

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Hartford

Minutes  
State Board of Education Meeting  
March 2, 2016

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the State Board of Education (hereinafter "Board") met on Wednesday, March 2, 2016, in Room 307 of the State Office Building, 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut.

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Allan Taylor called the meeting to order at 9:42 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  
Estela López  
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: Mark Ojakian, Ex Officio

II. Public Participation

1. Cicero B. Booker, Jr., Waterbury NAACP Branch Advisor, and James Monroe, President of the Greater Waterbury Branch of the NAACP, expressed their concerns about Waterbury's employment practices concerning hiring African American teachers and administrators. The speakers asked the Board to withhold funds or take over the Waterbury Board of Education, and to exercise its statutory authority in this matter. A copy of a related letter from the Greater Waterbury Branch of the NAACP to Chairperson Allan B. Taylor, dated February 15, 2016, was distributed to the Board and is enclosed in the official file of this meeting. The presenters also provided the Board with a copy of a

letter to the editor of the Sunday Republican from James Szykiewicz, "Increased Hiring of Minority Teachers Needed in Waterbury," dated February 28, 2016 (copy enclosed in the official file of this meeting).

2. Dr. Benjamin Foster, chair of the NAACP Education Committee, spoke in support of the NAACP's request and his support for increasing diversity in the Waterbury Public Schools. Mr. Foster urged the Board to consider their request.
3. Dr. Anthony Johnston, assistant professor of education and program director for secondary education at the University of St. Joseph, and Dr. Eileen Gonzalez, assistant professor of education, expressed their concerns about requiring more content knowledge courses as part of the master's degree requirements, and the need to focus attention on incentivizing the teacher profession. A copy of their prepared remarks is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
4. Dr. Ann Monroe-Baillargeon, Dean of the School of Education at the University of St. Joseph, expressed her concerns regarding the certification requirement for teachers to acquire a master's degree in an appropriate subject matter area, as determined by the State Board of Education, and requested that the implementation date be changed to 2018. A copy of Dr. Monroe-Baillargeon's prepared statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
5. Dr. Don Siler, assistant professor of education, University of St. Joseph, echoed the concerns raised by the Waterbury citizens. He expressed his belief that a teacher's relationship with his or her students is what truly has an impact on students' success. Mr. Siler expressed his concerns about the requirement for additional content area courses as part of the master's degree requirements.
6. Lisa Lessard, a resident of Waterbury, spoke in support of the NAACP representatives' comments and encouraged the Board to look into their concerns. She then expressed her concerns about a message that Superintendent Ann Sweeney is relaying to her local school board. Ms. Lessard played a tape recording of Superintendent Sweeney telling the Waterbury board that Waterbury's Alliance District grant is permanent, and is part of the Education Cost Sharing grant.
7. Attorney Frederick Dorsey, representing the Complainants in the 10-4b Complaint against Regional School District Number 1 (agenda item V.A.), expressed his concern about the timeliness of the response to the complaint and pointed out that although the Canaan Board of Education signed the joint employment agreement eight days after the section 10-4b complaint was filed, the board of education, in writing, reserved the right to challenge the joint employment Agreement.
8. Attorney Gary Brochu, representing the Board of Education for Regional School District Number 1 in the 10-4b Complaint against Regional School District Number 1 (agenda item V.A.), urged the Board to approve the recommendation of the Commissioner to

dismiss the 10-4b complaint. A copy of Attorney Brochu's prepared statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

9. John Mosby, a 55-year resident of Norwalk, expressed his concerns about the following: due process rights of special education and minority students in Norwalk have not been addressed; his voice and that of others not being heard at the local level; the use of Alliance District funds; and the lack of funding for the Briggs School; and the lack of teachers of color in the district. A copy of Mr. Mosby's November 6, 2015, letter to Chairman Taylor regarding these issues was distributed to the Board and is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

(The Board went into executive session after adopting the minutes.)

#### IV. Consideration of Minutes of the February 3, 2016, State Board of Education Meeting

Dr. Lopez moved, Mrs. Benham seconded, that the Board adopt the Minutes of the February 3, 2016, State Board of Education meeting.

##### VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

#### III. Executive Session

On a motion by Mr. Vrabely, seconded by Mrs. Hopkins-Staten, the Board voted unanimously to move into executive session at 10:35 a.m. for the purpose of receiving legal advice from Board counsel regarding appropriate procedures for the matter of Carmen Perez Dickson v. State Department of Education, Case No. CRT 15-1.

Present in executive session were Board members Mrs. Benham, Ms. Beyl, Mr. Clemons, Mr. Davenport, Mrs. Hopkins-Staten, Mr. Jones, Dr. López, Ms. Mojica, Mr. Noel-Sullivan, Ms. Sieve, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Vrabely, and Mr. Wright. Also present for all of executive session was Assistant Attorney General Ralph Urban.

On a motion by Mrs. Benham, seconded by Mr. Wright, the Board voted unanimously to move out of Executive Session and reconvene in public session at 11:00 a.m. Present were Mrs. Benham, Ms. Beyl, Mr. Clemons, Mr. Davenport, Mrs. Hopkins-Staten, Mr.

Jones, Dr. López, Ms. Mojica, Mr. Noel-Sullivan, Ms. Sieve, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Vrabely, and Mr. Wright. Mr. Trefry and Mr. Ojakian were absent.

V. Items Requiring Action

The Board considered agenda item V.B., Consideration of Proposed Final Decision in the Matter of Carmen Perez Dickson v. State Department of Education, Case No. CRT 15-1, at this time.

A. Consideration of Proposed Final Decision in the Matter of Carmen Perez Dickson v. State Department of Education CRT 15-1

Mr. Taylor requested that it be noted for the record that Carmen Perez Dickson informed the Board that while her attorney, Josephine Smalls Miller, was present in the meeting room, she would represent herself at today's proceedings, and Ms. Perez Dickson waived her right to have her attorney speak on her behalf.

Mr. Vrabely moved, Mrs. Benham seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to subsection (j) of Section 10-145b of the Connecticut General Statutes, (1) accepts and adopts the Findings and Proposed Decision in the Matter of Carmen Perez-Dickson v. State Department of Education, Case No. CRT 15-1, prepared by Impartial Hearing Officer Donal C. Collimore, with the following corrections agreed to by both parties on the record: i) to the eighth paragraph of page 10, changing "2005" to "2012"; and ii) to the fifth paragraph of page 13, changing "in 2005 where she admitted using a baseball that purposes" to "in 2012 where she admitted using a baseball bat for the purpose ..."; (2) affirms the decision of the State Department of Education to deny continuation of Ms. Perez-Dickson's professional educator certificate with endorsements for secondary Spanish and intermediate administration and supervision; and (3) directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Roll Call Vote

Board Member	In Favor	Opposed	Abstained	Absent
Erin Benham	X			
Erik M. Clemons	X			
William P. Davenport	X			
Theresa Hopkins-Staten	X			
Terry H. Jones	X			
Estela Lopez	X			
Maria Mojica	X			
Malia K. Sieve	X			
Joseph J. Vrabely, Jr.	X			
Stephen P. Wright	X			
Allan B. Taylor	X			

Motion carried unanimously.

[Mr. Trefry returned to the meeting.]

A. Connecticut General Statutes §10-4b Complaint regarding Regional School District Number 1 of Litchfield County

Mr. Vrabely moved, Mrs. Hopkins-Staten, seconded, that, with respect to the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) Section 10-4b Complaint filed on July 14, 2015 by certain residents of Regional School District Number One of Litchfield County against the Board of Education of Regional School District Number One of Litchfield County (the "Region One Board"), the State Board of Education adopts the recommendation of the Commissioner, and (a) finds that there is no reasonable cause to believe that the Region One Board has failed, or is unable, to implement the educational interests of the State of Connecticut as defined in C.G.S. Section 10-4a, (b) dismisses the Complaint, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

VI. Report of the Chair

Chairperson Allan Taylor referred Board members to the "Report of the Chair" in the Board's supplemental materials folder. A copy of the Chair's written report is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

VII. Report of the Commissioner

Commissioner Wentzell referenced her written report. She reported on her attendance at the joint Hunt Institute/NCSL/NASBE Policymakers Meeting on ESSA and State Responsibilities, held on February 26-27, 2016, in Atlanta, GA. The goal of the program was to prepare policymakers with some of the basics of ESSA implementation. At the meeting, the Commissioner heard how other states were doing. Commissioner Wentzell reported that she will continue to keep the Board updated on the Department's legislation testimony. She gave an overview of a conference titled, "From Compliance to Coherence," noting that Connecticut educators were provided with the opportunity to share effective models for use by other districts. A copy of the Commissioner's written report is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

VII. Items for Discussion

A. Next Generation Accountability

Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan gave a PowerPoint presentation to the Board of the results from the first iteration of Connecticut's Next Generation Accountability System. This system is considered more balanced and focused on growth over time. It moves beyond test scores and graduation rates to provide a more holistic, multifactor perspective of district and school performance. A copy of their PowerPoint presentation is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

VIII. Financial Matters

Chief Financial Officer Kathy Demsey reported that we are in the midst of the Legislative Session and addressing the budget matters.

XI. Committee Reports

A. Academic Standards and Assessment

No report was given.

B. Accountability and Support

Dr. López reported the Accountability and Support Committee will be meeting on Monday, March 14, 2016.

C. Finance, Audit, and Budget

Mr. Taylor reported that the Finance, Audit and Budget Committee met on February 25, 2016. Mr. Taylor made reference to reports the committee received on the status of the budget and upcoming audits.

D. Legislation and Policy Development Committee

Mrs. Hopkins-Staten reported that the committee met this morning. Kathryn S. Meyer, Martha Stone, and Leon Smith from the Center for Children's Advocacy presented to the committee an overview of the Center's legislative priorities. Due to time constraints, the committee was unable to consider agenda item IV., Update on Child Nutrition Programs.

E. Connecticut Technical High School System Board

Mr. Trefry reported that four of the technical high schools were outperforming their districts; and a review of reading shows growth.

F. NASBE

Mr. Taylor reported that the NASBE Legislative Conference 2016 would be held on April 3-5, 2016. Mr. Taylor reported that on April 3, 2016, NASBE and CCSSO will host a joint dinner with Peter Baker, chief White House correspondent for the New York Times.

Chairperson Taylor adjourned the meeting at 1:17 p.m.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Secretary