Connecticut State Board of Education
Hartford

Accountability and Support Committee

Wednesday, September 16, 2026
450 Columbus Blvd
Plaza North, Hearing Room B
Hartford, Connecticut

Draft Meeting Minutes
(Approved on: _____)

I. Call to Order

Pursuant to the notice filed with the Secretary of the State, Committee Chairperson Erin D. Benham, called the meeting to order at 3:36 p.m.

Committee Members Present:

Donald F. Harris, Jr.
Kristen A. Record
Dr. Seth D. Zimmerman
Erin D. Benham

Committee Members Absent:

CSDE Staff Present:

Dr. Melissa Jenkins
Dr. Charles Hewes
Jennifer Webb
Felicia Canty
Shakira Jacobs-Vazquez
Anika Matin

II. Approval of Minutes

Harris, Jr. moved, and Zimmerman seconded, that the Committee approves the minutes of May 20, 2026, Accountability and Support Committee meeting.

Vote:

In Favor:	Harris, Jr., Zimmerman, Benham, and Record
Abstained:	0
Opposed:	0
Absent:	0

Harris, Jr. moved, and Zimmerman seconded, that the Committee approves the minutes of June 17, 2026, Accountability and Support Committee meeting.

Vote:

In Favor:	Harris, Jr., Zimmerman, Benham, and Record
Abstained:	0
Opposed:	0
Absent:	0

III. Finalization of 2026-27 Accountability and Support Committee Meeting Schedule:

The Committee reviewed and discussed upcoming meeting dates for October, November, December, and the early months of 2027. Adjustments were made to the schedule due to member availability, public hearings, and district reporting timelines. The Committee agreed to reschedule the November 10 meeting to November 17, 2026, pending district confirmation. January 12, 2027, was identified as the preferred meeting date for that month. Additional tentative dates were set through Spring 2027.

IV. Review of Priorities for Alliance District Opportunity, Commissioner's Network School, and School Improvement Grant (SIG)

Jennifer Webb presented an overview of the updated Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) monitoring system, framed through the State Board of Education (SBE) strategic plan and "flight plan" analogy used to describe differentiated monitoring processes. The Committee discussed how state goals align with district and school plans, noting that most Alliance District plans prioritize Tier 1 instruction, literacy, and mathematics, with fewer explicitly funding family engagement initiatives.

Ms. Webb highlighted statewide progress, including 10 of 13 schools exiting identification status, strong outcomes among Commissioner's Network schools, and several state and national recognitions earned by schools in Alliance districts. She also reported that the Commissioner's Network program will sunset in 2028, with several schools requesting fourth or fifth-year extensions.

The Committee discussed differentiated support levels—comprehensive, enhanced, standard, and streamlined—based on district needs, leadership changes, and fiscal or instructional risk factors. Members noted improvements in district transparency, the depth of monitoring conversations, and evidence-based reflection across midyear and end-of-year touchpoints.

CSDE staff described ongoing audits, site visits, and grant oversight activities, including 168 walkthroughs, 58 site visits, and management of more than $600 million across programs. The Committee discussed SIG funding streams, evidence-based interventions, and the rebalancing of investments away from climate incentives toward stronger core instruction and MTSS supports.

V. Review of Charter School Performance Framework

The Committee engaged in an extended discussion with CSDE's charter team regarding renewal criteria, accountability standards, and the use of conditions on renewal decisions. Members raised questions about differentiating between three-year and five-year renewals, the role of chronic absenteeism and certification compliance, and the need for clearer alignment between school action steps and renewal recommendations.

Staff described efforts to improve transparency, strengthen evidence expectations, and support schools in addressing recurring issues. Committee members discussed contextual factors affecting school performance, the balance between accountability and support, and the importance of monitoring board governance in charter schools.

VI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m. Vice Chair Benham moved to adjourn, and Record seconded the motion. The next Accountability and Support Committee meeting will be held on November 17, 2026.

Prepared by: Dr. Melissa Jenkins,
Chief Turnaround Officer