

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

**Minutes
State Board of Education Meeting
November 6, 2019
(Approved December 4, 2019)**

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the State Board of Education (hereinafter "Board") met on Wednesday, November 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 9:38 a.m.

Present: Allan B. Taylor, Chairperson
Estela López, Vice Chairperson
Erin D. Benham
Milan Chand, Student Member
Sophia H. Chin, Student Member
Erik M. Clemons
William P. Davenport
Donald F. Harris, Jr.
Malia K. Sieve
Robert J. Trefry, Ex Officio

Absent: Mark Ojakian, Ex Officio

II. Public Participation

1. Fran Rabinowitz, Executive Director, Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) spoke in support of agenda item X.C., State Board of Education's Role in Supporting Local Boards of Education. A copy of Ms. Rabinowitz's written statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
2. Patrice McCarthy, Deputy Director and General Counsel, Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE), spoke in support of agenda item X.C., State Board of Education's Role in Supporting Local Boards of Education.
3. Thomas Stringfellow, a resident of Manchester, addressed the Board on several matters, including reading recommendations.
4. Gwen Samuel, President and Founder, Connecticut Parents Union, spoke on the education gift from the Dalio Foundation, the need for transparency, the need to partner with parents, and role and responsibilities of the State Board of Education.

The Board unanimously agreed to move the agenda out of order to consider agenda item VII, Report of the Commissioner.

VII. Report of the Commissioner

Commissioner Cardona announced that he was delighted that we would hear from two educators during his report. He referenced his written report in the Board's supplemental folders and highlighted the following items:

- Governor Lamont's visit to the CSDE.
- School districts that he visited.
- Joint statement with CAPSS and CABE regarding recent acts of racism involving students in Connecticut and the partnership statement on college and career pathways.
- Interviews with National Public Radio (NPR) and Attendance Works.
- A visit to CSDE from 40 pre-k students from Hartford's Breakthrough Magnet-North.

Well Done!

Performance Matters Forum – October 17, 2019
Alliance District Symposium – October 18, 2019
Paraeducator Symposium – October 28, 2019

Congratulations!

- Presidential Award Excellence in Science and Math Teaching:
 - Kimberly Moran, Rogers Park Middle School, Danbury
 - Kristina Ngai, William J. Johnston Middle School, Colchester
 - Diane Pintavalle Glastonbury High, Glastonbury
 - Peter Shanazu, Fairfield Warde High School, Fairfield
- Paraeducator of the Year
 - Jamie Bairaktaris, Redding Elementary School
- Connecticut Teacher of the Year
 - Meghan Hatch-Geary, English Teacher, Woodland Regional High School, Region 16

2019-20 Connecticut Milken Award Winner

Commissioner Cardona introduced and invited the Connecticut 2019-20 Milken Award Recipient Lauren Sepulveda to come forward to be seated before the Board. The Commissioner invited Ms. Sepulveda to speak on her project.

Ms. Sepulveda stated that she was teaching her class on the Second Industrial Revolution. A student asked how come no one looks like me in the textbook – did we not contribute? She asked her students who would they add, and they could not name a person to represent them. The class researched and then re-wrote the chapter from the old Pearson textbook.

To give the students a voice, they wrote to Pearson with their concerns. Pearson responded that they valued what the students had to say, and in the future, would look at equity. Ms. Sepulveda graciously submitted and shared a copy of her students' chapter with the Board.

2019 Terrel H. Bell Award Recipient for Outstanding School Leadership

Commissioner Cardona introduced Daniel Crispino, recipient of the 2019 Terrel H. Bell Award for Outstanding School Leadership, and Principal of John Barry Elementary School - one of four Blue Ribbon schools in Connecticut. The Commissioner described Principal Crispino as having the ability to inspire teachers to commit and share their leadership to sustain growth at John Barry School and created a culture of high expectations.

Principal Crispino thanked Commissioner Cardona and the State Board Education for inviting him to speak and acknowledged the guidance and support of Commissioner Cardona for the last five years in Meriden.

Principal Crispino stated that the John Barry staff is provided with opportunities to take risks and meet the needs of all students. John Barry's mission was to change the decade's long belief that Barry would always be a failing school. When highly skilled teachers, dedicated parents and families, and an innovative district and state work together they will be successful regardless of the odds.

He reflected that their dedication reflected the values of the Meriden Public Schools and built upon Superintendent Mark Benigni's vision and success for all children. John Barry became an environment that promoted mutual respect and admiration.

Chairman Taylor recessed the meeting at 10:26 a.m. to allow for pictures.

Chairman Taylor reconvened the meeting at 10:33 a.m.

VII. Report of the Commissioner (continued)

2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan and Dr. Renée Savoie presented a review of the 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), known as the "Nation's Report Card" to the Board. It was administered to a representative sample of students in Grades 4 and 8 who are assessed in Reading and Mathematics every two years. Mr. Gopalakrishnan reminded us that NAEP is not aligned to the Common Core Standards. Smarter Balanced is our state assessment.

Connecticut's overall performance remained strong, but gaps still exist. Few states outperformed Connecticut. We exceed the nation in all four areas.

III. Executive Session

On a motion by Dr. López, seconded by Mrs. Benham, the Board voted unanimously to move into executive session at 11:05 a.m. for the purpose of discussing personnel matters.

Present in executive session were Board members Mrs. Benham, Mr. Chand, Ms. Chin, Mr. Clemons, Mr. Davenport, Mr. Harris, Dr. López, Mrs. Sieve, Mr. Taylor, and Mr. Trefry. Also present for executive session was Commissioner Cardona.

The Board recessed its Executive Session at 11:28 a.m.

The Board reconvened its regular meeting at 11:28 a.m.

On motion by Dr. López, seconded by Mr. Davenport, the Board voted unanimously to move out of executive session and reconvene into regular meeting at 11:28 a.m. Present were Board members Mrs. Benham, Mr. Chand, Ms. Chin, Mr. Clemons, Mr. Davenport, Mr. Harris, Dr. López, Mrs. Sieve, Mr. Taylor, and Mr. Trefry. Absent was Mr. Ojakian.

V. Items Requiring Action

A. Personnel Appointment: Educational Supports and Wellness

Commissioner Cardona invited Chief Operating Officer Charlene Russell-Tucker to be present at the table before the Board. Mrs. Russell-Tucker has done so much at the state and national level to put Connecticut on the map in guiding and implementation of plans for improving social emotional learning and culture and climate in our schools so that kids are coming to school happy, healthy, and ready to learn. The Commissioner acknowledged Mrs. Russell-Tucker's husband and brother who were in the audience.

Dr. López moved, and Mrs. Benham seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-3a of the Connecticut General Statutes, and Article IV of its Bylaws, approves the appointment of Charlene M. Russell-Tucker as Deputy Commissioner of Educational Supports and Wellness, effective November 6, 2019 and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Personnel Appointment: Academics and Innovation

Commissioner Cardona invited Chief Turnaround Officer Desi D. Nesmith to be present at the table before the Board. The Commissioner shared that Mr. Nesmith came from a family of educators and welcomed his father Mr. Dessi Nesmith who had a profound impact on his education. The Commissioner acknowledged Mr. Nesmith's wife and two children who were also in the audience. As a father of two children currently in public schools, and the Chief Turnaround Officer, Mr. Nesmith is a staunch advocate for all of our kids. He always maintains a child-centered approach in making tough decisions and choices.

Dr. López moved, and Mr. Harris seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-3a of the Connecticut General Statutes and Article IV of its Bylaws, approves the appointment of Desi D. Nesmith as Deputy Commissioner of Academics and Innovation, effective November 6, 2019 and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

IV. Consideration of Minutes

C. October 2, 2019, State Board of Education Meeting

Mrs. Benham moved, Mr. Harris seconded, that the Board adopt the minutes of the October 2, 2019, State Board of Education Meeting.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

VIII. Financial Matters

Chief Financial Officer Kathy Demsey reported that at this time, we are progressing and are in good shape for the year.

VII. Report of the Chair

Chairperson Taylor reported that he attended the Paraeducator Professional Development and Leadership Symposium on October 28, 2019. The Connecticut 2020 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Recipient is Jamie Bairaktaris from Redding Elementary School. Also in attendance were Mrs. Benham and Dr. López.

IX. Consent Agenda

There were no Consent Agenda items for consideration.

X. Items for Discussion

A. Fairfield Racial Imbalance Plan Update

A panel consisting of State Department of Education Attorney Laura Anastasio, Fairfield Board Chairman, Christine Vitale, Fairfield Superintendent Michael Cummings, and Fairfield Board Vice Chairman Nick Aysseh presented an update on the progress to implement Fairfield's plan to correct racial imbalance at McKinley Elementary School. Discussion ensued regarding the enforcement of racial imbalance laws and Fairfield's plan implementation.

The Board requested that Fairfield provide a more definitive plan of action with a timetable at its next progress update in front of the Board.

B. Working for Students and Connecticut's Future: Connecticut Technical Education and Career System Strategic Operating Plan 2019-2020

A panel consisting of Connecticut Technical Education and Career System Board Chairman Robert Trefry, Superintendent Jeffrey Wihbey, Vice

Chairman Patricia Keavney-Maruca, and Lindy Lee Gold, Community Development Specialist, Department of Economic and Community Development presented the CTECS Strategic Operating Plan 2019-2020 to the Board.

Superintendent Wihbey highlighted that the hard copy of the strategic plan booklet *Working for Students and Connecticut's Future* was produced by the students at Abbott Technical High School. Mr. Wihbey applauded the graphic design and work of the students for producing such a professional product.

Superintendent Wihbey stated that the SOP was a three-year road map that outlines (i) what they want to achieve, (ii) how it will be achieved, and (iii) how success will be measured. Superintendent Wihbey referenced page 16 of the SOP and highlighted the SOP's five goals:

- Goal 1:** Culture, Climate, Instruction.
- Goal 2:** Industry Alignment and Collaboration.
- Goal 3:** Access and Opportunities.
- Goal 4:** Systems of Excellence.
- Goal 5:** Human Capital.

Discussion ensued regarding chronic absenteeism, curriculum, graduation rate, student recruitment, and leadership capacity.

C. State Board of Education's Role in Supporting Local Boards of Education

Commissioner Cardona emphasized that the Department was in the planning process of developing a comprehensive framework for supporting districts on district health.

In school districts, several systems are required to be functioning at full capacity in order for the entire district to be effective. Some district systems include the leadership structure, fiscal health of the district, and curriculum. Yet, another system for Board consideration is supporting the system of board governance for an effective board can catapult student success. The Commissioner stated that boards that work together could influence policy and practice to accelerate student growth. There are boards that can use more support working together to ensure that student learning and student success is at the heart of their conversation and the heart of their work.

The Commissioner opened up for discussion with the board members the role they think the state Board should have when it comes to our work as an agency in providing support and guidance to local boards of education.

The Board members applauded the Commissioner for bringing this issue as a project. Discussion ensued. The Board agreed that they should work with partners to support and set standards of expectation for local boards of education to be effective.

D. Draft Connecticut Computer Science Plan

Reading and Literacy Director Dr. Melissa K. Wlodarczyk Hickey and Computer Science and Math Education Consultant Jennifer Michalek presented an update of the Draft Connecticut Computer Science Plan to the Board. They presented a PowerPoint that addressed computer science in Connecticut by providing a computer science timeline beginning in 2014 when the Connecticut State Board of Education approved the formation of a Connecticut State Department of Education Computer Science Advisory Group in recognition of students needing computer science skills, to 2019 and the Pathways to Certification.

XI. Committee Reports

A. Academic Standards and Assessment

Mr. Clemons reported that the Committee would meeting on November 18, 2019.

B. Accountability and Support

Dr. López reported that the committee had a meeting on October 10, 2019. The two invited schools were (i) New Beginnings Family Academy, Bridgeport, and Explorations Charter School, Winsted.

C. Finance, Audit, and Budget

No report was presented.

D. Legislation and Policy Development

Mrs. Benham reported that the committee met that morning. The committee had a discussion on (i) vaping and the threat to the districts; (ii) received an update on the Relay ARC program and Bureau Chief Christopher Todd was able to answer questions from last month; and (iii) held an executive session with Legal Director Jessa Mirtle updating a pending litigation.

E. Connecticut Technical Education and Career System Board

CTECS Chairman Trefry stated that there was nothing further to report after the Strategic Operating Plan presentation.

F. NASBE

No report was presented.

Chairperson Taylor adjourned the meeting at 2:56 p.m.

Prepared by: _____
Dr. Miguel A. Cardona, Secretary
State Board of Education