

Connecticut State Board of Education Hartford

State Board of Education Meeting November 1, 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, November 1, 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/MZqmfOmlNiQ>.

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Karen DuBois-Walton called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Present: Karen DuBois-Walton, Chairperson
Erin D. Benham, Vice Chairperson
Bonnie E. Burr
Connor Cowan, Student Member
Elwood Exley, Jr.
Donald F. Harris, Jr.
Yasmeen Galal, Student Member
Patricia M. Keavney-Maruca, Ex Officio
Malia K. Sieve
Allan B. Taylor

Absent: Erik M. Clemons
Dr. Rai Kathuria (designee for Terrence Cheng, Ex Officio)
Martha Prou
Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Ex Officio

II. Public Participation

1. Christine Rebstock, executive director of media and communication for LGBTMS Middletown, read excerpts from a book and spoke on the age inappropriateness of this book and other books found in schools and public libraries.

IV. Consideration of Minutes:

A. October 4, 2023, State Board of Education Meeting

Vice Chair Benham moved, Board Member Burr seconded, that the Board adopt the minutes of the October 4, 2023, State Board of Education Meeting.

Board Member Taylor requested editing on page 3, under V. Report of the Chair. The editing was accepted and incorporated into the minutes.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

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

V. Report of the Chair

Chair DuBois-Walton highlighted the following:

- Congratulated Vice Chair Erin Benham for being nominated at the NASBE Annual Convention to succeed Board Member Woody Exley as the Northeastern Area Director on the NASBE Board of Directors.
- Thanked Board Member Exley for his service to NASBE.
- Indicated that the Commissioner will present the 2022-23 Next Generation Accountability System report.
- Encouraged fellow Board members to attend the Connecticut Teacher of the Year Awards Ceremony being held on Wednesday, November 15, 2023, at the Bushnell Auditorium.

The agenda was brought to XI., Items for Discussion: 2024 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year and Semifinalists Recognition.

XI. Items for Discussion

A. 2024 Ann Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year and Semi-Finalists Recognition

Chair DuBois-Walton individually called the name of each paraeducator and read aloud their bios into the minutes of the meeting.

- **Coventry – Julie Klimkiewicz:** Hale Early Education Center
 - Principal: Lois Hasty, Ph.D.
 - Superintendent: David J. Petrone, Ed.D.

Julie is an early childhood paraeducator who takes pride in being a part of the front lines of education. She assists the head teacher with planning and preparing lessons, provides daily

small group and one-to-one instruction to students with disabilities, supports students with self-care needs, and assists with students' behavioral management plans. In the preschool setting, she is a critical part of the assessment process. She works closely with the classroom teacher to collect data and monitor student progress. Julie's dedication to her school and students was highlighted when she was given the opportunity to become the long-term substitute in a preschool class. She was able to utilize all the skills and knowledge from her work as a paraeducator to help every student in her class growing significantly in all areas of mathematics, English language arts, and social emotional skills. Julie believes in the importance of relationships and that one positive interaction can change the trajectory of a student's life.

○ **LEARN – James 'Randy' Daher:** Ocean Avenue LEARNing Academy

- Principal: Carla Strecker
- Executive Director: Katherine Ericson

Randy is not only a paraeducator, but one of LEARN's first job coaches for the LEARN Transition academy. He dedicates his work to making connections with surrounding communities to provide his students with job assignments which promote necessary social skills. Randy transports students to local community worksites and to other extracurricular activities throughout the week. Through modeling and preparing task analysis for his students, he is responsible for collecting data and reporting transitions assessments to the special education team. When in the classroom, he ensures to approach each student's needs based upon their specific programmatic needs which includes math, budgeting, reading, organizing, inventory, writing, computer, personal hygiene, cooking, pre-vocational tasks, and cleaning. From academics to assisting with physical education activities, Randy is actively engaged in balancing students' classroom activities with time in the community. His greatest reward as a paraeducator and job coach is seeing all his students graduate and obtain employment.

○ **Newtown – Amy Santoro:** Hawley Elementary School

- Principal: Christopher Moretti
- Superintendent: Christopher Melillo

As a paraeducator for nearly six years, Amy has worked with students with academic, social-emotional and behavioral needs. She assists classroom teachers with small group instruction where she reinforces instruction. She has worked diligently to provide high levels of support for students with difficulties self-regulating. She recognizes precursor behaviors in order to prevent heightened escalation and offers tools and strategies to students. Amy believes by building positive, caring, and respectful relationships with students, you can have a lasting impact. She insures to celebrate all students' successes whether it's mastering the challenging sight word, doing something kind, or staying calm in a situation that was previously triggering. She is always willing to step up and step in to support every one of her students, but also her colleagues. Amy's goal as a paraeducator is to foster a growth mindset and help students develop skills that will benefit students for life.

○ **Stafford – Ben Trowbridge:** Stafford Middle School

- Principal: Susan Mike
- Superintendent: Steven A. Moccio

Ben is a dedicated paraeducator who provides one-to-one support to students where he teaches adaptive and communication skills. He has taken on leadership roles within his school where he coordinated schedules and facilitates student coverages. Ben takes his role as a paraeducator to the next level. He is highly involved in the school community: developing a school garden, leading learning lab (study hall), long term sub for reading class, assistant girls soccer coach, crisis team member, and homework club. He attends meetings for all grade levels, the school's special education team, and weekly meetings with fellow paraeducators in order to improve educational experiences for his students. His goal each day is to have a positive effect on not just my students but the student body, including staff. Each day as a paraeducator Ben strives to provide an environment where students can learn and achieve more independence because of the positive learning experience he has provided.

○ **Southington – Dawn Dickau:** Joseph DePaolo Middle School

- Principal: Chris Palmieri
- Superintendent: Steve Madancy

Dawn has worked with a student who has been blind since he had eye surgery at the end of second grade. He will be moving on to middle school this year. She is an advocate for seeking out and translating general education materials for this student, as well as educating and assuring teachers that he is a bright student and has interests similar to other boys his age. She ensures that he is a welcome member of the school's learning community. Dawn taught herself to read and write Braille, is working on learning Braille for math, and then wants to learn Braille for music as she has supported her student in participating in the Silver Star Band every week at the high school. She seeks out professional learning opportunities for herself to support this student, and she collaborates often with her student's teachers. She even established a Braille Day in this student's classroom so other students could learn about Braille. Dawn's advocacy for this student continues outside of the school learning community as she was influential in getting a sign put up near the student's home to alert motorists to be cautious. The student's father shared with her that his son loves to play basketball, but he worries about him chasing the basketball into the street. Dawn began her career as a Paraeducator working with students on the autism spectrum.

Commissioner Russell-Tucker congratulated the paraeducators. She voiced that they are an integral part of our educational system.

Chair DuBois-Walton concluded that it is always gratifying to have an opportunity to spotlight our paraeducators for their essential role.

VI. Report of the Commissioner and Agency Update

The Commissioner opened the Agency Update with a report on the release of the state results from the 2022-23 Next Generation Accountability System. She invited Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan to the table to present.

Next Generation Accountability System 2022-23 Results

Chief Gopalakrishnan explained that this report will present a comprehensive report from our Accountability System. Chief Gopalakrishnan provided details on the following presentation topics:

- Core Features of the Next Generation Accountability System
- Statewide Trend of Next Generation Accountability Results
- Bright Spots
- A Closer Look at Postsecondary Readiness
- Challenges that Remain
- A Closer Look at On-Track Graduation
- EdSight Secure Supports Local Decision-Making
- A Closer Look at Postsecondary Outcomes
- State Initiatives to Strengthen Postsecondary Success
- CSDE's Early detection Indication Tool Model
- Schools Identified for State Support
- Other Initiatives to Accelerate Recovery

Board Members engaged in discussion.

Commissioner Russell-Tucker stated that the Board had a copy of the presentation and her written report in their Supplemental Folders. She concluded by highlighting Shoutouts.

SHOUTOUTS:

- 2024 Ann Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year
- 2024 Connecticut Teacher of the Year
- The Milken Educator Awards
 - Alyssa Basso, New Haven K-8 Stem Teacher
 - Ashley Dunne, Southbury K-5 Music Teacher
- CSDE All-Staff Meeting
 - Thanked Vice Chair Benham for addressing the staff and Central Connecticut State University for hosting
- LEAP Effect Press Conference
- National Summer Learning Association Conference
- Paraeducator Career Fair
- Connecticut Association of School Nurses Conference

XI. Items for Discussion (continued)

B. Dalio Foundation Report: Getting Young People Back on Track

Barbara Dalio, Dalio Education's Founder and co-CEO, co-CEO Andrew Ferguson, and Adhlere Coffy, Senior Portfolio Director, Dalio Philanthropies, presented on the release of a research report

commissioned by Dalio Education titled, Connecticut's Unspoken Crisis: Getting Young People Back on Track. Mrs. Dalio stated that they have been helping off-track and disconnected young people and wanted to shed some light on this population and work with others to find solutions. She thanked Commissioner Russell-Tucker and Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan for the partnership and leadership in the research.

Mr. Coffy shared that they explored both in school and out of school outcomes of young people between the ages of 14 to 26 from 2014 to 2022. Mr. Coffy highlighted the collaboration of sources for obtaining the integrated data analysis for this report.

Mr. Ferguson presented the findings that 119,000 of Connecticut's 14- to 26-year-olds are either at-risk or disconnected. He expressed that every data point is a young person or human life and that their intent is to raise public awareness about young people who have deep potential but need more support.

The Dalio panel and Board members engaged in discussion.

Chair DuBois-Walton announced that due to Vice Chair Benham needing to depart from the meeting, the agenda will allow for her committee reports.

X. Committee Reports

B. Accountability and Support

Committee Chair Benham reported that the committee met on October 19, 2023, and were presented with Achievement First Charter Schools Renewal Corrective Action Updates. She highlighted a school visit to the Waterbury school system and was accompanied by Board Members Elwood Exley and Donald Harris.

G. SERC

Vice Chair Benham referenced the SERC report placed in the Supplemental Folders. She highlighted that at the quarterly SERC meeting, Chief Academic Officer Irene Parisi and staff presented Open Connecticut to the SERC Board.

[Vice Chair Erin Benham left the meeting at approximately 10:49 a.m.]

VII. Items Requiring Action

A. Adoption of Five-Year Comprehensive Plan for Education 2023-28: Every Student Prepared for Learning, Life, and Work Beyond School

Chief Strategic Planning Officer Keith Norton presented to the Board. Mr. Norton acknowledged the facilitator Jonathan Costa, on behalf of the RESC Alliance. He summarized the months-long process that started with the first Retreat held at Phoenix Manufacturing in Enfield and the thoughts, ideas, and aspirations discussed that created the major themes for setting the framework of the Plan.

Board Member Yasmeen Galal shared her appreciation that this Plan mentions AI. Mr. Norton responded that AI had quick growth to being a priority by the second Retreat.

The Commissioner stated that with approval of the Plan, the Department would keep the Board apprised of the status and progress of the Plan's goals and thanked Chief Norton for his work.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

VII. Financial Matters

Chair DuBois-Walton stated that there were no financial matters.

Commissioner Russell-Tucker introduced Roger Persson, Chief of Fiscal and Administrative Services, who will be present at the table for financial questions during the position search process.

X. Committee Reports

A. Academic Standards and Assessment

In the absence of Committee Chair Clemons, no report was presented.

C. Finance, Audit, and Budget

Committee Chair Harris reported that in communication with Interim Director Gloria McCree, they were planning for a December meeting.

D. Legislation and Policy Development

Committee Chair Sieve reported that the committee met this morning and held review and discussion on three topics: (1) CSDE Firearm Safety Guide, (2) Religious Accommodation Guidance, and (3) Bill of Parental Rights. She announced that the committee decided to move the meeting time back to 8:30 a.m.

E. Connecticut Technical Education and Career System Board

Chairperson Patricia Keavney-Maruca reported that Chris Harvey, a student from Ellis Tech is the first Connecticut student to enter a construction apprenticeship program. She remarked that his employment is a result of his work-based learning at CTECS. It marks a milestone for CTECS, the Department of Labor, and for construction employers across the state. Also, she noted the appointment of the CTECS Superintendent to Governor's Workforce Council.

F. NASBE

Board Member Exley started by congratulating Vice Chair Benham on her appointment as Northeastern Area Director. He referenced that he had sent the Board members his written report. Mr. Exley encouraged fellow Board members to get more involved with NASBE. He noted that there will be an opening on the Government Affairs committee.

Chair DuBois-Walton asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting, Board Member Harris moved, Board Member Sieve seconded.

Chair DuBois-Walton adjourned the meeting at 11:12 a.m.

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