

# IV.A.

## Connecticut State Board of Education Hartford

### State Board of Education Meeting

April 3, 2024

(Approved May 1, 2024)

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, April 3, 2024, in Plaza North Meeting Rom 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 April 3rd Meeting](#) .

#### I. Call to Order

Vice Chairperson Erin Benham called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m.

Present: Erin D. Benham, Vice Chairperson  
Donald F. Harris, Jr.  
Yasmeen Galal, Student Member  
Patricia M. Keavney-Maruca, Ex Officio  
Allan B. Taylor  
Seth D. Zimmerman

Absent: Connor Cowan, Student Member  
Dr. Rai Kathuria (designee for Terrence Cheng, Ex Officio)  
Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Ex Officio

#### II. Public Participation

1. Jacob Werblow, Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, Central Connecticut State University, spoke on various topics. A copy of Mr. Bosch's written material is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

#### III. Executive Session

##### A. Personnel Matter (Discussion of Agenda Item VII.A.)

Vice Chair Benham asked for a motion on agenda item, III.A. Board Member Harris moved, and Board Member Taylor, seconded, that the Board move into executive session. At approximately 9:40 a.m., the Board went into executive session. Present in executive session

were Vice Chair Erin D. Benham, Board Members Donald F. Harris, Jr., Patricia M. Keavney-Maruca, Allan B. Taylor, Seth D. Zimmerman, and Yasmeen Galal, student member. Also, present were Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker, Deputy Commissioner Dr. Charles Hewes, candidate Dr. Melissa Jenkins, and Staff Assistant Aldith Dewar.

At approximately 9:56 a.m., the Board reconvened the regular meeting. Vice Chair Benham asked for a motion to exit executive session. Board Member Taylor moved, and Board Member Harris seconded, that the Board exit executive session and reconvene the regular meeting.

Vice Chair Benham moved the agenda to Action Item VII.A.

## **VII. Items Requiring Action**

### **A. Personnel Appointment: Chief Turnaround Officer**

Vice Chair Benham asked for a motion on agenda item VII.A. Board Member Taylor moved, and Board Member Zimmerman seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-2a of the Connecticut General Statutes and its Bylaws, appoints Dr. Melissa Jenkins as Chief Turnaround Officer, effective April 29, 2024, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Deputy Commissioner Dr. Charles Hewes introduced Dr. Melissa Jenkins as the candidate for the appointment of Chief Turnaround Officer.

Dr. Jenkins introduced herself to the Board and spoke on her 32 years of experience.

#### **VOTE ON**

<b>MOTION:</b>	In favor:	Benham, Harris, Taylor, Zimmerman
	Opposed:	0
	Abstained:	0
	Absent:	0

Motion carried unanimously.

Vice Benham moved the agenda to Action Item VII.E.

### **B. Recognition of Paraeducators**

Vice Chair Benham asked for a motion on agenda item VII.E. Board Member Zimmerman moved, and Board Member Taylor seconded, the Recognition of Paraeducators.

Vice Chair Benham read the resolution into the record of the minutes as follows:

#### **To Be Proposed:**

WHEREAS, National Paraprofessional Appreciation Day is celebrated annually on the first Wednesday of April; and

WHEREAS, Paraeducators are instrumental in supporting students in the various aspects of the educational process; and

WHEREAS, Paraeducators collaborate with teachers and related service providers to support the diverse needs of students; and

WHEREAS, Paraeducators take pride in their profession and are dedicated to supporting their students, families, and school communities; and

WHEREAS, Paraeducators welcome opportunities to engage in professional learning to build upon their existing skills and knowledge of best practices pertinent to their specific roles; and

WHEREAS, Paraeducators recognize the importance of their role in maximizing student engagement to ensure students experience positive outcomes; now therefore be it

**Resolved**, That the Connecticut State Board of Education extends its gratitude and appreciation to all Connecticut Paraeducators for their dedication and service to the students and families of the State of Connecticut.

Vice Chair Benham then turned the presentation over to Education Consultant Sharon Fuller, Talent Office. Ms. Fuller introduced three representatives from the paraeducators workforce.

- Dawn Dickau, Connecticut's 2024 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year, and a paraeducator in Southington Public Schools. Ms. Dickau stated that she was honored to represent the State of CT paraeducators on this day of national recognition. Paraeducators take the time to get to know and care about their students, and become the liaison between the students and the teachers in making sure that students get the best education.
- Tricia Santos, co-chair of the CT Advisory Council for School Paraeducators, thanked Commissioner Russell-Tucker for being an advocate for paraeducators, and Bryan Klimkiewicz and his team for working for all paraeducators to be offered the same opportunities across the state. She thanked all paraeducators for being the lifeline for students and ensuring that CT children get the education they desire and are thriving.
- Shellye Davis, co-chair of the CT Advisory Council for School Paraeducators, expressed her gratitude to Commissioner Russell-Tucker on behalf of all the paraeducators she represents and thanked the Commissioner for her partnership and her continued efforts to make a more equitable path going forward.

Commissioner Russell-Tucker thanked the representatives for their work. She stated that she appreciates that fact that we can bring voice to the hard work paraeducators do every day for our students.

VOTE ON

MOTION:	In favor:	Benham, Harris, Taylor, Zimmerman
	Opposed:	0
	Abstained:	0
	Absent:	0

Motion carried unanimously.

Vice Chair Benham brought the agenda to IX., Consent Agenda.

Vice Chair Benham asked if there was a Board member wishing to remove an item from Consent. Seeing none, she 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 Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School, New London; IX.B., Approval of Commissioner's Network Extension for New London High School, New London; IX.C., Approval of Commissioner's Network Extension for Wilby High, School Waterbury; and IX.D., 2024-25 Educator Certification Emergency Endorsements.

**A. Approval of Commissioner's Network Extension for Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School, New London**

**Resolved**, That, pursuant to Section 10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes, the State Board of Education approves the continued participation of Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School, New London, in the Commissioner's Network for an additional year commencing July 1, 2024, 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 New London High School, New London**

**Resolved**, That, pursuant to Section 10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes, the State Board of Education approves the continued participation of New London High School, New London, in the Commissioner's Network for an additional year commencing July 1, 2024, 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 Wilby High, School Waterbury**

**Resolved**, That, pursuant to Section 10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes, the State Board of Education approves the continued participation of Wilby High School, Waterbury, in the Commissioner's Network for an additional year commencing July 1, 2024, 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. 2024-25 Educator Certification Emergency Endorsements**

**Resolved**, That the State Board of Education adopts the recommendation from the Connecticut State Department of Education to extend, for the 2024-25 school year only, implementation of the following temporary certification endorsements, as allowable under Sec. 10-145d-619 of *Regulations Concerning State Educator Certificates, Permits and Authorizations*, Emergency Generalist, PK-8 (#201), Emergency Generalist, 7-12 (#202), and Emergency Teacher of English Language Learners, PK-12 (#204) to allow educators who currently hold and continue to hold during the 2024-25 school year an appropriate provisional or professional teaching certificate to be eligible for Emergency Authorization at the request of the local education agency (LEA)/district, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

VOTE ON

MOTION: In favor: Benham, Harris, Taylor, Zimmerman  
Opposed: 0  
Abstained 0  
Absent: 0

Motions carried unanimously.

**IV. Consideration of Minutes:**

**A. March 6, 2023, State Board of Education Meeting**

Board Member Taylor moved, Board Member Harris seconded, that the Board adopt the minutes of the March 6, 2024, State Board of Education Meeting.

VOTE ON

MOTION: In favor: Benham, Harris, Taylor, Zimmerman  
Opposed: 0  
Abstained 0  
Absent: 0

Motion carried unanimously.

**V. Report of the Chair**

Vice Chair Benham highlighted the following:

- Board Members Connor Cowan, Yasmeen Galal, and Dr. Seth Zimmerman, had their confirmation hearings on March 14, 2024.
- She noted that on April 2, 2024, four (4) additional members had confirmation hearings.
- Provided an update on the fourth Killingly Impartial 10-4b Hearing held on March 26, 2024.
- Confirmed that EES (Educator Evaluation System ) is continuing as a group, as well as looking at the certification in CT.
- Attended the 2024 Alma Exley Scholars Awards program, featuring remarks by U.S. Secretary of Education and 1998 Alma Exley Scholar Dr. Miguel A. Cardona, and that Commissioner Russell-Tucker was honored as the 2024 Diversity Champion.

**VI. Report of the Commissioner and Agency Update**

The Commissioner noted that she would highlight a few items from her written report in the Board's Supplemental Folders that are connected to the Board's Five-year plan priorities.

- Participated in the Interagency Council for Ending the Achievement Gap.
- Convened the School Discipline Collaborative that advises the Commissioner of Education and the Board on strategies to reduce school discipline.
- Noted that March 11-15, 2024, was Civic Learning Week. Engaged in Civics Education Panel discussion with Secretary of State, Stephanie Thomas, and First Kid Governor Elena Tipton.

- Attended CCSSO 2024 Legislative Conference in Washington, DC and participated in a chiefs-only conversation with senior officials from the White House on topics related to chronic absenteeism, literacy, mathematics, high-dosage tutoring, summer learning, pathways to postsecondary education and more.
- Participated in the Student Engagement and Technical Attendance Center's webinar on chronic absence facilitated by the U.S. Department of Education.
- New York Times article, *Why School Absences Have 'Exploded' Almost Everywhere*.

#### Dashboard

The Commissioner invited Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan to the table to present on a newly designed dashboard on Chronic Absenteeism. Chief Gopalakrishnan noted that the attendance data was reporting end-of-year visualized chronic absence. He reported on the new monthly attendance dashboard which has the ability to track and visualize attendance month-by-month. He highlighted that data can be viewed on a district level, school level, and all student groups within each district and school. The dashboard not only shows chronic absenteeism, but also shows the attendance rate, truancy count, and grade level.

The Board engaged with questions and answers.

#### Certification – Connecticut Educator Certification Council (CECC)

Deputy Commissioner Sinthia Sone-Moyano and Education Consultant and Compliance Coordinator Julianne Frost, presented to the Board on the Connecticut Educator Certification Council (CECC), of which Ms. Frost is also a member. They provided an overview of purpose, and outcomes, and recommendations of the Council. The CECC was convened by the Commissioner and comprised of stakeholder representatives from across the board to give a voice to modernizing the certification system in Connecticut while continuing to attract and retain diverse, high-quality educators. Recommendations of the Council were then used to create the currently proposed House Bill 5436. They highlighted that 94 percent of the CECC's recommendations were accepted and supported by CSDE.

#### Connecticut Educator Support Funds Initiative

Charles Kenyon, Special Assistant to the Commissioner reported on the Connecticut Educator Support Fund Initiative that was launched in February to leverage \$4 million in ARP ESSER funds to help prekindergarten through grade 12 public school educators get classroom resources through a partnership with DonorsChoose, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that distributes classroom supplies. He shared that the project was a meaningful way to thank and support teachers and students in classrooms across CT. Mr. Kenyon concluded that the geographic impact of the initiative totaled 4,634 projects from over 150 districts and across 756 schools.

Vice Chair Benham brought the agenda back to VII., Items Requiring Action.

### **VII. Items Requiring Action**

#### **B. Renewal of State Charter: Highville Charter School, New Haven**

Vice Chair Benham asked for a motion on agenda item VII.B. Board Member Taylor moved, and Board Member Harris seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to subsection (g) of Section 10-66bb of the Connecticut General Statutes, renews the charter of

Highville Charter School from July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2027, subject to the conditions and recommendations set forth in the Commissioner's April 3, 2024, memorandum to the State Board of Education, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Deputy Commissioner Dr. Charles Hewes, Chief Academic Officer Irene Parisi, Program Manager Robert Kelly, with school representatives Che Dawson, Executive Director and Principal, Ebony West, Director of Business Operations, Claire Smith, Dean of Upper School, and Margarita Castillo, Dean of Early Childhood, presented to the Board.

Board Member Taylor asked a clarification question on the chronic absenteeism rate.

VOTE ON

MOTION:	In favor:	Benham, Harris, Taylor, Zimmerman
	Opposed:	0
	Abstained:	0
	Absent:	0

Motion carried unanimously.

**C. Renewal of State Charter: Jumoke Academy, Hartford**

Vice Chair Benham asked for a motion on agenda item VII.C. Board Member Taylor moved, and Board Member Harris seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to subsection (g) of Section 10-66bb of the Connecticut General Statutes, renews the charter of Jumoke Academy from July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2027, subject to the conditions and recommendations set forth in the Commissioner's April 3, 2024, memorandum to the State Board of Education, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Deputy Commissioner Dr. Charles Hewes, Chief Academic Officer Irene Parisi, Program Manager Robert Kelly, with school representatives Dr. Troy Monroe, Executive Director, Dr. Marie Gordon-Hall, Chief Academic Officer, and Mr. Arnel Hines, Chief Financial Officer, presented to the Board.

Board Member Harris commented on presiding over Jumoke Academy's public hearing, and applauded their work and encouraged the school to keep working on their current path.

VOTE ON

MOTION:	In favor:	Benham, Harris, Taylor, Zimmerman
	Opposed:	0
	Abstained:	0
	Absent:	0

Motion carried unanimously.

**D. Greenwich Racial Imbalance Update**

Vice Chair Benham asked for a motion on agenda item VII.D. Board Member Harris moved, and Board Member Zimmerman seconded, the resolution as follows:

**Whereas**, the Greenwich Board of Education ("Greenwich Board") submitted a plan to address the racial imbalance at New Lebanon and Hamilton Avenue Schools that created partial magnet programs at each school; and

**Whereas**, after the implementation of such magnet programs and the expansion of New Lebanon School to accommodate more magnet students, both schools continue to be racially imbalanced; and

**Whereas**, Julian Curtiss, Old Greenwich, North Street, and Parkway Schools have impending imbalances; and

**Whereas**, the Greenwich Board of Education has indicated that it will not pursue additional remedies to address the racial imbalance; and

**Whereas**, Section 10-226a(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) and Section 10-226e-5(a) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies (Regulations) requires a board of education to develop and implement a plan to address racial imbalance; and

**Whereas**, the Greenwich Board no longer has a plan in place that is reasonably calculated to reduce the racial imbalance at New Lebanon and Hamilton Avenue Schools; now, therefore, be it

**Resolved:** that in accordance with Section 10-226d of the C.G.S. and Section 10-226e-7(b) of the Regulations, the Connecticut State Board of Education hereby requires the Greenwich Board to submit an amendment to its Racial Balance Plan within 120 days of this day and no later than July 3, 2024.

Legal Director Mike McKeon and CSDE Attorney Laura Anastasio, with representatives from the Greenwich Board of Education and Greenwich Public Schools were in attendance to present to the Board.

Legal Director McKeon shared that Greenwich met with the Legislation and Policy Development Committee (LPDC) on January 3, 2024, and the LPDC invited Greenwich back to meet with the full Board. Attorney Laura Anastasio provided a brief history on the two currently racially imbalanced schools in Greenwich.

Superintendent Dr. Toni Jones, Chair Karen Kowalski, Vice Chair Karen Hirsch, Diane Fox, Principal of Hamilton Avenue Elementary School, and Dr. Dan Russo, Principal of New Lebanon Elementary School presented its strategies to the Board to address the Proposed Racial Imbalance Plan Update.

Vice Chair Benham thanked Greenwich for the Strategic Plan presentation and indicated that the purpose of this meeting was to talk about their Racial Imbalance Plan and to vote on a 120-Day Plan being submitted by Greenwich to the SBE.

The Board engaged Greenwich with questions and answers.



VOTE ON

MOTION:     In favor:     Benham, Harris, Taylor, Zimmerman  
                   Opposed:     0  
                   Abstained    0  
                   Absent:       0

Motion carried unanimously.

**F. State Board of Education Appointment to the Connecticut Advisory Council for Administrator Professional Standards**

Vice Chair Benham asked for a motion on agenda item VII.F. Board Member Taylor moved, and Board Member Zimmerman seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to subsection (b) of Section 10-144e of the Connecticut General Statutes, appoints the following individual to serve on the Connecticut Advisory Council for Administrator Professional Standards for a two-year term effective from September 1, 2024, and ending August 31, 2026, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Name	Affiliation	Representation	Term Ending
Christopher E. Trombly, Ph.D.	Southern Connecticut State University	Administrator Preparation Program	August 31, 2026

Education Consultant Sharon Fuller, Talent Office, shared with the Board that by statute, the State Board of Education is required to appoint two members to the Connecticut Advisory Council for Administrator Professional Standards and with the support of Chief Talent Officer Dr. Shuana Tucker and Deputy Commissioner Sinthia Sone-Moyano, she presented the nomination of Christopher E. Trombly, Ph.D. for the appointment.

VOTE ON

MOTION:     In favor:     Benham, Harris, Taylor, Zimmerman  
                   Opposed:     0  
                   Abstained    0  
                   Absent:       0

Motion carried unanimously.

**VIII. Financial Matters**

There were no matters to report.

**X. Committee Reports**

**A. Academic Standards and Assessment**

The committee did not meet.

**B. Accountability and Support**

Committee Chair Benham reported that the committee met on March 20, 2024.

**C. Finance, Audit, and Budget**

Committee Chair Harris reported that the next quarterly meeting will be held on June 4, 2024.

**D. Legislation and Policy Development**

The committee did not meet.

**E. Connecticut Technical Education and Career System Board**

Chairperson Patricia Keavney-Maruca reported that over 850 CTECS students participated in the annual CT Skills USA held on March 22, 2024, and 75 of those qualified will compete in the National Conference in Atlanta this summer. On April 5, 2024, interviews will be held for the eight qualifying candidates for superintendent.

**F. NASBE**

Vice Chair Benham reported on NASBE is restarting their Whole Child Study program.

**G. SERC**

Vice Chair Benham referenced her written report and highlighted SERC's 2024 Dismantling Systemic Racism Conference on May 6, 2024.

**XI. Items for Discussion**

There were no Discussion items on the agenda.

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

Vice Chair Benham adjourned the meeting at 12:13 p.m.

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_

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