

Connecticut State Board of Education Hartford

State Board of Education Meeting

January 11, 2023

(Approved February 1, 2023)

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, January 11, 2023, 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: <https://youtu.be/iZv4E84KEtU>.

I. Call to Order

Vice Chairperson Erin Benham called the meeting to order at 9:38 a.m.

Present:

Erin D. Benham, Vice Chairperson
Erik M. Clemons
Elwood Exley, Jr.
Donald F. Harris, Jr.
Valli Pendyala, Student Member
Awilda Reasco
Malia K. Sieve
Allan B. Taylor
Prajna Tickoo, Student Member

Absent:

Karen DuBois-Walton, Chairperson
Bonnie E. Burr
Dr. Rai Kathuria (designee for Terrence Cheng, Ex Officio)
Patricia M. Keavney-Maruca, Ex Officio
Martha Prou
Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Ex Officio

II. Public Participation

1. Dr. Katherine Roe, Chair, Education & Educational Psychology Department, Western Connecticut State University, represented AACTE-CT and spoke on topics. A copy of Dr. Roe's written statement is in the official file of this meeting.
2. Christine Rebstock, of Middletown, spoke on SEL, gender issues and materials in the school curriculum.
3. Thomas Stringfellow, of Manchester, spoke on the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday and various topics.
4. State Representative Chris Poulos, spoke in support of the Teacher of the Year Council and congratulated Carolyn Kielma as the 2023 Teacher of the Year.

III. Executive Session

The Board did not meet in executive session.

XI. Items for Discussion

Vice Chair Benham asked the Board to move items, XI.A., Recognition of the 2023 National Principal of the Year Donna Hayward, Haddam Killingworth High School, RSD 17; and XI.B., Recognition of the 2023 Teacher of the Year Carolyn Kielma and 2023 Teacher of the Year Finalists, to this point in the agenda. The Board unanimously agreed.

A. Recognition of the 2023 National Principal of the Year Donna Hayward, Haddam Killingworth High School, RSD 17

Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan invited Principal Donna Hayward, Superintendent Jeff Wihbey, and Board Chair Suzanne Sack of the Haddam Killingworth RSD 17 to the table. Mr. Gopalakrishnan announced to the Board that Donna Hayward, Principal of Haddam Killingworth High School, RSD 17 was recently recognized as the 2023 National Principal of the Year by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Mr. Gopalakrishnan highlighted that Haddam Killingworth High School was recognized as a Blue Ribbon School in 2018.

Principal Hayward thanked the Board for the recognition and thanked Superintendent Wihbey and Board Chair Sack for their support. Principal Hayward highlighted that she had just returned from an Extra Yard for Teachers Summit where they discussed teacher shortages, recruiting teachers, elevating education and educators.

Board Chair Sack thanked the Board for placement on the agenda and thanked Principal Hayward for her dedication to their district and students.

B. Recognition of the 2023 Teacher of the Year Carolyn Kielma and 2023 Teacher of the Year Finalists

Chief Talent Officer Shuana Tucker and CSDE State Teacher of the Year Coordinator Mary Glassman presented to the Board. Chief Tucker acknowledged Education Consultant Sharon Fuller. They introduced that this was the 70th year that Connecticut had participated in the Teacher of the Year Program in collaboration with the Connecticut Teacher of the Year Council.

Ms. Glassman individually called the name of each Connecticut Teacher of the Year Finalists to join the table and read aloud the bios of each into the minutes of the meeting.

- **Lisa J. Abel.** Simsbury Teacher of the Year, and a Music teacher at Simsbury High School who has been teaching for 19 years.
 - Lisa has been the Band Director at Simsbury High School for the past 15 years. In support of her application, her district noted that "Lisa is a woman with a wide array of strengths – intelligence, determination, and incredible work ethic, the ability to see the big picture, and a focus on people. She has had a notably positive impact on the culture of our band program and our school, and she is regarded by everyone in the

music department as an informal leader of their work. She is a teacher completely devoted to supporting her students' growth as musicians and citizens, and she has found innumerable ways to connect her kids with the community.

- *During her finalist interviews, one student noted, "She is the most caring teacher I've ever had. Every key experience I've had here somehow ties back to her."*
- **John P. Allen.** Putnam's Teacher of the Year, and a Social Studies teacher at Putnam High School with 7 years of teaching experience.
 - *In nominating John, his district noted, "John leaves a lasting impression on his students. He naturally forms genuine relationships with students from diverse backgrounds. He uses course content to level the playing field and meaningful inquiry to engage students in authentic learning experiences. John makes room at the table for every student's voice and provides feedback without judgement. He empowers students to think critically and communicate effectively about the world around them. He empowers students to be advocates and leaders, to overcome adversity and to not be defined by stereotypes.*
 - *During his finalist interviews, one student said, "Every student should have the opportunity to have a teacher like Mr. Allen at least once in their lives."*
- **Jennifer Rodriguez.** Newington's Teacher of the Year, and an Elementary teacher at Anna Reynolds School, with more than 14 years of teaching experience. Ms. Rodriguez was accompanied by her Superintendent Dr. Maureen Brummett, Newington Public Schools.
 - *In nominating her for this award, her district said, "Mrs. Rodriguez is highly effective in her role and when you enter her classroom you immediately understand why. She cultivates a climate that is welcoming, safe and supportive both physically and emotionally. Her classroom is bright, print-rich, and welcoming. Jennifer establishes and maintains a climate that is positive, innovative, and exciting."*
 - *In her finalist interviews, a parent said, "She makes every student feel like they're the most important person in the world."*
 - *And one student shared, 'She didn't embrace the saying 'Kids should be seen and not heard.' She thinks kids should be seen AND heard. She always gives us a voice."*

2023 Connecticut Teacher of the Year

- **Carolyn E. Kielma.** 2023 Connecticut Teacher of the Year and Bristol's Teacher of the Year. Ms. Kielma was accompanied by Superintendent Dr. Catherine Carbone, Bristol Public Schools, Principal Michael Higgins, Bristol Eastern High School.
 - Carolyn has been a science educator for 20 years, the last 14 of which she has spent teaching biology and biological forensics at Bristol Eastern High School. She also teaches the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program, supporting students who are first in their family to attend college or come from populations underrepresented at the collegiate level so the students can attain their dream of attending college or other postsecondary learning institutions.
 - In her application, Carolyn said, "What keeps me coming back to this profession every year is not the content I teach, but the children I get to meet and the role I get to play

in their lives. The reward is my students' success and happiness in living a full life." She wrote, "A graduating student my not remember the intermediate reactions of the Calvin Cycle of photosynthesis, but I hope they will remember how I sparked curiosity, challenged them, fostered discovery and helped them to be self-motivated learners."

- Carolyn believes that all students must feel they belong to be successful in the classroom. She is continuously amazed at how students can perform when given all the right opportunities. She believes that learning is not about knowing the right answer; it is a process of discovery.

Ms. Kielma thanked Principal Higgins and Superintendent Carbone for their support. Ms. Kielma stated that learning is a process of discovery. She highlighted that the teacher shortage should be addressed with colleagues across the state and colleagues across the nation.

Vice Chair Benham acknowledged Chief Talent Officer Shuana Tucker, and team members Mary Glassman, and Sharon Fuller for their work highlighting these special recognitions.

IV. Consideration of Minutes:

A. December 7, 2022, State Board of Education Meeting

Board Member Clemons moved, Board Member Reasco seconded, that the Board adopt the minutes of the December 7, 2022, State Board of Education Meeting.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

V. Report of the Chair

In the absence Chair DuBois-Walton, the Chair's written report was provided to Board members.

- Vice Chair Benham provided an update on the Killingly hearing dates.

VI. Report of the Commissioner and Agency Update

The Commissioner referenced her written report and highlighted the following selected items before transitioning to Agency Updates:

- Agency staffing.
- Participated and presented at the New Haven Delegation Education Forum with the Leadership Team.
- Annual briefing with legislators.
- Conversations with President Cheng and the CSCU System to strengthen our partnerships.

- EdSight Virtual Interactive Learning Session for Parents and Families to use the Data Portal.
- Provided welcome remarks at the CABA/CSDE Reading Curriculum Legislation and Waiver Process Webinar.
- Provided welcome remarks at the Science of Reading Masterclass Cohort II Kick Off Meeting.

Staffing Update

Chief Financial Officer Kathy Demsey presented on the staffing levels for the agency. Chief Demsey summarized the recruitment process.

The Board engaged in a question and answer period with Chief Demsey and Commissioner Russell-Tucker.

Chronic Absence Update: Learner Engagement and Attendance

Division Director John Frassinelli and Education Consultant Kari Sullivan Custer presented. Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan reported on the statewide trends in chronic absenteeism. He highlighted the triple contributory threat of the Flu, COVID, and RSV to the chronic absenteeism.

Ms. Custer spoke on the Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP). It was highlighted that that the hallmark of the LEAP program were home visits.

LEAP Stories from the Field

Claudia Ocasio, LEAP Home Visitor, Torrington Public Schools, and Katia Pazmino, LEAP Home Visitor, Family Centers and Stamford Public Schools, presented on their experiences and shared examples on the building of relationships and evaluation of their home visits with the community they service.

[Board Member Erik Clemons left the meeting at approximately 11:41 a.m.]

Commissioner Russell-Tucker thanked the participants and highlighted lost instructional time and why the issue of chronic absenteeism is so important.

Leap Evaluation

Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan presented that the LEAP Evaluation was conducted by the Center for Connecticut Education Research Collaboration (CCERC) and reported that LEAP showed the positive effects of home visits on student attendance and that attendance rates increased by approximately 15 to 20 percentage points.

Shoutouts!

- EdSight: How's My Child's School Doing? Using Information from the EdSight Portal to Understand School and District hosted by Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan.
- 2021-22 Next Generation Accountability System Results Release
- CareerConneCT Program Expansion
- RSCO Family Fun Night at Riverside Magnet School at Goodwin University
- Academic Recovery – Alliance District Focus

VII. Items Requiring Action

A. Report on Agricultural Science and Technology Education Graduates Five Years After Graduation

Chief Academic Officer Irene Parisi and Education Consultant Harold Mackin presented the annual report to the Board.

Vice Chair Benham asked for a motion for agenda item VII.A., Report on Agricultural Science and Technology Education Graduates Five Years After Graduation. Board Member Harris moved, Board Member Reasco seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-65a (b) of the Connecticut General Statutes, receives the Report on Agricultural Science and Technology Education Graduates Five Years after Graduation.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

VIII. Financial Matters

There was no financial report.

IX. Consent Agenda

Vice Chair Benham called for a motion on the Consent agenda. Board Member Harris moved, Board Member Sieve seconded, that the Board approve the following Consent agenda item: IX.A., Approval of 2022-2023 Annual Audit Plan.

A. Approval of 2022-2023 Annual Audit Plan

Resolved, that the State Board of Education adopts the Annual Audit Plan for the period of July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

X. Committee Reports

A. Academic Standards and Assessment

On behalf of Committee Chair Clemons, Vice Chair Benham reported that the committee met on January 9, 2023, with a presentation on Social, Emotional and Intellectual Habits: Grades 4-12.

B. Accountability and Support

Vice Chair Benham reported that the committee will next meet on February 15, 2023, and noted that Board members should contact Chief Irene Parisi if interested in charter school site visits.

C. Finance, Audit, and Budget

Committee Chair Harris reported that the committee met on December 16, 2022, to approve the audit plan that was presented to the Board.

D. Legislation and Policy Development

Committee Chair Sieve reported that the committee met earlier in the morning. The Greenwich Public Schools presented an update on the status of its Racial Imbalance plan.

E. Connecticut Technical Education and Career System Board

In the absence of CTECS Chairperson Patricia Keavney-Maruca, CTECS Chief of Staff Ronke Stallings provided the committee report.

F. NASBE

Board Member Exley stated that there was nothing to report.

G. SERC

Committee Member Benham referenced her SERC report in the Supplemental Folders.

- **Educator Evaluation Support Council (EES).** Vice Chair Benham provided an introduction and inception history to the Board on the purpose of the EES.

Vice Chair Benham asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting, Board Member Harris moved, Board Member Reasco seconded.

Vice Chair Benham adjourned the meeting at 12:09 p.m.

Prepared by: _____

Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Secretary
State Board of Education