

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

Minutes
State Board of Education Meeting
September 6, 2017
(Approved October 4, 2017)

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the State Board of Education (hereinafter "Board") met on Wednesday, September 6, 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 9:46 a.m.

Present: Allan B. Taylor, Chairperson
Estela López, Vice Chairperson
Erin D. Benham
Erik M. Clemons
William P. Davenport
*Donald F. Harris, Jr.
Maria I. Mojica
Dr. Jane Gates (designee representing Mark Ojakian, Ex Officio)
Malia K. Sieve
Robert J. Trefry, Ex Officio
Joseph J. Vrabely, Jr.

Absent: Terry H. Jones
Stephen P. Wright

Oath of Office

Attorney Peter M. Haberlandt, Commissioner of the Superior Court, administered the Oath of Office to student members Saomai Nguyen and Jaweria Shah.

II. Public Participation

1. Nick Caruso, Senior Staff Associate for Field Services at the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education's (CABE), spoke on CABE's involvement with the training of the Winchester Board of Education with its Lighthouse Project in partnership with the Connecticut State Department of Education. Mr. Caruso indicated that he felt privileged to have worked with the Winchester board, and praised the leadership of Freeman Burr and Dr. Ellen Stoltz. Mr. Caruso advised the State Board to continue to provide support to the Winchester board and Winchester Public Schools. Mr. Caruso stated that CABE will continue to provide support to the Winchester board and the district.

2. Lauren Anderson, Chair of the Education Department at Connecticut College, New London, spoke on teacher preparation at Connecticut-based educational schools and programs. Dr. Anderson stated that her colleagues, deans and directors of other Connecticut-based educational schools and programs are working hard to create innovative and inspirational opportunities for teachers to begin their careers in good standing.
3. Jessica Haxhi, Supervisor of World Languages for New Haven Public Schools, spoke in support of the agenda item V.B., Seal of Biliteracy Guidelines. Ms. Haxhi stated that the proposed Connecticut Seal of Biliteracy Guidelines are closely aligned with the guidelines that have been adopted in 28 other states. Ms. Haxhi thanked Commissioner Wentzell and her team. She especially acknowledged Deputy Commissioner Ellen Cohn, Megan Alubicki Flick, and Laura Stefon for their hard work and support of making this Seal a reality. A copy of Ms. Haxhi's written statement is included in the official file of this meeting.
4. Dr. Christine Carver, Superintendent of Bethel Public Schools, spoke in support of agenda item X.B., Recommendations from the Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) Taskforce. Dr. Carver stated that as a member of the Taskforce, she represented the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS). Dr. Carver indicated that she was formerly a director of special education, a special education teacher, and most importantly, a parent of a 22 year-old son with autism, who was educated within the Connecticut public school system. Dr. Carver advocated that a superintendent representative be included as a member of the Advisory Work Group and that clear guidance for districts and prioritized recommendations should be within the parameters of IDEA.
5. Kate Field, Teacher Development Specialist at Connecticut Education Association (CEA), spoke on streamlining the teacher professional development requirements in Connecticut. Ms. Field highlighted CEA's new Professional Learning Academy that was designed to help districts offer more teacher-driven personalized learning. A copy of Ms. Field's written statement is included in the official file of this meeting.
6. Deborah Richards, Director of Student Services, Capital Region Education Council (CREC), and colleague, Eric Protulis, Director of Special Services at EASTCONN, were present on behalf of the RESC Alliance to comment on agenda item X.B., Recommendations from the Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) Taskforce, relative to observation of students as part of the IEE process.
7. Katharine Gabrielson, Director of Special Services, Ansonia Public Schools and Immediate Past President of Connecticut Council of Administrators of Special Education (ConnCASE), spoke on agenda item X.B., Recommendations from the Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) Taskforce. Ms. Gabrielson participated on the Taskforce as a representative of ConnCASE. She thanked Chairman Taylor, Commissioner Wentzell, and the State Board members for convening that group. Ms. Gabrielson commented on the Taskforce's recommendations, and reiterated prior comments made by colleagues for ongoing continuity of the work by allowing the members of the Taskforce to become part of the Advisory Work Group.

8. Michele Ridolfi-O'Neil, Educational Issues Specialist, Connecticut Education Association (CEA), spoke on the teacher preparation programs and the need for avoidance of a two-tiered teacher preparation system. She thanked the Board for recognizing the challenges facing the teaching profession, including the teacher shortage and minority teacher recruitment and retention. A copy of Ms. Ridolfi-O'Neil's written statement is included in the official file of this meeting.
9. Thomas Stringfellow, a Manchester resident, congratulated the two new student members. Mr. Stringfellow highlighted two books: (i) "Who Was Roberto Clemente?" and (ii) "The Color Complex: The Politics of Skin Color in a New Millennium." Mr. Stringfellow referenced the cover story of UCONN Magazine (Summer 2017), The Next Generation of Farming. Mr. Stringfellow stated that education is vital whether special needs or not, or bilingual.
10. Jessica Martinez, a parent leader in Bridgeport, Connecticut, spoke on the budget. Ms. Martinez expressed that Connecticut needs to have justice and liberty for all our children. Ms. Martinez stated that she wants to continue advocating for her City of Bridgeport.
11. Chaila Robinson, a parent in Bridgeport, Connecticut, spoke on the budget. Ms. Robinson stated that she has two children in the Bridgeport public school system. She expressed her disappointment with the Bridgeport Board of Education concerning the children.

[Mr. Donald Harris arrived at 10:40 a.m.]

12. Gwen Samuel, President and Founder, Connecticut Parents Union, spoke on the budget. She first congratulated the two new student members. Ms. Samuel stated that without a budget, communication is vital as we are in a crisis which has implications to municipalities and children.
13. John Flanders, a father of a young man who went through the special education program, the Executive Director of the Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center, and a member of the IEE Taskforce, spoke on agenda, X.B. Mr. Flanders is also a member of the Cromwell Board of Education. Mr. Flanders stated that there is still a need for a framework that allows parents and schools to determine how and when they can observe their children.

III. Executive Session

The Board will go into executive session during this meeting.

IV. Consideration of Minutes

A. July 19, 2017, State Board of Education Meeting

Mr. Vrabely moved, Mr. Davenport seconded, that the Board adopt the minutes of the July 19, 2017, State Board of Education Meeting.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

V. Items Requiring Action

Dr. López moved, Mr. Vrabely seconded, that the Board consider agenda item V.A., Amendment to the Fairfield Board of Education's Plan to Correct Racial Imbalance at McKinley School, at this time.

A. Amendment to the Fairfield Board of Education's Plan to Correct Racial Imbalance at McKinley School

A panel consisting of the Director of Legal and Governmental Affairs, Peter Haberlandt, Dr. Toni Jones, Superintendent, Fairfield Public Schools, Philip Dwyer, Chair, Fairfield Board of Education, and Michael Cummings, Chief Academic Officer, Fairfield Public Schools, presented Fairfield School Board's Plan to Correct Racial Imbalance at McKinley Elementary School to the Board.

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

The Board recessed the meeting for lunch at 11:59 p.m.

The Board reconvened the meeting at 1:02 p.m.

Present: Allan B. Taylor, Chairperson
Estela López, Vice Chairperson
Erin D. Benham
Erik M. Clemons
William P. Davenport

Donald F. Harris, Jr.
Maria I. Mojica
Dr. Jane Gates (designee representing Mark Ojakian, Ex Officio)
Robert J. Trefry, Ex Officio
Joseph J. Vrabely, Jr.

Absent: Terry H. Jones
Malia K. Sieve
Stephen P. Wright

V. Items Requiring Action (continued)

A. Amendment to the Fairfield Board of Education's Plan to Correct Racial Imbalance at McKinley School

The Board was provided with copies of a draft resolution. Mr. Taylor read the following resolution into the minutes of the meeting:

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Sections 10-226a and 10-226b of the Connecticut General Statutes, accepts the Amendment to the Fairfield Board of Education's Racial Imbalance Plan, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action, conditioned upon the following:

1. That the Fairfield Board of Education's implementation of its plan, as amended, shall be subject to continuing review and evaluation by the State Department of Education (SDE).
2. That such review and evaluation shall include, but not be limited to, discussion with the Fairfield Board of Education concerning the feasibility and efficacy of further expanding open choice opportunities as a component of the school district's plan to achieve racial balance, with the outcome of such discussion to be communicated to the State Board by SDE at an appropriate time determined by the Commissioner.
3. That the SDE shall provide update reports to the State Board of Education in such manner and at such times as determined appropriate by the Commissioner or at the direction of the State Board.
4. That if at any time the State Board of Education determines that further action or discussion concerning the Fairfield Board of Education's plan to correct racial imbalance is necessary or advisable, the State Board will advise the Commissioner, who will provide reasonable notice to the Fairfield Board of Education.

Mr. Vrabely moved, Dr. López seconded, that the Board accept the resolution as read by Mr. Taylor.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

X. Items for Discussion

The Board unanimously agreed to consider agenda item X.A., Report of the Winchester Receiver, at this time.

A. Report of the Winchester Receiver

A presentation panel comprising of Freeman Burr, CSDE Receiver, Doug Pfenninger, Chair, Winchester Board of Education, and Melony Brady-Shanley, Superintendent, Winchester Public Schools, presented the Summary Report of Winchester Receivership to the Board. Robert Geiger, Winchester Town Manager, joined the presentation and provided his comments. The panelists presented a PowerPoint presentation to the Board with an overview on curriculum, board of education training and transition preparedness, finance and fiscal accountability and oversight, special education, superintendent search and selection process, and the Gilbert School. Discussion ensued.

V. Items Requiring Action (continued)

By unanimous consent, the Board added agenda items, V.C., Certificate of Recognition of Dr. Ellen Stoltz, and V.D., Certificate of Recognition of Mr. Freeman Burr to the agenda, which reads as follows:

C. Certificate of Recognition of Dr. Ellen Stoltz

Mr. Vrabely moved, Mrs. Benham seconded, that the Board approve the following recognition:

CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION
in honor of
Dr. Ellen Stoltz

upon her completion of assignment as the Durational Project Manager for the Connecticut State Department of Education, and with appreciation for her significant and lasting contributions to the improvement of district operations, curriculum, instruction, and assessment for the Winchester Public Schools.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

D. Certificate of Recognition of Mr. Freeman Burr

Mr. Vrabely moved, Mrs. Benham seconded, that the Board approve the following recognition:

CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION
in honor of
Mr. Freeman Burr

upon his completion of assignment as the Receiver for Winchester Public Schools for the Connecticut State Department of Education, and with appreciation for his significant and lasting contributions to the improvement of district operations, curriculum, instruction, and assessment for the Winchester Public Schools.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

III. Executive Session

On a motion by Mr. Vrabely, seconded by Dr. López, the Board voted unanimously to move into executive session at 1:36 p.m. for the purpose of discussing pending litigation with counsel.

Present in executive session were Board members Mrs. Benham, Mr. Clemons, Mr. Davenport, Mr. Harris, Dr. López, Mrs. Mojica, Ms. Nguyen, Dr. Jane Gates (designee representing Mark Ojakian), Ms. Shah, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Trefry, and Mr. Vrabely. Also present for all or part of the executive session were Commissioner Wentzell, Assistant Attorneys General Ralph Urban and Walter Menjivar, and Director of Legal and Governmental Affairs Peter Haberlandt.

The Board recessed its Executive Session at 2:01 p.m.

The Board reconvened its meeting at 2:01 p.m.

On motion by Mr. Vrabely, seconded by Dr. López, the Board voted unanimously to move out of executive session and reconvene in public session at 2:01 p.m. Present were Board members Mrs. Benham, Mr. Davenport, Mr. Harris, Dr. López, Mrs. Mojica, Ms. Nguyen, Dr. Jane Gates (designee representing Mark Ojakian), Ms. Shah, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Trefry, and Mr. Vrabely. Absent were Mr. Clemons, Mr. Jones, Mrs. Sieve, and Mr. Wright.

V. Items Requiring Action (continued)

B. Seal of Biliteracy Guidelines

Mrs. Benham moved, Mr. Davenport seconded, that the State Board of Education, in support of Public Act 17-29 adopts the Connecticut State Seal of Biliteracy Guidelines, to provide districts with guidance for implementing the Connecticut State Seal of Biliteracy and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

X. Items for Discussion (continued)

The Board unanimously agreed to consider agenda item X.B., Recommendations from the Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) Taskforce, at this time.

A. Recommendations from the Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) Taskforce

Deputy Commissioner Ellen Cohn and Bureau Chief of Special Education Bryan Klimkiewicz presented to the Board on the Recommendations from the Independent

Educational Evaluation (IEE) Taskforce. The Deputy Commissioner thanked the Taskforce that was assembled by the Department, which was composed of stakeholders representing a wide group of constituencies. She further thanked Esther Bobowick, Director of Professional Development Services, at Cooperative Educational Services (CES) for being the facilitator to the group. Deputy Commissioner Cohn also thanked and acknowledged Gail Mangs, Education Consultant in the Special Education Bureau, for her years of service, as Ms. Mangs is retiring in September 2017. She also thanked Attorney Louis Todisco, Legal and Governmental Affairs, State Department of Education for sitting on the Taskforce.

The Deputy Commissioner provided a summary for the existence of the Taskforce. The Taskforce was established to review issues raised by a "Request for Amendment of Regulation" filed pursuant to Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies Section 10-76d-9. The Petition sought to have the Board amend Section 10-76d-9 of the Connecticut Regulations to: (a) establish requirements concerning IEEs requested by parents from boards of education in connection with the development of individualized education programs under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, and (b) establish guidelines for the observation of students in school by parents and consultants.

On February 1, 2017, Connecticut State Board of Education agreed to the following four actions:

1. Establish a taskforce on the implication of independent educational evaluations, observations, and related matters composed of representative stakeholders;
2. Taskforce review issues raised by the petition to include public meetings where interested parties could express their views on these issues and formulate the appropriate actions to be taken;
3. Provide a report to the State Board of Education concerning their findings and their recommendations within 180 days, and that is why we are here today; and
4. Issue a guidance memo, the Department, should issue a guidance memo to all Connecticut superintendents summarizing their existing obligations under law, which occurred late in the spring.

The Deputy Commissioner then introduced the Department's new Bureau Chief of Special Education Bryan Klimkiewicz. Mr. Klimkiewicz then reviewed the processes of Taskforce and the recommendations made to the Board.

VI. Report of the Chair

No written report was provided.

VII. Report of the Commissioner

Commissioner Wentzell referenced her written report. Commissioner Wentzell highlighted with pride that on August 15, 2017, Connecticut's ESSA plan was approved by the U.S. Department of Education (USED). She thanked Deputy Commissioner Ellen Cohn and the senior team for its leadership and ongoing communication and collaboration with USED. The Commissioner participated in a webinar that was a collaboration between the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and Attendance Works on chronic absence. She commented that the real participant was Charlene Russell-Tucker. The Commissioner stated that Connecticut is viewed as a leader on chronic absenteeism, and she acknowledged Ms. Russell-Tucker's many years of dedicated leadership that has placed us in that standing. On September 5th, the Commissioner attended a back-to-school visit at Howell Cheney Technical High School with CTHSS Interim Superintendent Jeff Wihbey. She commented that Mr. Trefry would be proud of the students, administration, and faculty. It was a wonderful visit with good attendance from two members from the state legislature. The Board should be very proud of the technical high schools openings. Mr. Wihbey and the principal of Cheney Tech shared that it was able to fully enroll for the 9th grade. It is exciting that more and more kids of Connecticut are able to take advantage of the terrific opportunities in our technical high school system.

VIII. Financial Matters

No report was given.

XI. Committee Reports

A. Academic Standards and Assessment

The committee will be meeting on October 11, 2017.

B. Accountability and Support

Dr. López reported that the committee will be meeting on October 16, 2017.

C. Finance, Audit, and Budget

Mr. Taylor reported that the committee met on August 30, 2017.

D. Legislation and Policy Development

Mr. Vrabely reported that the committee met this morning. Mr. Vrabely stated that the item discussed would be coming to the full Board. Charlene Russell-Tucker with assistance from Peter Haberlandt talked on: (i) guidelines for expelled students; (ii) alternate learning environments; and (iii) tailoring specific plans for students which involve monitoring and transition back to school.

E. Connecticut Technical High School System Board

Mr. Trefry commented on a visit with Mr. Wihbey to J.M. Wright Technical High School. The students commented that they wanted to attend for the trades. At the September 19, 2017, board meeting, they approved a tuition rate for the aviation program. There is a new Chairman of the Finance Committee, Commissioner Scott Jackson.

F. NASBE

No report was given.

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