

THE COMMISSIONER'S ROUNDTABLE FOR FAMILY AND
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION
Hartford

Draft Minutes of Meeting
(Subject to Revision)
May 15, 2019

I. Call to Order

Ms. Ingrid Canady, Executive Director of the State Education Resource Center (SERC), called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. The meeting was held at the Graustein Memorial Fund, One Hamden Center, Hamden.

Members present:

Abie Benitez, Past President, Connecticut Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (Representing Connecticut Association of Schools)
Jeana Bracey, Director of School and Community Initiatives, Child Health and Development Institute
Mary Lou DiPaola, ESL Teacher, New Haven Board of Education (Representing Connecticut Federation of Educational and Professional Employees (AFT-CT))
Clifford Dudley, Principal, Orchard Hills School, Milford Public Schools (Representing Connecticut Federation of School Administrators)
Shenell Ellerbe, Board of Directors, African Caribbean American Parents of Children with Disabilities (AFCAMP)
Subira Gordon, Executive Director, ConnCAN
David Hopkins, President and CEO, Urban League of Greater Hartford (Represented by Kathy Reilly, Community Education Manager, Urban League of Greater Hartford)
Bianka Kortlan-Cox, Vice President for Legislation and Public Policy, Connecticut Association for the Gifted
Jennifer Lussier, Parent Consultant, Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center
Julianna Mendoza, Student, State Student Advisory Council on Education
Nikitoula Menounos, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Connecticut Technical High School System
Kris Sodhi, State Council for Educational Opportunities for Military Children
Mirellise Vazquez, Executive Director, Tauck Family Foundation (Representing Connecticut Council on Philanthropy)
Athena Wagner, Outreach Coordinator, State of Black Connecticut Alliance/Connecticut Parents' Union
Lisa Zawilinski, Chair, Department of Education, University of Hartford (Representing Deans of Schools of Education) (Represented by Maggie Clark, University of Hartford)

Members absent:

Jeffrey Bianco, Co-Chair, Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN) Connecticut
Jennifer Falotico, Vice President for Membership, Connecticut Parent Teacher Association

Matt Folan, Superintendent of Schools, Department of Children and Families
Matthew Geary, Superintendent of Schools, Manchester Public Schools (Representing Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents)
Paula Gilberto, CEO, United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut (Representing United Way of Connecticut)
Hebatalla Mohamed, Student, State Student Advisory Council on Education
Chemay Morales-James, Educational Equity Coach, My Reflection Matters and Bridge to Success (Representing Commission on Equity and Opportunity)
David Scata, Director of Education, Mohegan Tribe
John Taylor, Executive Director, Booker T. Washington Academy (Representing Northeast Charter Schools Network)
Donna Thompson-Bennett, Co-Director, National Parent Leadership Institute
Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner, Connecticut State Department of Education
Beresford Wilson, Assistant Director, FAVOR

Guests:

Jennifer Benevento, AFT Connecticut
Ingrid Canady, State Education Resource Center
George Coleman, CES
Jackie Coleman, Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
Kimberly Haugabook, Beacon Health Options
Tressa Spears Jackson, Community Health Network of Connecticut
Jessica Lavorgna, Windsor Locks Public Schools
Anne Mead, Danbury Public Schools
Carol O'Donnell, Connecticut Early Childhood Funder Collaborative
Michele O'Neill, CEA
Rebecca Adams Rieder, Connecticut Association of Boards of Education
Maria Sanchez, American Savings Foundation

State Agency Staff:

Judy Carson, Connecticut State Department of Education
Melissa Hickey, Connecticut State Department of Education
Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Connecticut State Department of Education
Suzanne Loud, Connecticut State Department of Education
Glen Peterson, Connecticut State Department of Education
Charlene Russell-Tucker, Connecticut State Department of Education
Deborah Watson, Office of Early Childhood

II. Welcome and Introductions

Ms. Canady welcomed the group and asked members and guests to introduce themselves. She then reviewed the group's engagement norms. Ms. Charlene Russell-Tucker, Chief Operating Officer of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), expressed Commissioner Wentzell's regrets that she was unable to attend the meeting.

III. Emergent Critical Issues in Education

Ms. Russell-Tucker provided information on the following issues:

- Roundtable members' participation in providing feedback on the [Position Statement on Reducing Disproportionality in Suspensions and Expulsions \(Exclusionary Discipline\) 2019](#)
- [Board of Regents Uniform Advanced Placement Policy](#)
- A series of memos to Superintendents illustrating high-impact family engagement practices aligned with [Connecticut's Definition and Framework for Family Engagement](#)

Ms. Deborah Watson, Project Manager for Family and Community Engagement, Office of Early Childhood, presented an overview of a new transition to kindergarten toolkit for families called [Hello Kindergarten!](#)

IV. Connecticut Report Cards

Mr. Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Performance Officer of the CSDE, presented on the [Connecticut Report Card](#). The Connecticut Report Card provides trends on metrics, including enrollment, absenteeism, suspension/expulsion, expenditures, achievement, accountability, graduation and college readiness for every district, school and the state. He demonstrated the new Web site and engaged members in using their own devices to explore data for their own schools and communities.

V. Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act Now: Input on Connecticut's State Plan for the Perkins V Program

Dr. Melissa Hickey, Director, and Ms. Suzanne Loud, Education Consultant, CSDE, reviewed the background of the [Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act](#) and engaged the group in a discussion of current thinking regarding career and technical education. Members of the group provided input on key policy issues that will guide the CSDE's new state plan for this federal funding. In addition to providing comments at the meeting, participants were informed that the CSDE is requesting comments in an [online survey](#) until July 9, 2019. The CSDE is currently soliciting information from Superintendents regarding their [intent to apply](#) for funding in the 2019-20 school year.

VI. Participants' Feedback on Roundtable Experience and Commissioner's Recommendations for Moving Forward

Ms. Canady reviewed a timeline of the Roundtable's accomplishments to date. She facilitated feedback from the group on their experience and their recommendations for moving forward. Ms. Russell-Tucker appreciated Commissioner Wentzell's leadership and dedication to the Roundtable and reiterated the Commissioner's belief in the importance of the group to continue as a permanent part of the CSDE's structure for advising the Commissioner's Office on policy matters.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12 p.m.