

Connecticut State Board of Education Hartford

State Board of Education Meeting

November 6, 2024

Draft

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State and posted on the agency's website, the members of the State Board of Education (hereinafter "Board") held a meeting on Wednesday, November 6, 2024, 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://ct-n.com/ondemand.asp?id=23744>.

I. Call to Order

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

Present: Erin D. Benham, Vice Chairperson
Sreenidi Bala, Student Member
Bonnie E. Burr
Donald F. Harris, Jr.
Sophia Messina, Student Member
Kristen A. Record
Allan B. Taylor
Seth D. Zimmerman

Absent: Terrence Cheng, Ex Officio
Erik M. Clemons
Juan C. Salazar
Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Ex Officio

II. Public Participation

1. State Representative Susan Johnson of the 49th District and member of the legislature's Education Committee, spoke in support of agenda item, VII.C., Approval of Certification for Frances McGrath #062 School Library Media.
2. Frances McGrath, of Willimantic, spoke in support of agenda item VII.C., Approval of Certification for Frances McGrath #062 School Library Media.
3. Barbara McGrath of Windham, spoke in support of agenda item VII.C., Approval of Certification for Frances McGrath #062 School Library Media.
4. Hezekiah Israel, of Indiana, spoke on the need to reintroduce the discussion of God into our schools.

5. Elizabeth Sked, Education Issues Specialist, CEA, spoke against and requested the tabling of agenda item VII.C., Approval of Certification for Frances McGrath #062 School Library Media.
6. Tom Stringfellow, resident of Manchester, spoke on various topics.

III. Executive Session

There was no executive session held.

IV. Consideration of Minutes:

A. October 9, 2024, State Board of Education Meeting

Board Member Zimmerman moved, Board Member Burr seconded, that the Board adopt the minutes of the October 9, 2024, State Board of Education Meeting.

VOTE ON

MOTION:	In favor:	Benham, Burr, Harris, Record, Taylor, Zimmerman
	Opposed:	0
	Abstained	0
	Absent:	Clemons, Salazar

Motion carried unanimously.

Vice Chair Benham asked the Board to take the agenda out of order to item VII.C., Approval of Certification for Frances McGrath #062 School Library Media.

VII. Items Requiring Action

C. Approval of Certification for Francis McGrath #062 School Library Media

Vice Chair Benham asked for a motion on agenda item VII.C. Board Member Harris moved, and Board Member Burr seconded, that the State Board of Education determines that Frances McGrath presents a combination of education and experience that is the equivalent of the education and experience required under Public Act 24-41, Section 6, and that pursuant to Section 6 waives the requirements thereunder and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action to issue an Initial Educator Certificate endorsed for School Library Media Specialist (#062).

Deputy Commissioner Sinthia Sone-Moyano and Chief Talent Officer Dr. Shuana Tucker, presented to the Board. Dr. Tucker provided an overview on the required regulations for #062, and the education and experience for the recommendation and waiver request.

Board members engaged in discussion.

VOTE ON

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

Absent: Clemons, Salazar

Motion carried.

V. Report of the Chair

Vice Chair Benham highlighted the following:

- Attended the High-dosage tutoring (HDT) program site visit at East Hartford Middle School with the Commissioner and Board Member Donald Harris.
- Attended the Press Conference to announce the 2025 CT Teacher of the Year in New Haven.
- Attendance at the Teacher of the Year Ceremony at the Bushnell.
- Attended the Annual Increasing Educator Diversity Symposium at Quinnipiac University
- Attended an Office of Early Childhood event – Shaping Tomorrow: A Conversation with Early Childhood Leaders.
- Reminder that Board Member Taylor will be honored at the CABA/CAPSS Convention.
- Acknowledged Board Members Kristen Record, Donald Harris, and Bonnie Burr for volunteering to preside over charter school renewal public hearings.
- Attended the Governor’s announcement of “Sreenidi Bala Day in Connecticut” at Farmington High School.

Sreenidi Bala

Student Member Sreenidi Bala described the event in Washington, DC that initiated “Sreenidi Bala Day in Connecticut.” Sree opened by sharing a picture with herself standing with First Lady Jill Biden at the White House.

First Lady Jill Biden, in partnership with the White House Gender Policy Council, celebrates the International Day of the Girl, to recognize outstanding young women from across the United States who are making a difference in their communities. The First Lady honored ten young women ages 14 to 18 who are leading change and shaping a brighter future in their communities across United States. Sreenidi highlighted having to introduce a fellow honoree, conversations with the press secretary, and a surprise visit by President Biden. Sreenidi thanked Vice Chair Benham and Commissioner Russell-Tucker for taking time to be at her school for the surprise announcement by the Governor.

V. Report of the Commissioner and Agency Update

The Commissioner welcomed everyone to the meeting. She followed up on Sreenidi Bala’s presentation to share the video of the Governor surprising Sree with a proclamation at Farmington High School.

Supporting Your Child’s Health and Well-being During the School Year

The Commissioner provided welcome remarks on an initial Virtual House Call Webinar. Division Director John Frassinelli, Division of School Health, Nutrition, and Family Services spoke about the three-part webinar series for parents, families, and caregivers. He highlighted the upcoming webinar, Protecting Our Youth: A Community Approach to Suicide Prevention.

Commissioner Russell-Tucker highlighted events as follows:

- Provided welcoming remarks at the Annual Increasing Educator Diversity Symposium at Quinnipiac University.
- Attended the summit hosted by the Office of Early Childhood: Shaping Tomorrow: A Conversation with Early Childhood Leaders.
- Announced the launch of the Regional School Choice Office's redesigned website and invited Division Director for School Choice Robin Cecere to the table.

Regional School Choice Office (RSCO)

Director Cecere provided an overview on the history of the establishment of RSCO, the role of the office, and the services provided to families. She highlighted the new website for the Application and Placement Process for the 2025-2026 school year and noted that the website is being translated into Spanish.

Commissioner Russell-Tucker continued to highlight events as follows:

- Attended the High-dosage tutoring (HDT) program at East Hartford Middle School with Chief Academic Officer Irene Parisi, Director of Special Projects John Scianimanco, Education Consultant Jennifer Michalak, SBE Vice Chair Benham and Board Member Donald Harris.
- The Office of Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities launched its Dyslexia Awareness Campaign to promote awareness and understanding of dyslexia.
- Gave welcome remarks at the Career & Technical Education (CTE) State Summit: Modernize to Elevate CTE at Central Connecticut State University.
- Gave welcome remarks at the Performance Matters Forum. She noted that Deputy Commissioner Dr. Charles Hewes revamped this year's program and requested that he make remarks.

Performance Matters Forum 2024

Deputy Commissioner Dr. Charles Hewes shared that the forum had originated out of the Performance Office as a conference by educators for educators. He highlighted that there were over 450 registrants with 21 different sessions offered.

Commissioner Russell-Tucker continued to highlight events as follows:

- Attended a press event announcing Julia Miller of New Haven as Connecticut's 2025 Teacher of the Year.
- Celebrated the 2025 Ann Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year recipient, Keysha Evans, alongside Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz.
- Joined Secretary of the State Stephanie Thomas and Executive Director of the CT Democracy Center Sally Whipple for the 2024-2025 kick-off of the Red, White, and Blue Schools program.
- Commissioner Russell-Tucker announced that Board Member Allan Taylor would be receiving the "Friend of Education" award at the CABE/CAPPS Convention.

Next Generation Accountability System Results 2023-24

Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan presented to the Board. He explained that the features of the Next Generation Accountability System Results go beyond test scores, attendance, and graduation rates for provide a more holistic picture of a school or district. He reviewed the statewide results.

The Board members engaged in discussion.

Update on Hartford Public Schools Fiscal Operations

The Commissioner referenced her commitment to keep the Board updated on its authorized action at the June 5, 2024, meeting concerning Hartford Public Schools Financial Management and summarized the three-prong approach: (i) Magnet School Assessment: Optimizing Funds Utilization; (ii) Special Education Services Assessment and Enhancement; and (iii) Improvement of Financial Systems. She invited Chief Strategic Planning Officer Keith Norton, Deputy Commissioner Dr. Charles Hewes, Special Education Division Director Bryan Klimkiewicz, and Director of Internal Audit Monique Coates to present to the Board.

The Board members engaged discussion.

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

VII. Items Requiring Action

A. Connecticut Advisory Council for Teacher Professional Standards (CACTPS) Annual Report 2023-2024

Vice Chair Benham asked for a motion on agenda item VII.A. Board Member Burr moved, and Board Member Harris seconded, that the State Board of Education receives the Connecticut Advisory Council for Teacher Professional Standards Annual Report 2023-2024, developed by the Council and submitted in accordance with the requirements of subsection (e) of Section 10-144d of the Connecticut General Statutes, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Chief Talent Officer Dr. Shuana Tucker and Education Consultant Sharon Fuller presented to the Board.

VOTE ON

MOTION:	In favor:	Benham, Burr, Harris, Record, Taylor, Zimmerman
	Opposed:	0
	Abstained:	0
	Absent:	Clemons, Salazar

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Connecticut Advisory Council for Administrator Professional Standards (CACAPS) Annual Report 2023-2024

Vice Chair Benham asked for a motion on agenda item VII.B. Board Member Burr moved, and Board Member Harris seconded, that the State Board of Education receives the Connecticut Advisory Council for Administrator Professional Standards Annual Report 2023-2024, developed by the Council and submitted in accordance with the requirements of subsection (e) of Section 10-144e of the Connecticut General Statutes, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Chief Talent Officer Dr. Shuana Tucker and Education Consultant Sharon Fuller presented to the Board.

VOTE ON

MOTION: In favor: Benham, Burr, Harris, Record, Taylor, Zimmerman
 Opposed: 0
 Abstained 0
 Absent: Clemons, Salazar

Motion carried unanimously.

D. Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS) Section 10-4b Complaint

Vice Chair Benham asked for a motion on agenda item VII.D. Board Member Taylor moved, and Board Member Zimmerman seconded, that in accordance with Section 10-4b of the Connecticut General Statutes, as well as Section 10-4b-3(a)(2) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, the State Board of Education ["SBE"] hereby finds that there is reasonable cause to initiate a complaint against the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System ["CTECS"], and in accordance with such finding, and pursuant to Section 10-4b-6(b) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, the SBE directs that the Connecticut State Department of Education conduct an investigation into whether CTECS has failed or is unable to make reasonable provisions to implement the educational interests of the State of Connecticut, and following the conclusion of such investigation submit to the SBE a report setting forth the results of that investigation in accordance with Section 10-4b-7 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies.

Legal Director Mike McKeon presented to the Board an overview of education statutes and a chronological delineation of CTECS' actions that led up to the request for 10-4b complaint investigation.

The Board members engaged in discussion.

VOTE ON

MOTION: In favor: Benham, Burr, Harris, Record, Taylor, Zimmerman
 Opposed: 0
 Abstained 0
 Absent: Clemons, Salazar

Motion carried unanimously.

VIII. Financial Matters

There were no financial matters presented.

IX. Consent

There were no Consent items on the agenda.

X. Committee Reports

A. Academic Standards and Assessment

Vice Chair Benham reported that the committee will be meeting on November 19, 2024.

B. Accountability and Support

Committee Chair Benham reported that the committee will be meeting on November 14, 2024.

C. Finance, Audit, and Budget

Committee Chair Harris reported that the committee will be meeting on December 3, 2024.

D. Legislation and Policy Development

Committee Chair Burr reported that the committee would be meeting after the Board meeting at 1:00 p.m.

E. Connecticut Technical Education and Career System Board

Vice Chair Benham reported that the Governor has appointed Dr. Christine Benz as the Chairperson for CTECS.

F. NASBE

Vice Chair Benham reported that she, along with Dr. Shuana Tucker and Mary Glassman attended and presented at the NASBE Annual Conference 2024.

G. SERC

Vice Chair Benham referenced her written report. She encouraged the members to look into the supporting families webinars and noted that SERC held its in-person retreat in October.

Vice Chair Benham asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting, Board Member Taylor moved, Board Member Zimmerman seconded, that the meeting be adjourned.

Vice Chair Benham adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m.

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