

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION Hartford

Accountability and Support Committee

Monday, October 17, 2016

State Office Building, 165 Capitol Avenue, Room 307A
Hartford, Connecticut

Draft Minutes

I. Call to Order

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, Chairperson López called meeting to order at 3.00 p.m.

Committee Members Present: Dr. Estela López, Chairperson
Erin Benham
Malia Sieve
Robert J. Trefry

Committee Member Absent: William P. Davenport

Staff Present: Dr. Sarah Barzee
Lesley Carson
Pamela Charland
Shondel Edwards
Mike Kent
Desi Nesmith

Guests Present: Dr. Steven J. Adamowski, Superintendent, Norwalk Public schools
Dr. Marie Allen, Principal, Norwalk Pathways Academy at Briggs, Norwalk
Garth Harries, Superintendent, New Haven Public Schools
Edith Johnson, Principal, Wilbur Cross High School, New Haven

II. Norwalk Pathways Academy at Briggs, Norwalk

Desi Nesmith, Chief Turnaround Officer, presented Fast Facts on Norwalk Pathways Academy at Briggs and Wilbur Cross High School in New Haven. The priorities for each school focused on professional development to improve instructional practice and impact. Pathways Academy at Briggs demonstrated a decrease in chronic absenteeism and suspension rates. Wilbur Cross High School demonstrated a decrease in suspension rate; however they had an increase in chronic absenteeism for the 2014-15 school year. Commissioner's Network funds partially funded staff positions.

Dr. Steven Adamowski, Superintendent of Norwalk Public Schools, and Dr. Marie Allen, Principal of Norwalk Pathways Academy at Briggs, reported on the successes of Norwalk. They noted that the priority of the Norwalk Pathways Academy are the students, their voices are valued and serve as a part of the decision making process. Students who excel in their core courses are able to return to Norwalk High School. If, however, students feel uncomfortable in a large environment they are welcomed to stay at Pathways Academy at Briggs Pathways Academy.

Another example of students' voices being valued was through the meal plan service change. Through planning, meeting, and reasoning with the food services administration, students were able to change the meal plans options. Briggs' students are also part of the Pathway with the Police and Fire Academy where they are learning how to become police officers. Students have received commendations from the police academy. Their experiences include mock homicides and fingerprinting. All these experiences serve as highly engaging opportunities for students to grasp knowledge while being exposed to career choices.

Mr. Nesmith noted that during his observation, the engagement among students and staff was obvious and the students were articulate and felt supported. Dr. Lopez requested data that shows where the resources are being used appropriately to assist students.

III. Wilbur Cross High School, New Haven

Garth Harries, Superintendent of New Haven Public schools and Edith Johnson, Principal of Wilbur Cross High School, reported funding allocations for the Commissioner's Network. The graduation rates increased from 64% to 72% by the state's cohort standards. Last year 89% of students who began in September graduated. The suspensions have gone down. There are sound relationships throughout the building, and clear expectations permeate throughout the school.

Planned professional development days and webinars are utilized for more strategic teaching and learning. Most importantly, common planning times have been created. Principal Johnson also reiterated the importance of building relationships with the students, common planning time, and management of schedules to ensure accountability measures for both students and teachers. Even though they are in the infancy stages, they have the ability to do great things. Their staff is made up of Spanish speaking guidance counselors and clerks, they are working with the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to improve where necessary, and it was noted that the consistency of CSDE consultants has made a huge impact in their planning and instructional practices.

Mr. Nesmith reported that Principal Johnson has a connection with her students. There was a sustainability question of what can be learned by looking back. Moving forward, any positions being funded by the Commissioner's Network will no longer be allowed to be 100% funded at the beginning by the Commissioner's Network funds. Therefore, if the district does not fund a percentage from year one, they will not be allowed to keep that position in the plan. Individuals or positions with district funding in the first year will increase as the network funds decrease every year. This is one of the key pieces that may have been overlooked.

IV. CREC Continuing Approval for Special Education AARC

Dr. Sarah Barzee updated the committee with information regarding Capitol Region Education Council's (CREC) Advanced Alternate Route to Certification (AARC) for cross endorsement in Special Education, administered by CREC. This preparation program was initially approved in 2007 for a period of two years through 2009. In the spring of 2009, based on a mandated program approval visit conducted by State Department of Education and aligned to the standards of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), CREC was granted *full continuing approval* by the SBE through 2014. In spring 2014, CREC hosted its second continuing approval visit. The visiting team determined that CREC did not meet requirements under NCATE Standards 1 and 2. As a result, the SBE granted CREC *provisional approval* for a period of September 3, 2014 through September 30, 2017 with a report due to the Review Committee in 2017. In spring 2016, CREC submitted a report to the Review Committee addressing the work completed to address the concerns noted by the committee. Based on the work completed, the Review Committee recommended to the Commissioner that CREC be granted full approval for a period of November 2, 2016 through September 30, 2019. The SBE will consider this recommendation at its November 2, 2016 meeting.

V. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by: _____
Shondel Edwards