

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

Accountability and Support Committee

Monday, December 12, 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, Board member Erin D. Benham called the meeting to order at 3.00 p.m.

Committee Malia Sieve (by phone)
Members Present: Robert J. Trefry
 Erin D. Benham
 William Davenport

Committee Dr. Estela López, Chairperson
Member Absent:

Staff Present: Desi Nesmith
 Pamela Charland
 Mike Kent
 Carla Ghostlaw

Guests Present: Dr. Kathleen M. Ouellette, Superintendent of Waterbury Public Schools
 Paul Whyte, Instructional Leadership Director, Waterbury Public Schools
 Ellen Paolino, Principal of Walsh Elementary School, Waterbury
 Jennifer Calabrese, Assistant Principal of Walsh Elementary School, Waterbury
 Dr. Patricia Garcia, Superintendent of Windham Public Schools
 Brett D. Fiore, Principal of Windham Middle School

II. Approval of Minutes

On a motion by William Davenport, seconded by Malia Sieve, the committee voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the September 26 and October 17, 2016, meetings.

Desi Nesmith, Chief Turnaround Officer, introduced his administrative assistant, Carla Ghostlaw, who will be in attendance moving forward recording minutes. Mr. Nesmith then gave a brief overview on the Commissioner's Network Fast Facts for Walsh Elementary School in Waterbury.

III. Walsh Elementary School, Waterbury

Dr. Kathleen M. Ouellette, Superintendent of Waterbury Public Schools and Ellen Paolino, Principal of Walsh Elementary School, updated the committee on the successes they've had and stated that they were pleased with Walsh's progress moving from a turnaround school to a focus school. They also shared several strategies they are implementing in order to keep their students engaged. Academically, Walsh

Elementary School has made and continues to make positive gains. The 2015-16 SBAC ELA proficiency gains of 9.2 percentage points, led all other Commissioner's Network schools, while the SBAC math proficiency gains were the third highest of Commissioner's Network schools. Walsh is working on maintaining their model turnaround partnership where students have the responsibilities of setting their own goals and teachers train new teachers. Data is moving in the right direction with a decrease in chronic absenteeism and suspension rates for the 2015-16 school year, and with the trend continuing in the 2016-17 year-to-date period. Mr. Nesmith encouraged everyone to visit Walsh School.

IV. Windham Middle School, Windham

Dr. Patricia Garcia, Superintendent of Windham Public Schools and Brett D. Fiore, Principal of Windham Middle School, provided information on the Common Core aligned instructional system put in place. Windham Public Schools have improved assessment and instruction by implementing a K-12 reading initiative, a coaching model where coaches work with teachers, and a data team process to support K-12. Dr. Garcia and Mrs. Fiore expressed that they have specifically focused on school climate and chronic absenteeism. The Smarter Balanced Assessment in ELA improved significantly compared to the Smarter Balance Assessment Math scores. They have also brought in and trained student teachers from Eastern Connecticut State University. Overall, there is more consistency and cohesion among the school which has helped with teacher retention. Windham Middle School participated in a school climate training in October which supported the efforts of creating a positive school climate in which students succeed academically and behaviorally. The school has been reaching out to parents around the importance of daily attendance. Dr. Garcia updated the committee with information on the New Arrivals program that Windham has had for the last few years. Additionally, Windham Middle School also has a dual language program where teachers use a specialized curriculum in which students are taught in both Spanish and English. A benefit to this program is that the New Arrivals students learn English, as well as science and social studies in their native language.

V. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.