

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Hartford

Minutes  
State Board of Education Meeting  
November 2, 2016  
(approved December 7, 2016)

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the State Board of Education (hereinafter "Board") met on Wednesday, November 2, 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 9:37 a.m.

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

Absent: Amina S. Lampkin, Student Member  
Mark Ojakian, Ex Officio

II. Public Participation

1. Michael Alfano, Dean of the School of Education and Professional Studies at Central Connecticut State University and President of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education—Connecticut, cited his reasons for requesting that the Board table/deny approval of the Relay Graduate School of Education's application to offer an alternate route to certification program in Connecticut. A copy of Dean Alfano's prepared remarks is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
2. Joseph Madaus, Associate Dean of the NEAG School of Education, University of Connecticut, expressed concerns regarding the standards for the Relay Graduate School of Education's alternate route to certification program in comparison to certification programs offered by other institutions of higher education, and urged the Board not to approve the resolution.
3. Edward J. Murphy, Jr., a resident of Litchfield, spoke in support of regionalization of public school districts, and, in particular, with regard to Regional School District No. 6 and Litchfield High School.

4. Michele O'Neill, Educational Issues Specialist, Connecticut Education Association, read prepared remarks in opposition to the approval of the resolution regarding the Relay Graduate School of Education. A copy of Ms. O'Neill's prepared statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
5. Jenna Rodriguez Mancini, a junior studying elementary education and visual arts at Eastern Connecticut State University, read prepared remarks in opposition to the approval of the Relay Graduate School of Education Alternate Route to Certification. A copy of Ms. Rodriguez-Mancini's prepared statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
6. Shayla Beausoleil, a student at Eastern Connecticut State University, asked the Board to deny the Relay Graduate School of Education the authority to provide an alternate route to certification in Connecticut. She suggested that the State should examine whether existing university programs in Connecticut could offer any accelerated programs that would attract teachers in general and teachers of color specifically, to enter into the profession. A copy of Ms. Beausoleil's prepared statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
7. Rachael Tyrrel, a sophomore at Southern Connecticut State University, expressed her concerns with the proposal by the Relay Graduate School of Education, stating that Relay does not provide the necessary supports, knowledge, and training required to become a teacher. She urged the Board to deny approval. A copy of Ms. Tyrrel's prepared statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
8. Dr. Ann Grosjean, speaking on behalf of Doreen Merrill, Chair of the Connecticut Advisory Council for Teacher Professional Standards, stated that the Council had not been asked to review the Relay proposal. She stressed the importance of minority teacher recruitment and retention, as well as the necessity of both induction and support in educator preparation programs. Dr. Grosjean requested the opportunity to further review information about the Relay Graduate School of Education proposal and report back to the Board, Governor and General Assembly.
9. Katherine Field, teacher development specialist, Connecticut Education Association, expressed concerns about the quality of the Relay Graduate School of Education and its affiliation with charter school chains. A copy of Ms. Field's prepared statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
10. Dr. Robert Hannafin, Dean of the Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions, Fairfield University, asked the Board to table the proposal to approve the Relay Graduate School of Education Alternate Route to Certification. Dr. Hannafin recognized the need for more minority teachers as well as the need to retain them. He spoke about the problems of chronically underperforming schools and under-resourced schools in inner cities.
11. Dr. Ann Dichele, professor at Quinnipiac University in the MAT Program, expressed her opposition to the approval of the proposed Relay Graduate School of Education Alternate Route to Certification, stating that the program is not a graduate school but rather a social justice issue. Dr. Dichele urged the board to consider the bias within such programs, adding that children in less affluent communities need qualified teachers.

12. Mia Dimbo, a Bridgeport teacher and member of the Connecticut Education Association's minority affairs committee, cited research regarding inequities created by the Relay Graduate School of Education. Ms. Dimbo asked the Board to reject the proposal to approve Relay, and to explore other viable ways to recruit and retain minority teachers. A copy of Ms. Dimbo's prepared statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
13. Marissa Gannon, a junior at the University of Connecticut's Neag School of Education, described her experiences in the Neag educator preparation program and her appreciation for the skills and knowledge she has gained there. She stated that the Relay Graduate School of Education program is not a solution, as there is insufficient information about its course of study. Ms. Gannon asked the Board to delay its vote, pending further information to inform its decision. A copy of Ms. Gannon's prepared statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
14. Rebecca Good, Program Lead for the Relay Graduate School of Education, spoke about her non-traditional background and her desire to lead the effort to increase the number of high quality minority teachers. She stated that she wants to be part of the solution, by creating additional pathways to certification for non-certified staff.
15. Amanda Marcano, secretary at Cooperative High School and mother of children who attend school in New Haven, and a participant in the Relay professional development program, expressed her support for the program and asked the Board to trust the program.
16. Catherine Arroyo, a long-term substitute teacher in Waterbury and a participant in the Relay professional development program, stated that the program supports individuals who connect well with students. She stated that the program has dedicated instructors and focuses on closing the achievement gap. Ms. Arroyo urged the Board to approve the resolution.
17. Alyssa Arroyo, a substitute teacher at Crosby High School in Waterbury, stated that she teaches five general biology classes. She stated that she is from Waterbury and is rooted in the community. Ms. Arroyo expressed her support of the Relay Graduate School of Education proposal, as it is flexible and accommodates working adults.
18. Dr. Shuana Tucker, Chief Talent Officer, New Britain Public Schools, stated that while she worked in the Waterbury Public School System, a small cohort of minority candidates were selected to participate in the Relay Graduate School of Education professional development program. She stated that this is one way to grow a pipeline for qualified minority teachers, and supports the Board's approval of the resolution.
19. Dr. Alaina Harper described her professional background and credentials, noting that she has worked with aspiring teachers in New York and Hartford, Connecticut, and earned her doctorate from Harvard University. Dr. Harper expressed her commitment to Hartford and the State of Connecticut, and stated that her participation in the Relay Graduate School of Education resonates with her own personal experiences. She expressed her hope that the Board would support the proposal.
20. Chris Willems, a science teacher at the Metropolitan High School in New Haven, spoke about his experiences working with Teach for America teachers, noting that most leave and it is very disruptive. Mr. Willems believed that the Relay alternate route to certification would not result

in successful teachers, and asked the Board to not approve the resolution. A copy of Mr. Willems' prepared statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

21. David Cicarella, President of the New Haven Federation of Teachers, acknowledged the need for a more diverse teaching force, but expressed concern about Relay's focus on "no excuses" pedagogy as well as its partnership with the New Haven Public Schools without any discussion with the Federation. Mr. Cicarella noted that California and Pennsylvania have rejected the Relay Graduate School of Education. He asked the Board, if not ready to reject the proposal at this time, to table it to allow for further collaboration and discussion.
22. Robert M. Goodrich, Co-founder of Radical Advocates for Cross-cultural Education, asked the Board to reconsider its legislative proposal to eliminate the statutory requirement that mandates districts to mark a student as absent for a full school day if such student was issued an in-school suspension lasting more than one-half of a school day, stating that exclusionary discipline practices have many unintended consequences that outweigh any perceived benefits. He also expressed concerns about the vetting process for the Relay Graduate School of Education and asked the Board not to vote on this proposal until district level stakeholders have the information needed to make an informed decision. A copy of Mr. Goodrich's prepared statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
23. Robert Cotto, Jr., certified teacher in Connecticut, educational researcher, and resident of Hartford, expressed his concerns about the Relay program proposal and asked the Board to reject the proposal and to explore new and existing alternatives to diversify the teaching force. A copy of Mr. Cotto's prepared statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
24. Tom Stringfellow, resident of Manchester, spoke about several issues and publications, including the Indigenous People of the United States, opiate use by youth, a recent Time Magazine article on depression and anxiety in youth, issues faced by LGBT youth, white poverty in America, and implicit bias.
25. Lauren Anderson, Chair of the Education Department, Connecticut College, New London, urged the Board against approving Relay Graduate School of Education as a preparation provider in Connecticut, stating that it is not a graduate school and there is no credible evidence to support its claims to effectiveness in raising achievement, preparing teachers who can facilitate meaningful learning or retaining teachers of color. A copy of Ms. Anderson's prepared statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
26. Jeffrey Villar, Executive Director of the Connecticut Council for Education Reform, stated that the Relay proposal is not a proposal against traditional certification programs; rather, it is an opportunity to find alternate ways to recruit minorities into the teaching profession. He noted that the Department required several iterations of the proposal before recommending it to the Board. Further, this is a recommendation for a two-year approval, and the Board has the authority to hold the program accountable for success.
27. Jennifer Alexander, CEO of ConnCAN, expressed ConnCAN's support for the Board's approval of the Relay Graduate School of Education as a new educator preparation program in Connecticut. Ms. Alexander commended the program for its focus on instructional practice and recruiting and

training a diverse group of teachers. A copy of Ms. Alexander's prepared statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

28. Garth Harries, a private citizen and former Superintendent of the New Haven Public Schools, spoke in support of the Board's approval of Relay Graduate School of Education. Mr. Harries acknowledged that this program represents a partial answer to improving the teaching force and minority teacher recruitment. He noted that we must work toward success together, not separately.
29. Lisa Mack, Human Resources Director for the New Haven Public Schools, spoke about the challenges in attracting and retaining educators of color. She noted that Relay represents a good option and a good fit for some prospective teachers, and allows individuals a cost-effective and time-effective way to pursue certification in teaching.
30. Ann Cronin shared with the Board her background in education, including having earned Connecticut's distinguished English teacher of the year award, having supervised and taught hundreds of teachers, having taught for ten years, and having served as an advisor to districts seeking accreditation. Ms. Cronin stated that she believed Relay is an inadequate preparation program and does not provide participants with the necessary knowledge in critical areas (e.g., brain development, research in writing, etc.). Ms. Cronin stated that young educators of color are capable of and should be held to the same standards as their peers.
31. Gwen Samuel, Founder and President, Connecticut, Parents Union, urged the Board to ask: Can Relay Graduate School of Education bring innovative teachers into our classrooms? Ms. Samuel noted that we need to depart from our "steady habits" and seek solutions to enhancing diversity and quality in our schools. She noted that the process could have been improved through community engagement. Ms. Samuel encouraged the Board to approve the proposal or, if it deems appropriate, to table for a short period.

### III. Executive Session

The Board did not meet in executive session.

### V. Items Requiring Action

By unanimous consent, the Board agreed to consider agenda item V.A., Approval of Relay Graduate School of Education Alternate Route to Certification, at this time.

#### A. Approval of Relay Graduate School of Education Alternate Route to Certification

Mr. Vrabely moved, Mrs. Benham seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-145d-9(g)(3)(A) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, grants full program approval for the period November 2, 2016, through October 31, 2018, with an on-site visit no later than spring 2018, and continuous focused monitoring of the new program by the Connecticut State Department of Education, to the Relay Graduate School of Education, Alternate Route to Certification program, for the purpose of recommending

candidates for the Connecticut temporary 90-day teaching certificate in the following endorsement areas:

Program	Grade Level	Program Level	Program Type
Elementary Education	K-6*	Initial	Alternate Route to Certification
Secondary Education:			
English	7-12	Initial	Alternate Route to Certification
Mathematics	7-12	Initial	Alternate Route to Certification
General Science	7-12	Initial	Alternate Route to Certification
Biology	7-12	Initial	Alternate Route to Certification
Chemistry	7-12	Initial	Alternate Route to Certification
Physics	7-12	Initial	Alternate Route to Certification

\*Pursuant to Public Act 12-63, amended by Public Act 13-122 (Section 11), on or after July 1, 2017, an endorsement for elementary education will be issued for Grades 1–6 only to in-state graduates.

and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried.

IV. Consideration of Minutes

Dr. López moved, Mr. Vrabely seconded, that the Board adopt the Minutes of the October 5, 2016, State Board of Education Meeting.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

The Board recessed the meeting at 12:33 p.m.

The Board reconvened the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Present: Allan Taylor, Chairperson  
Theresa Hopkins-Staten, Vice Chairperson  
Erin D. Benham  
Erik M. Clemons  
William P. Davenport  
Terry Jones  
Estela López  
Maria I. Mojica  
Coral L. Ortiz, Student Member  
Malia K. Sieve  
Robert Trefry, Ex Officio  
Joseph Vrabely  
Stephen Wright

Absent: Amina S. Lampkin, Student Member  
Mark E. Ojakian, Ex Officio

V. Items Requiring Action (continued)

B. Adoption of Legislative Proposals

Mr. Vrabely moved, Mrs. Sieve seconded, that the State Board of Education adopts an additional bill to be added to the 2017 Legislative Proposals and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

VI. Report of the Chair

Chairperson Taylor referred Board members to the "Report of the Chair" in the Board's supplemental materials folder.

VII. Report of the Commissioner

Commissioner Wentzell referenced her written report. The Commissioner noted that she continues to engage in activities that focus particular attention on the Board's Five-year Comprehensive Plan. She indicated that in addition to her own outreach efforts, all chiefs and team members bring the Five-year Comprehensive Plan when they meet with stakeholders, connecting the plan to their content areas. Dr. Wentzell noted that she was pleased to announce that Lauren Danner, a science

teacher at and graduate of North Branford High School, was named the 2017 Teacher of the Year. Ms. Danner will be recognized at the Teacher of the Year Celebration in November.

VIII. Financial Matters

Chief Financial Officer Kathy Demsey provided a financial update to the Board, noting that the Department is on track to remain within budget. She noted that the Connecticut Technical High School System (CTHSS), under Dr. Torres' leadership, has been able to accommodate the required budget reductions within the system. Ms. Demsey referred Board members to a document titled, "CTHSS: Comparison of Net Current Expenditures," showing comparisons of NCEs over the 2014-15 and 2015-16 years.

IX. Consent Agenda

Mr. Vrabely moved, Mr. Davenport seconded, that the Board consider consent agenda items IX.A., Continuing Educator Preparation Program Approval: CREC Advanced Alternate Route to Certification for Cross Endorsement in Special Education; and IX.B., Receipt of RESC Report: English Learner Survey -- Data Analysis and Feasibility Study .

At the request of Mrs. Hopkins-Staten, agenda item IX.A., Continuing Educator Preparation Program Approval: CREC Advanced Alternate Route to Certification for Cross Endorsement in Special Education, was removed from the consent agenda.

A. Continuing Educator Preparation Program Approval: CREC Advanced Alternate Route to Certification for Cross Endorsement in Special Education

Mrs. Hopkins-Staten moved, Mrs. Benham seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-145d-9(g)(1)(A) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, grants full approval to the Advanced Alternate Route to Certification for Cross Endorsement in Special Education (AARC) program, administered by the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC), for the period November 2, 2016, through September 30, 2019, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

At the request of Dr. López, agenda item IX.B., Receipt of RESC Report: English Learner Survey -- Data Analysis and Feasibility Study, was removed from the consent agenda.

B. Receipt of RESC Report: English Learner Survey -- Data Analysis and Feasibility Study

Dr. López moved, Mr. Vrabely seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 298 of Public Act 15-5, receives the Connecticut Alliance of Regional Educational Service Centers' English Learner Survey Data Analysis and Feasibility Study dated October 1, 2016, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

X. Items for Discussion

A. Report of the Commissioner's Council on Mathematics

Interim Chief Academic Officer Isabelina Rodriguez and Education Consultant Jennifer Michalek summarized the Report of the Commissioner's Council on Mathematics, which was commenced by Commissioner Wentzell in 2015 in response to the Smarter Balanced test results in mathematics. Ms. Michalek presented an overview of the Council's work and their recommendations, as well as initiatives planned to assist districts in improving mathematics instruction and achievement. Discussion ensued.

The Commissioner recognized all members of the Math Council and those who were here earlier today.

[Coral Ortiz left the meeting at 2:07 p.m.]

B. Report on Chronic Absenteeism

Chief Operating Officer Charlene Russell-Tucker and Education Consultant Kari Sullivan presented a PowerPoint presentation on chronic absenteeism. They explained Connecticut's success in this area, including a tiered approach to prevention and intervention, and effective high-impact strategies to address absenteeism.

Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan presented data and accountability on the chronic absence landscape in Connecticut. Chief Turnaround Officer Desi Nesmith presented on the change in data outcomes over two years in selected Alliance Districts. Mrs. Russell-Tucker emphasized the goal for all students to be in school and engaged.

Discussion ensued.

[Stephen Wright left the meeting at 2:23 p.m.]

C. Computer Science Position Statement

Interim Chief Academic Officer Isabelina Rodriguez and Education Consultant Jennifer Michalek highlighted the work of the Computer Science Advisory Group, which was charged to examine computer science education in Connecticut and develop recommendations to support the growth of computer science in the state. The draft position statement, created through the collective work of the stakeholders on the Computer Science Advisory Group, was vetted by the Academic Standards and Support Committee, and will be presented for adoption at the December meeting of the State Board of Education.

[Erik Clemons left the meeting at 2:51 p.m.]

[Erin Benham left the meeting at 3:00 p.m.]

- D. Due to time constraints, Agenda item, X.D., National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 2015 Science Results, was postponed to the December Board meeting.

XI. Committee Reports

A. Academic Standards and Assessment

No report was given.

B. Accountability and Support

Dr. López reported that the committee met on October 17, 2016, to review progress on the district plans for Wilbur Cross High School in New Haven and Pathways Academy in Norwalk. The committee will meet on November 7, 2016, to review progress reports on Crosby High School in Waterbury and Dunbar School in Bridgeport.

C. Finance, Audit, and Budget

Mr. Taylor reported that the committee last met on August 31, 2016, and will be meeting on December 1, 2016.

D. Legislation and Policy Development

Mrs. Hopkins-Staten reported that the committee met this morning. Chief Talent Officer Dr. Sarah Barzee and Division Director of the Bureau of Educator Effectiveness Shannon Marimón presented to the committee an overview on Educator Preparation Advisory Council (EPAC)'s recommendations, which will be brought to the Board in December. The committee also discussed a draft of the guidance document regarding Praxis Core, a pre-service assessment for candidates in CT educator preparation programs. The guidance document will be brought before the Board for review and approval pursuant to Public Act

16-41 An Act Concerning the Recommendations of the Minority Teacher Recruitment Taskforce.

- E. Connecticut Technical High School System (CTHSS) Board  
Mr. Trefry reported on the following: (1) public reaction to the potential closing of two schools, and the support expressed by the legislature and business and industry community; (2) the Board's discussions with CBIA on the relationship of investments in the CTHSS and returns on investments; and (3) the appointment of a new CTHSS board member, Ms. Gina Chiarella Schum.

- F. NASBE

No report was given.

Chairperson Taylor adjourned the meeting at 3:33 p.m.

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Secretary  
State Board of Education