

Connecticut State Board Of Education Hartford

Minutes Special State Board of Education Meeting

August 21, 2024
(Approved September 4, 2024)

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State and posted on the agency's website, the members of State Board of Education (hereinafter "Board") met on Wednesday, August 21, 2024, at the Wethersfield Historical Society, Keeney Memorial Cultural Center, 200 Main Street, Wethersfield, Connecticut. Public access to the building allowed for public attendance at the meeting.

The meeting can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/pkS0nq9eMhY>

I. Call to Order

Vice Chair Benham called the special meeting to order at 9:14 a.m.

Present: Erin D. Benham, Vice Chairperson
Sreenidi Bala, Student Member (newly appointed)
Bonnie E. Burr (participated via Teams)*
Donald F. Harris, Jr.
Sophia Messina, Student Member (newly appointed)
Kristen A. Record
Juan C. Salazar
Allan B. Taylor*
Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Ex Officio
Seth D. Zimmerman

Absent: Erik M. Clemons
Terrence Cheng, Ex Officio

II. Public Participation

There were no participants for public participation.

III. Items Requiring Action

A. Consideration for Approval of Material Change to Interdistrict School for Arts and Communication (ISAAC), New London

Vice Chair Benham asked for a motion on agenda item III.A. Board Member Harris moved, and Board Member Zimmerman seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-66ss of the Connecticut General Statutes, approves the July 1, 2024, charter amendment proposal of Interdistrict School for Arts and Communication to the extent such proposal seeks a modification of its grade configuration to add Grade 4 in the 2024-25 school year and Grade 5 in the 2025-26 school year and increase its enrollment cap by 52 for a maximum approved enrollment of 328 for the 2024-25 school year, and directs the Commissioner of Education to take the necessary action.

*[Board Member Allan Taylor arrived at approximately 9:19 a.m.]

Deputy Commissioner Charles Hewes, Chief Turnaround Officer Melissa Jenkins, Program Manager Robert Kelly, presented to the Board.

The Board members engaged in questions and answers with the team presenters.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Adoption of the Position Statement and Policy Guidance: Personal Technology Use in Connecticut Schools

Vice Chair Benham asked for a motion on agenda item III.B. Board Member Zimmerman moved, and Board Member Harris seconded, that the State Board of Education, adopts the Position Statement and Policy Guidance: Personal Technology Use in Connecticut Schools, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Vice Chair Benham recognized and introduced the two newly-appointed 2024-25 student Board members Sreenidi Bala and Sophia Messina, and thanked them for their attendance.

Commissioner Russell-Tucker provided an introduction and noted Governor Lamont's recognition of the distractions in the classroom caused by personal technology, specifically, smart phones. She highlighted how Governor Lamont's leadership, vision, and commitment to education has resulted in his direction to the Department of Education to develop the guidance being presented to the Board for adoption.

Deputy Commissioner Sinthia Sone-Moyano, and Division Director John Frassinelli, School Health, Nutrition, and Family Services, provided a detailed presentation to the Board.

The Board members engaged in questions, clarifications, and discussion. The Board members were appreciative to the student members for providing their perspective as students who would be impacted by the cell phone guidance.

*[Board Member Bonnie Burr was scheduled to leave the meeting at approximately 10:00 a.m.]

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

IV. Report of the Commissioner

- Commissioner Russell-Tucker provided an update on Hartford Public Schools. The Commissioner informed the Board that her commitment is to keep them posted as to what is occurring with our work with the Hartford Public Schools. She updated that the Board's authorization to undertake an extensive review of the Hartford Public Schools' fiscal processes is underway with the three areas of focus. She concluded that she would have more details at the September meeting.

V. Report of the Chair

Vice Chair Benham reported on the following:

- SERC. The SBE has two seats designated on the SERC Board. She sits on one seat, and the second seat needs to be filled. Please let her know if there is an interest to sit on the SERC Board.
- Hartford Public Schools. She attended a meeting of concerned caregivers. The meeting discussion was led by Chief Strategic Planning Officer Keith Norton.
- Killingly. Reported that the Killingly 10-4b matter had ended with a resolution.
 - She thanked Board Members, Clemons, Harris, and Taylor for sitting with her on the Killingly Panel.
 - She thanked Assistant Attorney General Darren P. Cunningham, Counsel for the Connecticut State Board of Education and 10-4b Hearing Panel.
- Attended Saint Joseph University's 2024 Distinguished Alumni Awards Ceremony that honored and celebrated Commissioner Russell-Tucker.

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

Vice Chair Benham adjourned the special meeting at 10:41 a.m.

Prepared by: _____

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