

VI.A.

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION Hartford

Minutes State Board of Education Meeting January 6, 2016 (approved February 3, 2016)

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the State Board of Education (hereinafter "Board") met on Wednesday, January 6, 2016, in Room 1D of the Legislative Office Building, 300 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut.

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Allan Taylor called the meeting to order at 9:41 a.m.

Present: Allan B. Taylor, Chairperson
Theresa Hopkins-Staten, Vice Chairperson
Erin D. Benham
Susannah M. Beyl, Student Member
Erik M. Clemons
William P. Davenport
Terry H. Jones
Maria I. Mojica
Timothy J. Noel-Sullivan, Student Member
Malia K. Sieve
Robert J. Trefry, Ex Officio
Joseph J. Vrabely, Jr.
Stephen P. Wright

Absent: Estela López
Mark Ojakian, Ex Officio

II. Public Participation

1. Dean Jones, parent of students who attend Achievement First Middle School, spoke in support of the quality of the experience his daughters have had as students at Achievement First, and noted that the teachers and staff are preparing his children with the academic and character skills needed for higher education and life. A copy of Mr. Jones' prepared statement is included in the official file of this meeting.

2. Josephine Pittman, parent of two scholars who attend Achievement First Middle School, spoke in support of the quality of education and staff at Achievement First, and noted that Achievement First is preparing her children for college and beyond. A copy of Ms. Pittman's prepared statement is included in the official file of this meeting.
3. Dr. Joseph V. Erardi, Superintendent of the Newtown Public Schools, updated the Board on the status of the Newtown Public School System since the December 2012 shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School. He provided an overview of security measures that have been implemented, teaching and learning initiatives, and progress on the new Sandy Hook School. While much progress has occurred, the challenges resulting from the December 2012 incident will continue for decades, Dr. Erardi noted. He asked the Board to continue its support for Newtown's recovery efforts and invited Board members to visit the Newtown Public Schools.

Dr. Erardi presented the Board with a copy of "Best Practice Considerations for Addressing Student Mental Health Issues," "Proactive Risk Assessment Procedures," and "Security in the Newtown Public Schools 2008-2015, A Collaborative, All-in, Best Practice Approach." A copy of each document is included in the official file of this meeting.

4. Mr. Thomas Kuroski, President of the Newtown Federation of Teachers, spoke about Newtown's recovery efforts, noting they were far from complete, and asked the Board to respond to Newtown's unique challenges over the next decade.
5. Mr. Mark J. Pompano, Director of Security, Newtown Public Schools, stated that planning is the most important part of school security, and stated that the risk assessment procedures, contained in Newtown Public Schools Emergency Operations Plan, serve as a model for other districts.
6. Ms. Milly Arciniegas, Hartford Parent University, commended the Commissioner and Board on their timely response to the concerns raised by parents about the SAND Elementary School professional development training exercise on differentiated instruction. Ms. Arciniegas stated that districts must ensure that they hire staff members who do not have a history of discriminatory actions.
7. Ms. Gwen Samuel, public school parent and president of the Connecticut Parents Union, spoke about the importance of providing mental health support and services to students throughout the state, particularly in urban areas and for those children receiving special education services. She stated that there is an accountability issue in Connecticut (e.g., school governance councils, special education rates, district hiring practices) and more oversight is required by the state.
8. Ms. Ines Pegeas, Hartford resident, former teacher, and secretary of the African American Alliance, questioned what has been done to increase minority teacher recruitment and what will be done in the future. Ms. Pegeas stated that Hartford has

not been successful in recruiting teachers of color to its classroom, and noted that there is a need for instruction in cultural diversity.

III. Consent Agenda

There were no items on the consent agenda.

IV. Executive Session

A. Discussion with Counsel Regarding Pending Litigation Involving the State Board of Education (CCJEF; Alicia B., et al)

On a motion by Mr. Vrabely, seconded by Mrs. Benham, the Board voted unanimously to move into executive session at 10:27 a.m. for the purpose of discussing with counsel pending litigation that involves the State Board of Education (CCJEF, Alicia B., et al.).

Present in executive session were Board members Mrs. Benham, Ms. Beyl, Mr. Clemons, Mr. Davenport, Mrs. Hopkins-Staten, Mr. Jones, Ms. Mojica, Mr. Noel-Sullivan, Ms. Sieve, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Vrabely, and Mr. Wright. Also present for all or part of executive session were Commissioner Wentzell, Assistant Attorney General Joseph Rubin, Assistant Attorney General Ralph Urban, and Director of Legal Affairs Peter M. Haberlandt.

On a motion by Vrabely, seconded by Mrs. Benham, the Board voted unanimously to move out of Executive Session and reconvene in public session at 11:48 a.m. Present were Mrs. Benham, Ms. Beyl, Mr. Clemons, Mr. Davenport, Mrs. Hopkins-Staten, Mr. Jones, Ms. Mojica, Mr. Noel-Sullivan, Ms. Sieve, Mr. Taylor, and Mr. Vrabely. Mr. Wright, Dr. Lopez, and Mr. Ojakian were absent.

V. Consideration of Minutes of the December 2, 2015, State Board of Education Meeting

Ms. Mojica moved, Mr. Vrabely seconded, that the Board adopt the Minutes of the December 2, 2015, State Board of Education meeting.

VOTE ON

MOTION:	In favor:	Benham, Clemons, Davenport, Hopkins-Staten, Jones, Mojica, Sieve, Taylor, Vrabely
	Opposed:	0
	Abstained:	0
	Absent:	López, Wright

Motion carried unanimously.

VI. Items Requiring Action

[Mr. Wright returned at 11:52 a.m.]

A. Approval of Legislative Proposals

Mr. Vrabely moved, Mrs. Benham seconded, that the State Board of Education adopts the 2016 Legislative Proposals and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

VOTE ON

MOTION:	In favor:	Benham, Clemons, Davenport, Hopkins-Staten, Jones, Mojica, Sieve, Taylor, Vrabely, Wright
	Opposed:	0
	Abstained:	0
	Absent:	López

Motion carried unanimously.

VII. Items for Discussion

A. Overview of Special Education in Connecticut

Chief Operating Officer Charlene Russell-Tucker and Chief of the Bureau of Special Education Dr. Isabelina Rodriguez provided an overview of special education. Dr. Rodriguez presented a PowerPoint overview on the special education process. Discussion ensued. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

B. SAND Elementary School Investigation Update

A panel consisting of Deputy Commissioner Ellen Cohn, Chief Turnaround Officer Desi Nesmith, and Turnaround Education Consultant Dr. Adrian R. Wood provided an update on the November 2015 SAND Elementary School professional development exercise investigation. Discussion followed.

The Board recessed its meeting at 1:00 p.m.

The Board reconvened the meeting at 1:43 p.m.

Present: Allan B. Taylor, Chairperson
Theresa Hopkins-Staten, Vice Chairperson
Erin D. Benham
Susannah M. Beyl, Student Member

Erik M. Clemons
William P. Davenport
Terry H. Jones
Maria I. Mojica
Timothy Noel-Sullivan, Student Member
Malia K. Sieve
Robert J. Trefry, Ex Officio
Joseph J. Vrabely, Jr.
Stephen P. Wright

Absent: Estela López
Mark Ojakian, Ex Officio

C. Achievement First Hartford Academy – Student Discipline Policy and Practices

Dacia Toll, Achievement First Co-CEO and President, and Sorbrique Grant, Principal of Achievement First Hartford Academy Middle School, presented an overview of Achievement First Hartford Academy's discipline policy and practices. Discussion followed.

VIII. Report of the Chair

Chairperson Allan Taylor reported on a New England Secondary School Consortium group visit to West Woods Upper Elementary, Farmington, Connecticut. Mr. Taylor commended this upper-elementary school for its success in the area of competency-based outcomes.

IX. Report of the Commissioner

Commissioner Wentzell referred Board members to the "Report of the Commissioner" in the Board's supplemental materials folder. She reported on her attendance at Achieve's Annual Meeting, December 3-4, 2015; the conversation about the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA); and the renewed emphasis on public education as the most important civil rights issue. A copy of the Commissioner's written report is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

X. Financial Matters

A. Budget Update

Chief Financial Officer Kathy Demsey reported on the updated budget for the Department.

XI. Committee Reports

A. Academic Standards and Assessment.

Mr. Wright reported that at the January 28, 2015, meeting, the committee will consider the arts standards.

B. Accountability and Support

No report was given.

C. Finance, Audit, and Budget

No report was given.

D. Legislation and Policy

Mrs. Hopkins-Staten reported that the committee met this morning. The committee received an update on the Minimum Budget Requirement legislative proposal. Chief Operating Officer Charlene Russell-Tucker, Dr. Isabelina Rodriguez, and Director of Legal Affairs Peter M. Haberlandt presented to the committee on the complaint process for special education.

E. Connecticut Technical High School System

No report was given.

F. NASBE

Mr. Taylor reported that the NASBE board will meet on January 22, 2016.

Adjourn

By unanimous consent, the meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Prepared by: _____
Dianna R. Wentzell, Secretary
State Board of Education