

Connecticut State Board of Education Hartford

State Board of Education Meeting June 14, 2023

Draft

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, June 14, 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/nAdaFQLsgJw>.

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Karen DuBois-Walton called the meeting to order at 9:33 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.
Patricia M. Keavney-Maruca, Ex Officio
Valli Pendyala, Student Member
Allan B. Taylor*

Absent: Martha Prou
Awilda Reasco
Malia K. Sieve
Dr. Rai Kathuria (designee for Terrence Cheng, Ex Officio)
Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Ex Officio

Chair DuBois-Walton announced that the agenda items would be taken out of order to accommodate the time constraints of guests.

Oath of Office

Attorney Michael P. McKeon, Commissioner of the Superior Court, administered the Oath of Office to reappointed Board member Erin D. Benham. A copy of the Oath of Office is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

Chair DuBois-Walton requested to move to agenda item VII., Items Requiring Action. The agenda was brought to agenda item VII.A.1., Election of Vice Chairperson.

VII. Items Requiring Action

A. Biennial Organizational Meeting

1. Election of Vice Chairperson

Chair DuBois-Walton entertained a motion for the nomination of a Vice Chairperson. Board Member Donald Harris nominated Erin D. Benham to continue in the role of Vice Chairperson. Board Member Benham accepted the nomination and there were no other nominations.

Board Member Harris moved, and Board Member Burr seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 2 of Article II of its Bylaws, elects Erin D. Benham as Vice Chairperson of the State Board of Education, for the period June 14, 2023, until the next biennial organizational meeting, at which an election for Vice Chairperson will be held.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

V. Report of the Chair

- Chair DuBois-Walton announced the Board would not hold the July 12th meeting as there were no items requiring action for July.
- She commended the Commissioner and the SDE Team on the management of proposed legislations.

II. Public Participation

1. Christine Rebstock, of Middletown, spoke regarding the wearing of the colors of the transgender flag, the flying of pride and transgender flags, and pride month videos in the public schools.

[Board Member Allan Taylor arrived at the meeting at approximately 9:42 a.m.]

2. Jennifer Benevento, Professional Issues and Development Coordinator for AFT-Connecticut, spoke in support of agenda item VII.G., Connecticut Guidelines for Educator and Leader Evaluation and Support 2023.
3. Mary Yordon, President, Norwalk Federation of Teachers, spoke in support of agenda item VII.G., Connecticut Guidelines for Educator and Leader Evaluation and Support 2023.
4. Kate Field, Evaluation Specialist, Connecticut Education Association, and member of the Educator Evaluation Advisory Council, spoke in support of agenda item VII.G., Connecticut Guidelines for Educator and Leader Evaluation and Support 2023.
5. Joslyn Dellancy, Vice President, Connecticut Education Association, spoke in support of agenda item VII.G., Connecticut Guidelines for Educator and Leader Evaluation and Support 2023.

6. Tom Stringfellow, resident of Manchester spoke on various topics.

VII. Items Requiring Action (continued)

Chair DuBois-Walton transitioned the agenda to bid farewell to Student Member Valli Pendyala.

B. Recognition in Honor of Valli Pendyala

Chair DuBois-Walton entertained a motion for the Resolution in Honor of Valli Pendyala be added to the agenda, Vice Chair Benham moved, and Board Member Harris seconded, that the motion as read into the record of the minutes by Chair DuBois-Walton as follows:

Whereas, Section 10-1 of the Connecticut General Statutes provides for the appointment of two student members to the Connecticut State Board of Education; and

Whereas, Governor Ned Lamont appointed Valli Pendyala of South Windsor to the State Board of Education for a one-year term commencing July 7, 2022; and

Whereas, During their tenure, Mx. Pendyala served with distinction and has contributed greatly to the Board's discussions of education policy issues;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved, That the State Board of Education extends to Valli Pendyala its appreciation for their commitment to educational excellence and equity in Connecticut public schools and best wishes for success in their future endeavors.

Approved unanimously this fourteenth day of June, Two Thousand Twenty-Three.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

Chair DuBois-Walton read a card from Valli Pendyala into the record of the minutes:

To my fellow Board Members of the Connecticut State Board of Education,

This past year has been one of the best experiences of my life. I've learned so much more about education in our state. But I have also learned more about being a leader and the power of my voice. I could not have gone on this journey without the help and support of each one of you, and for that, I am forever grateful. Sincerely, Valli Pendyala.

Chair DuBois-Walton returned the agenda to item II, Public Participation with the End-of-Year Presentation by the State Student Advisory Council on Education.

State Student Advisory Council on Education (SSACE) End-of-Year Presentation

The SSACE students presented their topics with a PowerPoint that outlined their two segments of research, survey, and policy recommendations. A copy of the presentation is in the official file of this meeting.

School Attendance – Improving School Climate and Student Success:

- Melinda Lu – Amity Regional High School
- Rebecca Wahl – Daniel Hand High School
- Tenae Blakwin – New Britain High School
- Alyssa Newson – Norwich Free Academy
- Daniel Maroun – Academy of Science & Innovation High School

Encompassing Engaging Curricula

- Rebecca Markowitz – Rocky Hill High School
- Veronica McKenna – Wethersfield High School
- Christine Velez – Woodland Regional High School
- Tanner Elliott – Torrington High School
- Nicholas Lolis – Wilton High School
- James Roden – Pomperaug Regional High School

The students concluded by thanking the Board members for listening and hoped that the Board would take their recommendations into account.

Chair DuBois-Walton thanked SSACE for their time and presentation. She acknowledged the SSACE advisor Cherese Miller-Odukwe, Director of Student Activities, Connecticut Association of Schools.

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker extended her appreciation of the SSACE presentation and recognition of attendance and social connection.

The Board members engaged the students with follow-up questions on the presentation.

III. Executive Session

The Board did not meet in executive session.

IV. Consideration of Minutes:

A. May 3, 2023, State Board of Education Meeting

Vice Chair Benham moved, Board Member Burr seconded, that the Board adopt the minutes of the May 3, 2023, State Board of Education Meeting.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

Killingly Section 10-4b Impartial Hearing Panel Update

Vice Chair Benham, a member of the Killingly Impartial Hearing Panel provided an update on the pending Killingly hearing.

Legal Director Mike McKeon was invited to the table to give a summary on the status of Killingly.

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker noted that Killingly had become one of the SDE's behavioral health pilots. She invited Division Director John Frassinelli, School Health, Nutrition, and Family Services, to the table. Mr. Frassinelli spoke on Killingly's grant resources and the staffing for behavioral health.

X. Committee Reports

D. Legislation and Policy Development

In the absence of Committee Chair Sieve, Chair DuBois-Walton reported that the committee met this morning for the purpose of reviewing agenda item VII.G., CT Guidelines for Educator and Leader Evaluation and Support 2023. She highlighted that Dr. Tucker and Ms. Fuller presented and laid out the processes, stakeholder involvement, and the addressing of shortcomings of the existing system. She concluded that the report was highly recommended from committee to the Board, and noted the support provided from Public Participation.

V. Report of the Commissioner and Agency Update

The Commissioner referenced her written report and highlighted the following:

- Welcomed Deputy Commissioner Sinthia Sone-Moyano
- Since mid-April we have had ten (10) new staff hires
- Visit to Anna E. Norris School, East Hartford joined with Lt. Governor Bysiewicz to launch a second annual PreK-12 School Staff Appreciation Digital Backpack promotions and discounts as a thank you to all school staff across the state
- Press conference addressing educator shortage
- Presented at NGA/ECS - Governor's Education Policy Advisors K-12 Summit
- Provided testimony at the U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee Hearing: "Why Are So Many American Youth in a Mental Health Crisis? Exploring Causes and Solutions"
- 2016 Comprehensive Plan – Equity and Excellence for All – ensuring that their nonacademic needs are met
- Legislative Session ended on June 7, 2023

ESSER Investment Updates

Commissioner Russell-Tucker provided an ESSER investment update that recapped ESSER I, ESSER II, ARP ESSER, the district allocation of funds by priority, and the drawdown levels.

[Chair DuBois-Walton left the meeting at approximately 10:46 a.m.]

Teacher Shortage: Statewide Initiatives

Dr. Shuana Tucker, Chief Talent Officer presented on the CSDE's partnership with the DOL to create a registered Connecticut Teacher Apprenticeship program that provides two

pathways to teachers with (i) Connecticut Teacher Residency, and (ii) NextGen Educators. Chief Tucker further highlighted the Ed Rising mini-grants for the statewide grow your own.

The Commissioner highlighted the following Shoutouts!

Shoutouts!

- 2023 Connecticut U.S. Presidential Scholars - Ambika Grover, Greenwich High School and Lukas Koutsoukos, Wilton High School
- Governor Lamont declared May 10, 2023, as "School Nurse Day!"
- CSDE and RISE Network co-hosted a FAFSA Challenge meeting with participating districts
- Commissioner Russell-Tucker received CT Black and Puerto Rican Caucus (BPRC) Achievement Award at their annual event
- Meeting with the CT Advisory Council for Teacher Professional Standards (CACTPS) on new initiatives on teacher workforce development certification recruitment & the Educators Rising program
- Participation on a panel at the National Governors Association & Education Commission of the States: Governors' Education Policy Advisors K-12 Education Summit regarding Academic Supports, Science of Reading & Summer Enrichment
- Provided testimony in front of the United States Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) committee
- Lt. Governor's Coding Challenge Award Ceremony
- CAS Challenge to Educational Citizenship Award Program

VII. Items Requiring Action

A. Biennial Organizational Meeting

2. Adoption of 2024 Meeting Schedule

Vice Chair Benham asked for a motion for agenda item VII.A.2. Board Member Harris moved, Board Member Burr seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 1-225 of the Connecticut General Statutes, approves the 2024 schedule of regular meeting dates, as follows:

January 3, 2024,
February 14, 2024
March 6, 2024
April 3, 2024
May 1, 2024
June 5, 2024
July 10, 2024 (Tentative)
August 7, 2024 (Retreat)
September 4, 2024
October 9, 2024
November 6, 2024
December 4, 2024

and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

VII. Items Requiring Action

A. Biennial Organizational Meeting

3. Approval of State Board of Education 2023 Committee Appointments

Vice Chair Benham asked for a motion for agenda item VII.A.3. She noted that Patricia Keavney-Maruca was assigned to the Finance, Audit, and Budget Committee. Board Member Clemons moved with an edit request, Board Member Taylor seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Article II, Section 4, of its Bylaws, approves the following assignments to the State Board of Education standing committees:

Academic Standards and Assessment Committee

Erik M. Clemons, Chair
Erin D. Benham
Martha Paluch Prou
Awilda Reasco
Allan B. Taylor
Kelli-Marie Vallieres

Accountability and Support Committee

Erin D. Benham, Chair
Karen DuBois-Walton
Elwood Exley, Jr.
Donald F. Harris, Jr.
Malia K. Sieve

Finance, Audit, and Budget Committee

Donald F. Harris, Jr., Chair
Bonnie E. Burr
Patricia M. Keavney-Maruca
Allan B. Taylor

Legislation and Policy Development Committee

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

and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

Vice Chair Benham discussed/noted the need for an off-site evening meeting designation on the schedule.

C. Recognition of Connecticut Association for Adult and Continuing Education Student Award Winners

Chief Academic Officer Irene Parisi presented to the Board and read the names of the recipients aloud into the record of the minutes.

Vice Chair Benham asked for a motion for agenda item VII.C. Board Member Taylor moved, Board Member Burr seconded the motion as follows:

Whereas, adult education exemplifies the concept of lifelong learning with nearly ten thousand Connecticut residents in adult basic education/secondary school completion programs and nearly twelve thousand Connecticut residents in English as a Second Language (ESL) and United States citizenship preparation programs; and

Whereas, the Connecticut Association for Adult and Continuing Education (CAACE), through its CAACE Student Award, recognized five individuals who have overcome numerous obstacles and hardships to persist and succeed in adult education; and

Whereas, these individuals exemplify the spirit and determination necessary to achieve a goal and serve as role models to all adult and young learners in our communities; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the State Board of Education recognizes the following individuals for their accomplishments in this major adult education endeavor:

Marina Carvalhais	Bridgeport Adult Education
Ellen Tadese	Manchester Adult and Continuing Education
Nicole Taylor	Norwich Regional Adult Education
Diannek Miranda	Wallingford Adult Education
Brandon Zaniewski	Naugatuck Adult and Continuing Education

and directs the Commissioner of Education to take the necessary action.

VOTE ON

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

Absent: DuBois-Walton, Prou, Reasco, Sieve

Motion carried unanimously.

D. Recognition of GED Scholar Award Winner

Chief Academic Officer Irene Parisi presented to the Board.

Vice Chair Benham asked for a motion for agenda item VII.D. Board Member Clemons moved, and Board Member Burr seconded, the motion as follows:

Whereas, Octavia Gelfman, of Ridgefield, has demonstrated exceptional skill and proficiency in the four subject areas of the high school equivalency examination by attaining a total score of 769 on the GED® tests in 2022; and

Whereas, she is the Connecticut resident with the highest total score on the GED® tests; and

Whereas, she has brought honor to herself, to the State Board of Education and the State of Connecticut; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the State Board of Education honors Octavia Gelfman with great appreciation for her accomplishments in a major adult education endeavor and directs the Commissioner of Education to take the necessary action.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

E. Approval of Commissioner's Network Turnaround Plan: Barnum School, Bridgeport

Vice Chair Benham asked for a motion for agenda item VII.E. Board Member Exley moved, and Board Member Burr seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes, adopts and approves the Turnaround Plan for Barnum School in Bridgeport for the Commissioner's Network, subject to the conditions noted in the Commissioner of Education's June 14, 2023, Executive Summary to the State Board of Education, and directs the Commissioner of Education to take the necessary action, including, but not limited to, expending such funds as may be necessary to execute and implement the foregoing.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

F. Consideration of Norwich Free Academy Petition for a Declaratory Ruling

Legal Director Mike McKeon and Staff Attorney Louis Todisco provided an analysis of the Department's recommendation in presenting to the Board.

Vice Chair Benham asked for a motion for agenda item VII.F. Board Member Burr moved, and Board Member Harris seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 4-176 of the Connecticut General Statutes and Sections 10-4-21 and 22 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, declines to issue declaratory rulings concerning the application of Connecticut General Statutes Sections 10-33 and 10-34 as requested by Norwich Free Academy in its Petition for Declaratory Ruling filed on April 17, 2023, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Board Member Taylor raised the question concerning school for these students for 2023-24 school year.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

G. Connecticut Guidelines for Educator and Leader Evaluation and Support 2023

Chief Talent Officer Shuana Tucker and Education Consultant Sharon Fuller, Talent Office, presented to the Board. They identified the stakeholder organizations of the EES 2022 to include: AACTE-CT, AFT-CT, CABE, CAPSS, CAS, CEA, CASA, CFSA, Minority Teacher, Recruitment (MTR) Policy Oversight Council, and the RESC Alliance.

Chief Tucker acknowledged Ms. Fuller for leading the effort for educator evaluation, together with liaison Erin Benham, State Board of Education.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

IX. Financial Matters

There was no financial report.

X. Consent Agenda

Vice Chair Benham asked if there was anyone wishing to remove an item from Consent. Board Member Taylor clarified that he was not removing an item, but had a question on the chronic

absenteeism rate for the two New Britain schools. Chief Academic Officer Irene Parisi was invited to the table to provide a response together with Superintendent Dr. Anthony Gasper.

Vice Chair Benham asked for a motion on the Consent agenda. Board Member Harris moved, Board Member Taylor seconded, that the Board approve the following Consent agenda items: IX.A., Approval of Commissioner's Network Extension for Pulaski Middle School, New Britain; IX.B., Approval of Commissioner's Network Extension for Slade Middle School, New Britain; IX.C., Approval of Commissioner's Network Extension for Smalley Elementary School, New Britain; IX.D., Approval of Commissioner's Network Extension for Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School, Bridgeport; IX.E., Approval of Proposed Contract for Whole School Management Services Between Achievement First Bridgeport Academy, Inc. and Achievement First, Inc.; IX.F., Approval of Proposed Contract for Whole School Management Services Between Achievement First Hartford Academy, Inc. and Achievement First, Inc.; IX.G., Approval of Proposed Contract for Whole School Management Services Between Amistad Academy, Inc. and Achievement First, Inc.; and IX.H., Approval of Proposed Contract for Whole School Management Services Between Elm City College Preparatory, Inc. and Achievement First, Inc.

A. Approval of Commissioner's Network Extension for Pulaski Middle School, New Britain

Resolved, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes, approves the continued participation of Pulaski Middle School, New Britain, in the Commissioner's Network for an additional year commencing July 1, 2023, 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.

B. Approval of Commissioner's Network Extension for Slade Middle School, New Britain

Resolved, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes, approves the continued participation of Slade Middle School, New Britain, in the Commissioner's Network for an additional year commencing July 1, 2023, 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 Smalley Elementary School, New Britain

Resolved, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes, approves the continued participation of Smalley Elementary School, New Britain, in the Commissioner's Network for an additional year commencing July 1, 2023, 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 Theodore Roosevelt Elementary 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, 2023, 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. Approval of Proposed Contract for Whole School Management Services Between Achievement First Bridgeport Academy, Inc. and Achievement First, Inc.

Resolved, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-66tt of the Connecticut General Statutes, approves the contract for whole school management services between Achievement First Bridgeport Academy, Inc. and Achievement First, Inc. and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

F. Approval of Proposed Contract for Whole School Management Services Between Achievement First Hartford Academy, Inc. and Achievement First, Inc.

Resolved, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-66tt of the Connecticut General Statutes, approves the contract for whole school management services between Achievement First Hartford Academy, Inc. and Achievement First, Inc. and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

G. Approval of Proposed Contract for Whole School Management Services Between Amistad Academy, Inc. and Achievement First, Inc.

Resolved, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-66tt of the Connecticut General Statutes, approves the contract for whole school management services between Amistad Academy, Inc. and Achievement First, Inc. and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

H. Approval of Proposed Contract for Whole School Management Services Between Elm City College Preparatory, Inc. and Achievement First, Inc.

Resolved, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-66tt of the Connecticut General Statutes, approves the contract for whole school management services between Elm City College Preparatory, Inc. and Achievement First, Inc. and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

X. Committee Reports

A. Academic Standards and Assessment

Chair Clemons reported that the committee met on May 15, 2023.

B. Accountability and Support

Committee Chair Benham reported that the committee met on June 5, 2023, and will next meet in September.

C. Finance, Audit, and Budget

Committee Chair Harris reported that interviews were conducted for the position of Director of Internal Audit, and an offer made and being considered.

E. Connecticut Technical Education and Career System Board

Chairperson Patricia Keavney-Maruca reported it was graduation season for CTECS. She spoke on the high percentile graduation and attendance rates.

F. NASBE

Board Member Exley reported on the NASBE Priorities.

G. SERC

Vice Chair Benham referenced the SERC report placed in the Supplemental Folders. She highlighted the possibility of SERC location hosting the August Retreat.

XI. Items for Discussion

Board Member Exley raised the question on nonbinary recognition on official documents within school districts. Discussion ensued.

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

Vice Chair Benham adjourned the meeting at 11:51 a.m.

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