

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Hartford**

**Minutes  
State Board of Education Meeting  
February 6, 2019  
(Approved March 6, 2019)**

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the State Board of Education (hereinafter "Board") met on Wednesday, February 6, 2019, in Plaza North Meeting 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 9:49 a.m.

Present: Allan B. Taylor, Chairperson  
Estela López, Vice Chairperson  
Erin D. Benham  
Erik M. Clemons\*  
William P. Davenport  
Donald F. Harris, Jr.  
Terry H. Jones  
Tarini Krishna, Student Member  
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: Makayla R. Dawkins, Student Member  
Stephen P. Wright

**II. Public Participation**

1. Rina Garcia, a parent of a six-grader at Renzuelli Academy, Hartford, shared her concerns regarding the Academy and the superintendent of Hartford Public Schools. A copy of Ms. Garcia's written statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
2. Sharon Voroschak-Papcin, a resident of the City of Ansonia, spoke in support and appreciation of the proposed compromise to resolve agenda item V.B., Ansonia 10-4b

Inquiry. A copy of Ms. Voroschak-Papcin's written statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

3. Cesarina Thompson, Dean, University of Hartford's College of Education, Nursing and Health Professions, referenced her colleague, Dr. Sheetal Sood, Director of Special Education, and spoke in support of agenda item IX.F., Approval of New Educator Preparation Program: University of Hartford, Special Education Program. A copy of Dean Thompson's written statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
4. Thomas Stringfellow, a resident of Manchester, spoke on February being Black History Month and addressed the Board on several matters, including book and movie recommendations.
5. Wendy Simmons, Director of Education and Equity, Connecticut Voices for Children, spoke in support of agenda item V.C., Position Statement on Reducing Disproportionality in Suspensions and Expulsions (Exclusionary Discipline).

#### Montessori Magnet at Batchelder School

Ten students from the Montessori Magnet at Batchelder School, 757 New Britain Avenue, Hartford, performed with African drums, xylophones, and an electric keyboard. The performers also sang happy birthday to Board member Terry Jones, as it was his birthday that day.

### **III. Executive Session**

The Board did not meet in executive session.

### **IV. Consideration of Minutes**

#### **A. December 5, 2018, State Board of Education Meeting**

Mr. Vrabely moved, Mr. Davenport seconded, that the Board adopt the minutes of the December 5, 2018, State Board of Education Meeting.

#### VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

## **V. Items Requiring Action**

The Board considered agenda item V.A., Consideration of Proposed Decision in the Matter of the Revocation of Educator Certificate of Maria Moulthrop, Certificate Holder, Case No. 16-01, at this time.

### **A. Consideration of Proposed Decision in the Matter of the Revocation of Educator Certificate of Maria Moulthrop, Certificate Holder**

A Court Reporter was present at the meeting to record the proceedings for Consideration of Proposed Decision in the Matter of the Revocation of Educator Certificate of Maria Moulthrop, Certificate Holder.

Assistant Attorney General Kerry Colson was present at the meeting to represent and counsel the State Board of Education. Assistant Attorney General Colson introduced the history of the Proposed Decision of the Impartial Hearing Officer and confirmed that each side was limited to offer 20 minutes of oral argument.

Division of Legal and Governmental Affairs Attorney Louis Todisco represented Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner of Education.

Attorney John M. Gesmonde, of the law firm Gesmonde, Pietrosimone & Sgrignari, LLC represented Maria Moulthrop, Certificate Holder.

[\*Mr. Clemons arrived at the meeting at 10:50 a.m.]

The Board engaged in questions and answers concerning the resolution on the floor. Chairperson Taylor announced a recess to allow the attorneys to revise the resolution.

The meeting reconvened at 12:15 p.m. A Substituted V.A. resolution was presented to the Board.

Mr. Vrabely moved, Mr. Harris seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to subsection (i) of Section 10-145b of the Connecticut General Statutes, (1) accepts and adopts the findings of fact and conclusions of law contained in the Proposed Decision in the Matter of Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner of Education and Maria Moulthrop, Certificate Holder, Case No. 16-01, prepared by Impartial Hearing Officer Frederic S. Ury, Esquire and dated October 9, 2018; (2) accepts and adopts the penalty of revocation of the professional educator certificate of Maria Moulthrop in the Proposed Decision; (3) modifies the hearing officer's Proposed Decision and hereby revokes the initial educator certificate of Maria Moulthrop; and (4) directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Each Board member recorded as voting in favor or opposed to the resolution certifies that he or she has read the Proposed Decision in its entirety.

*Roll Call Vote*

<b>Board Member</b>	<b>In Favor</b>	<b>Opposed</b>	<b>Abstained</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Erin D. Benham	X			
Erik M. Clemons	X			
William P. Davenport	X			
Donald F. Harris, Jr.	X			
Terry H. Jones	X			
Estela López	X			
Maria I. Mojica	X			
Malia K. Sieve	X			
Allan B. Taylor	X			
Joseph J. Vrabely, Jr.	X			
Stephen P. Wright				X

Motion carried unanimously.

**B. Ansonia 10-4b Inquiry**

Mr. Vrabely moved, and Mrs. Benham seconded that the Board consider agenda item V.B., Ansonia 10-4b Inquiry at this time. A Court Reporter was present at the meeting to record the proceedings for the Ansonia 10-4b Inquiry.

Division of Legal and Governmental Affairs Attorney Louis Todisco and Attorney Laura Anastasio introduced the history in the matter of the Ansonia 10-4b proceeding. Assistant Attorney General Ralph Urban was present at the meeting and represented and counseled the State Board of Education.

Attorney Louis Todisco informed the State Board of Education of the status of the matter. Assistant Attorney General Urban announced that the parties had executed an additional waiver and that the matter may be presented to the Board at the March 6, 2019, meeting as resolved by the parties.

The Board recessed for lunch at 12:45 p.m.

The Board reconvened from lunch at 1:31 p.m.

Present: Allan B. Taylor, Chairperson  
Estela López, Vice Chairperson  
Erin D. Benham  
Erik M. Clemons  
William P. Davenport  
Donald F. Harris, Jr.  
Terry H. Jones  
Tarini Krishna, Student Member  
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: Makayla R. Dawkins, Student Member  
Stephen P. Wright

**C. Position Statement on Reducing Disproportionality in Suspensions and Expulsions (Exclusionary Discipline)**

Mr. Vrabely moved, and Dr. López seconded, that the State Board of Education, adopts the Position Statement on Reducing Disproportionality in Suspensions and Expulsions (Exclusionary Discipline), and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

**VOTE ON**

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

Motion carried unanimously.

**D. Appointments to Personnel Search Committee to Conduct Search for Commissioner of Education**

Mr. Vrabely moved, Mr. Davenport seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-3a and Section 1-200 of the Connecticut General Statutes, appoints to a Personnel Search Committee the following members:

- all voting members of the State Board of Education, providing that those whose terms expire in 2019 but who are not nominated to serve another term shall cease to be a member of the Personnel Search Committee; and
- any individual nominated by the Governor to fill a vacancy on the State Board of Education, providing that if such nomination is not confirmed by the General Assembly, said individual shall cease to be a member of the Personnel Search Committee; and
- the Chairperson of the Connecticut Technical High School Board; and
- Paul Mounds of the Office of the Governor; and
- **RESOLVED**, That the State Board of Education charges said Personnel Search Committee with responsibility for conducting a search for a Commissioner of Education and submitting to the State Board of Education for its consideration a candidate for Commissioner of Education, whose appointment shall be recommended to the Governor.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

**E. Appointment of Interim Commissioner of Education**

Mr. Vrabely moved, Dr. López seconded, that the State Board of Education, appoints Dr. Dianna Wentzell as Interim Commissioner of Education, effective with the expiration of her current term on March 1, 2019, until such time as a new Commissioner is appointed.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

## **VI. Report of the Chair**

Chairperson Taylor did not provide a report.

## **VII. Report of the Commissioner**

Commissioner Wentzell referenced her written report. The Commissioner highlighted her attendance at the inauguration of Ella Briggs of East Hampton as the 2019 Kid Governor, as well as the announcement of Michael Zaba of Toffolon Elementary School in Plainville as the recipient of the 2018 Milken Educator Award.

## **VIII. Financial Matters**

No financial report was presented.

## **IX. Consent Agenda**

At the request of Dr. López and Mrs. Benham, agenda items IX.D., Commissioner's Network Extension for East Hartford Middle School in East Hartford; and IX.E., Commissioner's Network Extension for Clinton Avenue School in New Haven were removed from the consent agenda.

Dr. López and Mrs. Benham wanted the opportunity to highlight the progress made by the two schools.

Mr. Harris moved, Mr. Davenport seconded, that the Board approve the following Consent agenda items, IX.A., Approval of the 2019-20 Concussion and Head Injury Annual Review for Coaches; IX.B., Commissioner's Network Extension for Batcheller Early Education Center in Winchester; IX.C., Commissioner's Network Extension for Pearson School in Winchester; IX.F., Approval of New Educator Preparation Program: University of Hartford, Special Education Program; and IX.G., Approval of Menu of Research-based Grade K-3 Universal Screening Reading Assessment.

### **A. Approval of the 2019-20 Concussion and Head Injury Annual Review for Coaches**

**RESOLVED**, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Subsection (b)(2) of Section 10-149b of the Connecticut General Statutes, approves the 2019-20 Concussion and Head Injury Annual Review for Coaches, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

**B. Commissioner’s Network Extension for Batcheller Early Education Center in Winchester**

**RESOLVED**, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes, approves continued participation of Batcheller Early Education Center, Winchester, in the Commissioner’s Network for an additional year commencing July 1, 2019, 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.

**C. Commissioner’s Network Extension for Pearson School in Winchester**

**RESOLVED**, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes, approves continued participation of Pearson School, Winchester, in the Commissioner’s Network for an additional year commencing July 1, 2019, 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.

**F. Approval of New Educator Preparation Program: University of Hartford, Special Education Program**

**RESOLVED**, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-145d-9(g)(2)(A) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, grants full approval for the period February 6, 2019 through March 31, 2023, to the University of Hartford (UHART), with annual progress monitoring conducted using program data from the Connecticut Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) Data Dashboard until UHART’s Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) fall 2022 site visit, for the purpose of certifying graduates from UHART in the following new certification area:

<u>Program</u>	<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Program Level</u>	<u>Program Type</u>
Special Education	K-12	Initial	Graduate

and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

**G. Approval of Menu of Research-based Grade K-3 Universal Screening Reading Assessment**

**RESOLVED**, That the State Board of Education adopts the *easyCBM*<sup>®</sup> reading assessment.

VOTE ON

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

Motions carried unanimously.

**D. Commissioner's Network Extension for East Hartford Middle School in East Hartford**

Dr. López moved, Mrs. Benham seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes, approves continued participation of East Hartford Middle School, East Hartford, in the Commissioner's Network for an additional and final year commencing July 1, 2019, 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, Jones, López,  
Mojica, Sieve, Taylor, Vrabely  
Opposed: 0  
Abstained: 0  
Absent: Wright

Motion carried unanimously.

**E. Commissioner's Network Extension for Clinton Avenue School in New Haven**

Mrs. Benham moved, Dr. López seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes, approves continued participation of Clinton Avenue School, New Haven, in the Commissioner's Network for an additional year commencing July 1, 2019, 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, Jones, López,  
Mojica, Sieve, Taylor, Vrabely  
Opposed: 0  
Abstained: 0  
Absent: Wright

Motion carried unanimously.

**X. Items for Discussion**

**A. Report on School Discipline**

Chief Operating Officer Charlene Russell-Tucker and Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan presented analyses of trends in student disciplinary behaviors in Connecticut public schools. The report covered data collection and reporting, sanctions and incidents, suspension rates, suspensions of young students, and an in-depth look at disparities by race/ethnicity. Discussion was held on the use of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS).

**B. Update on Achievement First Bridgeport Academy, Amistad Academy, and Elm City College Preparatory School**

A panel consisting of Chief Turnaround Officer Desi Nesmith, Chief Talent Officer Sarah Barzee, Turnaround Bureau Chief Lisa Lamenzo, and Achievement First, Inc. Vice President of Operations and Information Technology Support Laurie Bussmann presented to the Board on the status of (i) student suspension issues, (ii) teacher certification issues, (iii) Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) issues, and (iv) bilingual certification issues. Discussion ensued with questions and answers.

**XI. Committee Reports**

**A. Academic Standards and Assessment**

Mr. Clemons reported that the committee would meet on February 25, 2019.

**B. Accountability and Support**

Dr. López reported that the committee would meet on February 27, 2019.

**C. Finance, Audit, and Budget**

No report was presented.

**D. Legislation and Policy Development**

Mr. Vrabely reported that the committee met this morning. Chief Talent Officer Dr. Sarah Barzee and Education Consultant Dr. Katie Moirs presented the four candidates for seats on the Educator Preparation Program Review Committee. Special Education Bureau Chief Bryan Klimkiewicz presented a discussion on Homebound and Home Instruction for Students with Disabilities or Temporary

Medical Needs. The committee held discussion regarding the Draft Proposed Resolution on Access to Public School Choice Programs.

**E. Connecticut Technical Education and Career System Board**

CTECS Chairman Trefry requested that Jeffrey S. Wihbey, Superintendent of the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS) provide an update.

**F. NASBE**

No report was presented.

Chairperson Taylor adjourned the meeting at 4:01 p.m.

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