi, Chief Academic Officer; Keith M. Norton, Chief Strategic Planning Officer; John D. Frassinelli, Director of School Health, Nutrition, and Family Services; Bryan Klimkiewicz, Special Education Division Director; Robin Colombo Cecere, Regional School Choice Office Director; Matthew Cerrone, Director of Communications; and Michael P. McKeon, Director of Legal and Governmental Affairs.

Presenters:

Laura Stefon, Chief of Staff, CSDE
Irene Parisi, Chief Academic Officer, CSDE
John Frassinelli, Director of School Health, Nutrition, and Family Services, CSDE
Robin Cecere, Regional School Choice Office Director, CSDE
Bryan Klimkiewicz, Special Education Division Director, CSDE

II. Approval of Minutes

Dr. DuBois-Walton moved to approve the November 1, 2023, meeting minutes, and Mr. Harris seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Review and Discussion: CSDE Legislative Proposals

Ms. Stefon began presentation on the CSDE's legislative proposals, including the proposed application to adult education students of the same 25-credit graduation requirement the legislature had previously enacted for students enrolled in regular high schools. Mr. Harris expressed concerns that adding an additional five credits could serve as a roadblock to students who are seeking their GED. Dr. DuBois-Walton similarly noted that as most individuals who are pursuing

adult education are doing so at different stages in their lives, having to obtain an additional five credits could prove difficult for them. Mr. Exley asked how much time an additional five credits would take adult education students to earn. Ms. Parisi stated she would look into it.

Regarding Mr. Harris's question as to the origin of this proposed legislative change, Ms. Parisi explained that it has been driven by the adult education directors in different school districts, and that employers were not its proponents. Dr. DuBois-Walton raised the potential fiscal impact of this change. Ms. Parisi stated that there are federal and state funds and that the instructional staff are already part of the adult education programs. Ms. Paris added that during its most recent session, the legislature had amended the law to require that parents who withdraw 17-year-old students from school must concurrently enroll them in adult education. Mr. Harris noted that there is, however, a significant difference between a 17-year-old who is being withdrawn from school and a 35-year-old who wishes to return to school to obtain his or her GED. Ms. Stefon stated that the CSDE would review the issues raised by the Committee members and endeavor to provide answers to any outstanding questions prior to the Committee's January 3, 2024, meeting.

Ms. Stefon then addressed the legislative proposal pertaining to the Seal of Biliteracy Program, explaining that it merely seeks to expand the program to private schools and would delete the requirement that a Native American tribe be federally recognized. Ms. Stefon moved on to the proposed extension of the Sheff magnet enrollment standards, noting that it is a technical change that extends certain provisions of preexisting statutes in order to bring them into alignment with the Sheff stipulated agreement. Ms. Cecere added that the legislative change would extend the enrollment standards and the Commissioner-approval standards from 2021 to 2025, in accordance with the timelines previously set down by the legislature.

Ms. Stefon reviewed the legislative proposal that Goodwin University Magnet Schools be recognized as an entity that can charge tuition to districts for magnet school enrollment. Ms. Cecere explained that this legislative change would align with prior legislation that had designated Goodwin University Magnet Schools as a local education agency.

Ms. Stefon turned to a legislative proposal that, Mr. Frassinelli noted, would expand eligibility for grants that help fund school-breakfast programs in K-12 systems to those entities that consist only of high school grades. Mr. Frassinelli explained that there is a preexisting legislative grant that is apportioned among eligible districts/schools, so this proposed change would expand the apportionment pool, which Mr. Frassinelli estimated would result in a roughly \$80 annual reduction in the pro rata amounts distributed to eligible districts and schools. Dr. DuBois-Walton expressed concern that there may already not be enough money for hungry students and asked whether there should be a push for a greater overall amount.

Ms. Stefon then reviewed the Farm-to-School Program. The legislative change in question is a minor emendation in response to a State auditor finding that the CSDE was required to directly arrange for student field trips to farmers. This proposal would simply establish that the CSDE will assist districts in coordinating these visits, but it is not directly responsible for arranging them.

The final proposed legislative change addresses various elements of a bill that addresses the allocation of responsibilities for the provision of certain special education services and is designed

in part to add consistency to the different terminology used by different State agencies. Mr. Klimkiewicz explained that that the proposal would also eliminate unannounced site visits as they are logistically impractical for both districts and the CSDE. There would still be site visits, but they would be announced.

Ms. Stefon reiterated that the CSDE would follow up on the questions raised regarding the adult education credit requirements, and in the interim asked the Committee to vote on whether to refer the legislative proposals to the full Board for its review. Ms. Sieve then moved to do so, and Mr. Exley seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Harris moved, and Dr. DuBois-Walton seconded, a motion to adjourn the meeting, which motion passed unanimously.