

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

Minutes
State Board of Education Meeting
March 1, 2017
(Approved April 5, 2017)

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the State Board of Education (hereinafter "Board") met on Wednesday, March 1, 2017, in Plaza North Room C and D of the State Office Building, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, Connecticut.

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Allan Taylor called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

Present: Allan B. Taylor, Chairperson
Erin D. Benham
Erik M. Clemons
William P. Davenport
Donald F. Harris, Jr.
Amina S. Lampkin, Student Member
Estela López
Coral Ortiz, Student Member
Malia K. Sieve
Robert J. Trefry, Ex Officio
Joseph J. Vrabely, Jr.
Stephen P. Wright

Absent: Terry H. Jones
Maria I. Mojica
Mark Ojakian, Ex Officio

Oath of Office

Attorney Peter M. Haberlandt, Commissioner of the Superior Court, administered the Oath of Office to Donald F. Harris, Jr. to the Board (a copy is in the official file).

[Commissioner Dr. Dianna Wentzell was absent due to providing testimony at the Connecticut General Assembly Education Committee's public hearing.]

II. Public Participation

1. Valerie Wilson, president of the Urban League of Southern Connecticut, urged the Board to vote in favor of the renewal of the Achievement First charter schools.
2. Kadisha Coates, resident of Bridgeport, spoke about the positive impact Achievement First Bridgeport Academy (AF) has had on her life, her child's education, and the Bridgeport community. She noted that AF provided an excellent learning experience

and instilled in children and families an expectation that they will be prepared for college. A copy of Ms. Coates' written statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

3. Reverend Kelcy Steele, Varick Memorial AME Zion Church, New Haven, and member of the Booker T. Washington Academy Board, spoke in support of the renewal of Elm City Charter School and Amistad Academy, and noted the benefits of the Greenfield Model.
4. Sharkia Bookert, a parent of three children who attend Achievement First schools (Amistad High, Elm City College Preparatory, and Amistad Elementary), described the advantages the schools provide to parents and students, and asked the Board to renew the charters. A copy of Ms. Bookert's written statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
5. Tessa Lindo, parent of an Amistad Academy student, stated that the school has a long waitlist, and she is very pleased that her daughter was admitted to Amistad. She commended the school for setting a high bar for students and its support for parents. A copy of Ms. Tesso's written statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
6. LaQuincy Franklin, a resident of New Haven and parent of two Amistad Academy students, stated that the school prepared her children well; they learned to read at an early age, were encouraged to attend college, and were taught the importance of giving back to the community. Ms. Franklin urged the Board to renew the charter. A copy of Ms. Franklin's written statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
7. Kimberly and Craig Bruce, parents of a student who attends Achievement First Bridgeport Academy (AFBA), urged the Board to renew the charter of AFBA. They described how the school has prepared their son well for his future, and provides so many families a high quality education. A copy of Ms. Bruce's written statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
8. Roland G. Axelson, a longtime public school educator in Connecticut, expressed his personal beliefs about the need for students to be exposed to cultural and religious diversity (and the study of Islam in particular) if they are to become educated and informed citizens. A copy of Mr. Axelson's written statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
9. Milly Arciniegas, executive director of the Hartford Parent University, expressed her dismay concerning the findings of the Office of the Child Advocate (OCA) Investigative Report Regarding Compliance of Hartford Public Schools with State Laws Regarding Mandated Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect. Ms. Arciniegas stated that the State Board of Education needs to ensure that children are kept safe; educators who abuse children (e.g., as noted in the OCA report and those who were involved in labeling students at SAND Elementary School) should not be in our school buildings, and their certification should be taken away.
10. Samantha Pacheco, mother of three children in the Hartford Public Schools and a president of SAND Elementary School PTO, told the Board that the staff members who

were involved in labeling students at SAND were still employed, and proposed that they be removed from the school and have their certification removed. Ms. Pacheco stated that she will continue to advocate for children until her concerns are addressed.

11. Tynima Toney, parent of two children in the Hartford Public Schools, expressed that she was upset with the report of students being abused in the Hartford Public Schools, and stated that the certification of those involved should be taken away. She stated that parents are mandated to send their children to school and should be assured their children are in a supportive environment with quality educators.
12. Gwen Samuel, Connecticut Parents' Union, stated that the State Board of Education (SBE) should serve as an unbiased broker for education decision-making, and cannot delegate its responsibilities. Ms. Samuel criticized Chairperson Taylor's remarks made at the January 4, 2017, State Board of Education meeting during the Board's consideration of a plan to correct racial imbalance in the Fairfield Public Schools; in particular, the use of the term "ghetto". She noted that she would like the minutes to reflect this. Ms. Samuel stated that the SBE needs to convene a meeting to follow up on the findings of Office of the Child Advocate report, and to vocalize its intent to investigate child abuse and neglect, and seclusion and restraint, in order to make sure those children affected are "made whole" and to restore trust with parents.
13. Thomas Stringfellow, resident of Manchester, addressed the Board about Black History Month, commenting on the movie "Fences," the work of Maya Angelou, a PBS documentary on Africa, and the importance of teaching about cultural relevancy in our public schools.

Mr. Taylor addressed previous comments about his remarks at the January 4, 2017, SBE meeting during the Board's consideration of Fairfield's plan to correct racial imbalance at McKinley School. He stated that it certainly was not his intention to use the word "ghetto" in a negative way; rather, he was referring to a concentration of a population within a certain area. Mr. Taylor stated that he is deeply sorry that his use of this word could be misinterpreted and that it caused concern.

III. Executive Session

The Board did not meet in executive session.

IV. Consideration of Minutes

A. January 26, 2017, State Board of Education, Workshop

Dr. López moved, Mrs. Benham seconded, that the Board adopt the Minutes of the January 26, 2017, State Board of Education Workshop.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

B. February 1, 2017, State Board of Education, Meeting

Mr. Vrabely moved, Dr. López seconded, that the Board adopt the Minutes of the February 1, 2017, State Board of Education Meeting.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

V. Items Requiring for Action

A. Approval of Marin School, Bridgeport, for Cohort III of the Commissioner's Network

Mr. Vrabely moved, Mrs. Benham seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes, approves continued participation of Luis Munoz Marin School, Bridgeport, in the Commissioner's Network for an additional year commencing July 1, 2017, and directs the school to report to the State Board of Education Accountability and Support Committee on its priorities and progress in the 2017-18 school year; and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action, including, but not limited to, expending such funds as may be necessary to execute and implement the foregoing.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Approval of Lincoln-Bassett School, New Haven, for Cohort III of the Commissioner's Network

Mr. Clemons announced that he was recusing himself from agenda item V.B. and would abstain from voting. Mr. Clemons then left the meeting room and remained outside the room until the conclusion of activity concerning this agenda item.

Dr. López moved, Mr. Vrabely seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes, approves continued participation of Lincoln-Bassett Community School, New Haven in the Commissioner's Network for an additional year commencing July 1, 2017, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action, including, but not limited to, expending such funds as may be necessary to execute and implement the foregoing.

VOTE ON

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| MOTION: | In favor: | Benham, Davenport, Harris, López, Sieve, Taylor, Vrabely, Wright |
| | Opposed: | 0 |
| | Recused: | Clemons |
| | Absent: | Jones, Mojica |

Motion carried unanimously.

[Mr. Clemons returned to the meeting at 11:47 a.m.]

C. Approval of Charter School Renewal: Elm City, New Haven

Dr. López moved, Mrs. Sieve seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to subsection (g) of Section 10-66bb of the Connecticut General Statutes, renews the charter of Elm City College Preparatory from July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2021, and approves the material change to expand the Greenfield Model to include Grades 7 and 8, in the 2017-18 school year, subject to the conditions noted in the Commissioner's March 1, 2017, memorandum to the State Board of Education, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Dr. López moved, Mr. Davenport seconded, that the Board amend the language in the resolution to address the school's compliance with certification.

Dr. López moved, Mr. Davenport seconded, that the proposed motion to amend be withdrawn.

The Board unanimously agreed to recess and provide Director of Legal Affairs Peter M. Haberlandt and his staff an opportunity to draft a substitute resolution.

The Board recessed the meeting at 1:20 p.m.

The Board reconvened the meeting at 1:50p.m.

Present: Allan Taylor, Chairperson
Erin D. Benham
Erik M. Clemons
William P. Davenport
Donald F. Harris
Amina S. Lampkin, Student Member
Estela López
Coral L. Ortiz, Student Member
Malia K. Sieve
Robert Trefry, Ex Officio
Joseph Vrabely
Stephen Wright

Absent: Terry Jones
Maria I. Mojica
Mark E. Ojakian, Ex Officio

V. Items Requiring for Action

C. Approval of Charter School Renewal: Elm City, New Haven (continued)

Dr. López moved, Mr. Vrabely seconded, that the Board consider the following substitute resolution:

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to subsection (g) of Section 10-66bb of the Connecticut General Statutes, renews the charter of Elm City College Preparatory (ECCP) from July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2020, and approves the material change to expand the Greenfield Model to include Grades 7 and 8, in the 2017-18 school year, subject to (a) the conditions noted in the Commissioner's March 1, 2017, memorandum to the State Board of Education, and (b) the annual submission of a report satisfactory to the Commissioner concerning certification compliance, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action and to report to the Board the Commissioner's evaluation of the status of ECCP's certification compliance at the Board's January meeting each year.

VOTE ON

SUBSTITUTE

RESOLUTION:

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|------------|---|
| In favor: | Benham, Clemons, Davenport, Harris, López, Sieve, Taylor, Vrabely, Wright |
| Opposed: | 0 |
| Abstained: | 0 |
| Absent: | Jones, Mojica |

Motion carried unanimously.

The Board recessed the meeting for lunch at 1:53 p.m.

The Board reconvened the meeting at 2:27 p.m.

Present: Allan Taylor, Chairperson
Erin D. Benham
Erik M. Clemons
William P. Davenport
Donald F. Harris
Amina S. Lampkin, Student Member
Estela López
Coral L. Ortiz, Student Member
Malia K. Sieve
Robert Trefry, Ex Officio
Joseph Vrabely
Stephen Wright

Absent: Terry Jones
Maria I. Mojica
Mark E. Ojakian, Ex Officio

D. Approval of Charter School Renewal: Achievement First, Bridgeport

Mrs. Sieve moved, Mr. Vrabely seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to subsection (g) of Section 10-66bb of the Connecticut General Statutes, renews the charter of Achievement First Bridgeport Academy (AFBA) from July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2020, subject to (a) the conditions noted in the Commissioner's March 1, 2017, memorandum to the State Board of Education, and (b) the annual submission of a report satisfactory to the Commissioner concerning certification compliance, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action and to report to the Board the Commissioner's evaluation of the status of AFBA's certification compliance at the Board's January meeting each year.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

J. Election of Vice Chairperson of the State Board of Education

Mr. Vrabely moved, Mr. Clemons seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 2 of Article II of its Bylaws, elects Estela López as Vice Chairperson of the State Board of Education, for the period March 1, 2017, until the next biennial organizational meeting, at which an election for Vice Chairperson will be held.

VOTE ON

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| MOTION: | In favor: | Benham, Clemons, Davenport, Harris, López, Sieve, Taylor, Vrabely, Wright |
| | Opposed: | 0 |
| | Abstained: | 0 |
| | Absent: | Jones, Mojica |

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. Mr. Taylor highlighted that New England Secondary School Council (NESSC) will host its 2017 High School Redesign in Action Conference on March 27-28, 2017, in Hartford. Mr. Taylor extended an invitation to members of the Board.

VII. Report of the Commissioner

Commissioner Wentzell provided Board members with a written report in advance of the meeting; a copy is enclosed in the Supplemental Materials folder. In Commissioner Wentzell's absence, Deputy Commissioner Ellen Cohn highlighted the following:

- March 1, 2017, Commissioner Wentzell testified before the Education Committee regarding a series of important education-related proposals.
- On February 21, 2017, the Commissioner testified before the Appropriations Committee to discuss the Governor's proposed 2018-19 biennial budget as it pertains to the Department.
- Commissioner Wentzell presented remarks at the State of Connecticut's 16th Annual Black Heritage Month Celebration at 450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford.

VIII. Financial Matters

Chief Financial Officer Kathy Demsey was required to attend the Education Committee public hearing. In her absence, no report was given.

IX. Consent Agenda

A. Amendment to 2017 Meeting Schedule

Mr. Clemons moved, Mrs. Benham seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 1-225 of the Connecticut General Statutes, amends its 2017 schedule of regular meeting dates by changing the June meeting to June 14, 2017, as follows:

January 4, 2017
February 1, 2017
March 1, 2017
April 5, 2017
May 3, 2017
June 14, 2017
July 19, 2017
August 3, 2017 (retreat)
September 6, 2017
October 4, 2017
November 1, 2017
December 6, 2017

and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

VOTE ON

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| MOTION: | In favor: | Benham, Clemons, Davenport, Harris, López, Sieve, Taylor, Vrabely, Wright |
| | Opposed: | 0 |
| | Abstained: | 0 |
| | Absent: | Jones, Mojica |

Motion carried unanimously.

X. Items for Discussion

A. Accountability Index

Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan presented on Connecticut's Next Generation Accountability System with the 2015-16 results. He reviewed the 12 indicators of academic growth. Discussed ensued.

[Commissioner Dianna R. Wentzell returned from the General Assembly's Education Committee's public hearing and joined the meeting at 3:15 p.m.]

Commissioner Wentzell noted that the Education Committee considered our agency bill, An Act Implementing The Recommendations Of The Department Of Education, and a separate bill, An Act Concerning Connecticut's Seal Of Bilingualism.

B. Update on the Report of the Office of Child Advocate Regarding Mandated Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect

Legal Director Peter Haberlandt, and staff attorney Matthew Venhorst presented background information on the Department's legal authority concerning educators' licensure, including revocation and denial of certification. Attorney Haberlandt discussed the Department's role in investigating allegations of educator misconduct, and providing guidance and technical assistance to school districts.

Nancy Pugliese, Chief of the Bureau of Investigations and Professional Practice, described the process and timelines for reporting suspected abuse or neglect, and the definition and responsibilities of mandated reporters. Ms. Pugliese explained the related responsibilities of local and state agencies (i.e., school district, Department of Children and Families, Department of Education, State's Attorney, State Police) with regard to educator abuse and/or neglect.

A lengthy discussion followed in which the Board expressed its outrage with the findings contained in the OCA report and the urgency of addressing these findings. The Board directed the Department to draft a statement condemning both the abuse that took place in the Hartford school system, and the lack of compliance with laws regarding mandated reporting of such abuse or neglect. Discussion ensued regarding the need to communicate to all school districts and staff their legal responsibilities and the reporting process. They asked that the Department report back to the Board and invite the Hartford Public School System's acting superintendent to present her plan to prevent such actions from occurring in the future.

[Amina Lampkin left the meeting at 3:05 p.m.]

[Stephen Wright left the meeting at 3:06 p.m.]

XI. Committee Reports

A. Academic Standards and Assessment

In Mr. Wright's absence, no report was given.

B. Accountability and Support

Dr. López reported that at the February 6, 2017, meeting, the committee received a progress report on and engaged in discussion with representatives of Lincoln Bassett School, New Haven, and Marin School, Bridgeport. The next committee meeting is scheduled for March 6, 2017.

C. Finance, Audit, and Budget

Mr. Taylor report that the committee was in the process of scheduling its next meeting. No report was given.

D. Legislation and Policy Development

The committee did not meet.

E. Connecticut Technical High School System Board

Mr. Trefry reported that a board meeting was held on March 2, 2017. He stated that the CTHSS Three-year Strategic Plan was almost up. The board will be working on the next Three-year Strategic Plan and anticipates completing it in December.

F. NASBE

No report was given.

Chairperson Taylor adjourned the meeting at 4:49 p.m.

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