

Connecticut State Board of Education

Hartford

State Board of Education Meeting September 7, 2022 (Approved October 12, 2022)

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, September 7, 2022, 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: [CT-N: State Board of Education September 7th Meeting.](#)

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Karen DuBois-Walton called the meeting to order at 9:38 a.m.

Present: Karen DuBois-Walton, Chairperson
Erin D. Benham, Vice Chairperson
Bonnie E. Burr
Erik M. Clemons
Elwood Exley, Jr.
Donald F. Harris, Jr.
Dr. Rai Kathuria (designee for Terrence Cheng, Ex Officio)
Valli Pendyala, Student Member
Martha Prou
Awilda Reasco
Malia K. Sieve
Allan B. Taylor
Praja Tickoo

Absent: Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Ex Officio

Oath of Office

Attorney Michael P. McKeon, Commissioner of the Superior Court, administered the Oaths of Office to the two newly appointed 2022-23 student members (i) Valli Pendyala, and (ii) Praja Tickoo. Copies of the Oaths of Office are enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

II. Public Participation

1. Martin Edgar, member of the Hartford Federation of Substitute Teachers (Local 1018E), spoke on pay wage compensation adjustments and benefits for substitute teachers. A copy Mr. Edgar's written statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
2. Attorney Andrew Feinstein, a representative of residents and parents of Killingly, spoke on efforts to establish a School Based Health Center, the social emotional and behavioral health needs of students, and on the complaint that was filed with the Department. A copy of Attorney Feinstein's written statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
3. Christine Rosoti Randall, a Killingly parent, spoke on the Killingly Board of Education, and the need for the students to have mental health supports.
4. Kristine Cicchetti, a parent in Killingly, spoke on the need for a mental health center, the school safety special meeting of the Killingly Board of Education, and the 10-4b complaint.
5. Lisa Girard, spoke on the need for a School Based Health Center in Killingly.
6. Sue Lannon, a resident and parent in Killingly, spoke on the Killingly Board of Education.
7. Kate Dias, president of the Connecticut Education Association (CEA) and a high school Math teacher in Manchester, spoke on behalf of her colleagues in Killingly on the consequences of no resources for mental health.
8. Tom Stringfellow of Manchester, spoke on the Killingly Board of Education, Columbus Day, and provided book recommendations.

Chair DuBois-Walton asked for the Board's approval to move agenda item XI.A., Overview of State Assessment Results, forward on the agenda.

XI. Items for Discussion

A panel consisting of Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Dr. Joseph Macary, Superintendent of Vernon Public Schools, Melony Brady-Shanley, Superintendent, Winchester Public Schools, Dr. Ellen Retelle, Director of Integrated Day Charter School, Norwich, and Nathan Quesnel, Superintendent, East Hartford Public Schools presented to the Board. Chief Gopalakrishnan presented an overview of the assessment results, and demonstrated with the showing of the Connecticut Performance Index. The superintendents presented and shared their strategies and implemented interventions. All the superintendents referenced the influx of the ESSER I, ESSER II, and ARP fundings as being crucial to their interventions.

A question was raised concerning home visits and keeping families engaged. Division Director John Frassinelli joined the superintendents at the Board table to contribute to the discussion on school home visits and spoke on the LEAP Program.

III. Executive Session

The Board did not meet in executive session.

IV. Consideration of Minutes:

A. June 1, 2022, State Board of Education Meeting

Board Member Exley requested an edit on page 12, under NASBE. The word "Physicians" should be replaced with "Positions" to read as: Public Education Positions Committee.

Board Member Sieve moved, Board Member Reasco seconded, that the Board adopt the minutes of the June 1, 2022, State Board of Education Meeting, as corrected.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

B. June 17, 2022, State Board of Education Retreat

Board Member Exley moved, Board Member Harris seconded, that the Board adopt the minutes of the June 17, 2022, State Board of Education Retreat.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

V. Report of the Chair

Chair DuBois-Walton highlighted Board Member activities as follows:

- She joined Governor Lamont, Commissioner Russell-Tucker, superintendents, and fellow Board Members: Vice Chair Erin Benham, Woody Exley, Donald Harris, and Awilda Reasco at the Commissioner's Back-to-School event at Berlin High School.
- Represented the SBE in Washington, DC, at the Reagan Institute Summit on Education: RISE 2022 to examine Networked: The Quest for Connectivity.
- Vice Chair Erin Benham crafted a proposal that will be showcased at the NASBE Annual Conference 2022, in Phoenix Arizona.
- Board Member Exley serves on the NASBE Board of Directors.

- Board Member Sieve is serving as a mentor to the two student members, Valli Pendyala and Praja Tickoo on NASBE'S Student Engagement Collaborative Initiative.
- Continued work towards the next Five-Year Plan.
- Consideration of issues pending before us, including racial imbalance, the Killingly complaint, and other matters.

VI. Report of the Commissioner and Agency Update

The Commissioner referenced her written report and highlighted the following items:

- Agency Staffing – CFO Demsey has weekly meetings with DAS.
- Restart of the DPH/SDE Health and Safety Tuesday Calls.
- The Yale School of Public Health to join the team working directly with districts.
- DPH/SDE/OEC New School Guidance for 2022-2023: Launching into Healthy Learning.
- New England Chiefs Conference in Rhode Island: Renew: New England Regional Collaboration to Accelerate Student Learning and Building Pathways Conference with a CT Delegation, Commissioners from six states and Secretary Cardona on August 22-23, 2022.
- Testimony before the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee in Washington D.C. on June 22, 2022.
- Meeting with DSS regarding Afghan Refugee Resettlement Funding. DSS has received funding to support our districts.
- Invitation to the SBE members to the agency's Back-to-School Staff Showcase.
- Provided remarks at New Britain Convocation Ceremony.

The Commissioner requested that Legal Director Mike McKeon provide an update on the Killingly and Greenwich matters.

Killingly Board of Education

Legal Director McKeon presented a step-by-step summary on the 10-4b complaint that was filed by Complainants alleging that the Killingly Public Schools had failed to implement the educational interest of the State under CGS Sec. 10-4b by failing to adequately address mental health and social emotional needs of their students.

Greenwich Public Schools

Legal Director McKeon presented a summary of a viral video that was released of an Assistant Principal of an Elementary School in the Greenwich Public Schools.

ESSER Funds Update

Chief Financial Officer Kathy Demsey presented a status overview on the percentage of funds drawn down by districts and the closing date of the grant periods for the ESSER 1, ESSER II, and ARP ESSER.

Results from Survey on Vacancies

Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan provided a status report on a vacancy survey that was conducted in August 2022 for all districts and Approved Private Special Education Programs (APSEPs). Mr. Gopalakrishnan reported on the vacancy findings based on the 149 responding districts to survey.

Special Education Office Update

Division Director Bryan Klimkiewicz presented on the federal IDEA funding streams. He featured FY21 IDEA, FY22 IDEA, and FY22 ARP IDEA as additional ARP funds especially for special education activities.

He then reported on special education recovery services and activities of ESSER 2 and ESSER 3. Mr. Klimkiewicz concluded with highlighting an ESSER 3 initiative, "Special Education Employment System (CSEES)," a new online resource for districts to recruit in state and nationally.

Academic Office Update

Chief Academic Officer Irene Parisi and Dr. Melissa Hickey, Interim Director of the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success, presented on the rollout of a new Science of Reading Masterclass, a CSDE and CAPSS partnership that will provide a statewide professional development for educators in the science of reading practices and research to develop an evidence-based approach that aligns with the components of comprehensive K-3 literacy instruction.

Turnaround Office Update

Chief Academic Officer Irene Parisi presented on the continued work with the Commissioner's Network schools. She reported that the districts were invited back and held an in-person Commissioner's Network Summer Institute.

Talent Office Update

Chief Talent Officer Shuana Tucker provided an update and data on the Northeastern Enhanced Reciprocity and Emergency Educator Certification Endorsements that were approved by the Board for implementation. She also provided an update on the applications submitted for the CHESLA Teacher Loan Subsidy Program.

Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS) Update

The Commissioner introduced the appointment of a new Advisory Board for CTECS by the Governor and his appointment of Patricia Keavney-Maruca as the Chairperson, who will also be serving on the State Board.

The Commissioner introduced Dr. Ellen Solek, CTECS Superintendent/Interim Executive Director.

Dr. Solek reported on the continued work on the separation, the filling of staff vacancies, and highlighted the following initiatives:

- The opening of all CTECS schools; her school visits; and the senior class being mentors to the freshmen class.
- The continued work on the Strategic Operating Plan and the Admissions Policy.
- Highlighted a Podcast series called: Talking Shop with CTECS: opportunity to feature many of the CTECS programs and people.

Shoutouts!

The Commissioner highlighted:

- Commissioner's Back-to-School with NASA Astronaut Dr. Bernard Harris, SDE staff and SBE members.
- Where We Live Hosted by Lucy Nalpathanchil, Connecticut Public Radio: Interview opportunity to talk about all things education.
- The CT Association of Boards of Education Annual Leadership Conference at the Water's Edge with Ajit Gopalakrishnan and Irene Parisi. Board Member Donald Harris was in attendance.

- RENEW Summit, Newport, Rhode Island. Those are the Commissioners from Connecticut, Maine, Rhode Island, Vermont, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Secretary Cardona.
- Joined Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz at the Beman Middle School in Middletown.
- CT PK-12 School Staff Appreciation Digital Backpack!

VII. Items Requiring Action

A. Adoption of the Updated Definition of Attendance to include Remote Learning

Chair DuBois-Walton asked for a motion for agenda item VII.A. Board Member Harris moved, Board Member Reasco seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Public Act 21-46, Section 18, adopts the amended definition of excused absence and unexcused absence and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action:

A student is considered to be "in attendance" if:

1) present at their assigned school, and/or

2) participating in an activity sponsored by the school (e.g., field trip);

and/or,

3) participating in statutorily authorized remote learning as determined through a combination of synchronous virtual classes, synchronous virtual meetings, activities on time-logged electronic systems, and/or the completion and submission of assignments.

for at least half of the instructional school day.

A student is considered to be "in attendance" if present at his/her assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school (e.g., field trip) for at least half of the regular school day. Students serving an out-of-school suspension or expulsion are reported as "absent" except for each day that the student receives alternative education programming for at least half of the instructional school day.

A panel consisting of Division Director John Frassinelli, School Health, Nutrition, and Family Services, together with Kari Sullivan Custer, Education Consultant, presented an update to the Board on the legislature officially authorizing districts with the ability to provide remote learning to grades 9-12 provided that the districts adhere to the guidelines and standards set by the Department and also be in compliance with the Department's definition of attendance. Director Frassinelli then reviewed the four activities that individually or cumulatively define the definition of attendance for remote learning.

The Board engaged in questions and answers.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Appointment of the Panel of Impartial Arbitrators under the Teachers' Negotiations Act

Board member Exley moved, and Board member Sieve seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to subsection (a) of Section 10-153f of the Connecticut General Statutes, recommends Attorney Janis Jerman for appointment as an impartial arbitrator representing the interests of the public in general, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Legal Director Mike McKeon, and Attorney Laura Anastasio presented to the Board. Attorney Anastasio provided an overview of the purpose of the Teacher Negotiation Act. She then outlined the role of impartial arbitrators and described the selection process.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

VIII. Financial Matters

Board member Sieve moved, and Board member Prou seconded, that the State Board of Education approves the Current Services and Capital Budget Requests for Fiscal Years 2023-24 and 2024-25 and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Chief Financial Officer Kathy Demsey presented an overview of the budget process. Chief Demsey highlighted her spreadsheet of the budget on a line item basis to show which accounts were increasing.

The Board engaged in questions and answers.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

VII. Consent Agenda

There were no Consent items on the agenda.

X. Committee Reports

A. Academic Standards and Assessment

Committee Chair Clemons reported that the committee will be meeting on September 13, 2022.

B. Accountability and Support

Committee Chair Benham reported that the committee will be meeting on September 21, 2022.

C. Finance, Audit, and Budget

Committee Chair Harris reported that a committee meeting date is pending.

D. Legislation and Policy Development

Committee Chair Sieve reported that the committee met earlier this morning and discussed the definition of attendance; the Department had received an updated Racial Imbalance Plan from Fairfield school district; and policy issues the committee may want to consider.

E. Connecticut Technical Education and Career System Board

The CTECS report was provided earlier in the meeting under Agency Update.

F. NASBE

Board Member Exley reported on NASBE initiatives: (i) Adolescent Mental Health, and (ii) sponsorship of a Mathematics Study Group. Board Member Sieve, as mentor, reported on the NASBE Student Engagement Collaborative and the two student members provided comments on their participation. Board Member Exley concluded with the upcoming NASBE Annual Conference 2022. Board Member Benham spoke on the presentation with Chair DuBois-Walton and Commissioner Russell-Tucker that they will present at the NASBE Annual Conference.

G. SERC

Committee Member Benham referenced her SERC report in the Supplemental Folders. She gave an update on the African American/Black and Puerto Rican/Latino Course of Studies.

Chair DuBois-Walton asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting, Board Member Taylor moved, Board Member Sieve seconded, that the meeting be adjourned.

Chair DuBois-Walton adjourned the meeting at 12:37 p.m.

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