

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

Draft Minutes of Meeting
(Subject to Revision)
October 5, 2017

I. Call to Order

Ingrid Canady, Executive Director of the State Education Resource Center (SERC), called the meeting to order at 9:17 a.m. Ms. Canady asked the group to take a moment to reflect on the people impacted by natural disasters in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, and recent gun violence in Las Vegas. The meeting was held at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, 10 Columbus Boulevard, 7th Floor, Hartford, Connecticut.

Members present:

Abie Benitez, President, Connecticut Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (Representing Connecticut Association of Schools)
Paige Bray, Associate Dean for Research and Community Education, Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education, University of Hartford (Representing Deans of Schools of Education)
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)
Tamara Lanier, Chief Probation Officer, Connecticut Judicial Branch, Court Support Services Division (Representing Connecticut State Conference of NAACP)
Jennifer Lussier, Parent Consultant, Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center
Nikitoula Menounos, Principal, Norwich Technical High School (Representing Connecticut Technical High School System)
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
Sara Sneed, Director, Education Investments, Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
John Taylor, Executive Director, Booker T. Washington Academy (Representing Northeast Charter Schools Network)
Donna Thompson-Bennett, National Coordinator, National Parent Leadership Institute
Mirellise Vazquez, Executive Director, Tauck Family Foundation (Representing Connecticut Council on Philanthropy)
Athena Wagner, Outreach Coordinator, State of Black Connecticut Alliance/Connecticut Parents' Union
Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner, Connecticut State Department of Education

Members absent:

Jeffrey Bianco, Co-Chair, Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN)
Connecticut

Jeana Bracey, Director of School and Community Initiatives, Child Health and
Development Institute

Audrey Brown, Parent (Representing African Caribbean American Parents of Children
with Disabilities (AFCAMP))

Elizabeth Brown, President, Waterbury Board of Education (Representing Connecticut
Association of Boards Education)

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)

Derby Egyin, Student, Windsor Locks High School (Representing State Student Advisory
Council on Education)

Lisa Fair, Parent, Achievement First

Jennifer Falotico, Vice President for Membership, Connecticut Parent Teacher Association

Mario Florez, Director of School Climate and Culture, Hartford Public Schools
(Representing Commission on Women, Children and Seniors)

Natasha Harris, Director of Workforce Quality Assurance, Urban League of Greater
Hartford

Giancarlo Isotti, Student, Suffield High School (Representing State Student Advisory
Council on Education)

Aggie Kurzyna, Parent, CT Parent Power (Representing Connecticut Parent Power)

Bryan Randall, Personnel Officer, U.S. Naval Submarine Base (Representing State
Council for Educational Opportunities for Military Children)

Robert Smoler, President, Fairfield Education Association (Representing Connecticut
Education Association)

Tynima Toney, Parent Coach, Hartford Parent University

Beresford Wilson, Assistant Director, FAVOR

Guests:

Jennifer Benevento, AFT Connecticut

Ingrid Canady, State Education Resource Center

Jackie Coleman, Hartford Foundation for Public Giving

Melvette Hill, Commission on Women, Children and Seniors

Anne Henderson, National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement

Angela Holmes, Waterbury Hospital

Jessica Lavorgna, EDC

Betsy LeBorionic, CREC

Anne Mead, Danbury Public Schools

Carol O'Donnell, Connecticut Council for Philanthropy

Russell Sills, Windsor Public Schools

Paula Smith, Mohegan Tribe

Elsie Torres, Meriden Public School

State Agency Staff:

Judy Carson, Connecticut State Department of Education
John Frasinelli, Connecticut State Department of Education
Jennifer Johnson, Office of Early Childhood
Lystra Julien, Connecticut State Department of Education
Charlene Russell-Tucker, Connecticut State Department of Education
Deborah Watson, Office of Early Childhood

II. Welcome and Introductions

Ms. Charlene Russell-Tucker, Chief Operating Officer of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), welcomed the group and reiterated [the charge](#) to the Commissioner's Roundtable for Family and Community Engagement in Education. She thanked the group for their commitment to representing the voices of families and community members in the Roundtable's discussions of important education issues.

Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner of the Connecticut State Department of Education, welcomed the group and thanked them for their commitment to family and community engagement. Commissioner Wentzell told the group about [guidance](#) that was sent to districts about the disasters happening and efforts to ensure clarity for students who are displaced and enrolling in Connecticut schools. She noted that she will be meeting with the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents about services available for students.

Commissioner Wentzell also mentioned that [information](#) was sent to superintendents about hate and violence after the tragic events that occurred in Charlottesville, Virginia in August.

Ms. Ingrid Canady directed the group's attention to the meeting norms and reminded them that the norms were co-created with the group using a culturally-responsive process that represented members' interests and values.

Ms. Russell-Tucker described Connecticut's *Attend Today, Achieve Tomorrow* campaign. The campaign is designed to provide districts, schools and community partners with resources and artwork with the Attend Today, Achieve Tomorrow slogan and design work. A [webpage](#) with printable and downloadable resources is now available.

III. The Connecticut Blueprint for Defining, Understanding and Promoting Family and Community Engagement in Children's Learning and Development

Ms. Russell-Tucker introduced guest speaker Anne Henderson, Senior Consultant, National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement. Ms. Henderson made a [presentation](#) to the group on the process that has been used to develop a draft definition of family engagement for Connecticut and shared the draft language. The definition was developed through a process of consulting national resources, on-going meetings of a state working group as well as local focus groups of parents. Participants were asked to critique the draft definition

and share their comments at their table and then with the full group. Ms. Henderson told the group that the notes from their discussion will be compiled to develop a penultimate version of the draft definition that will be shared at the statewide symposium.

IV. Commissioner's Reaction to Blueprint Process and Intersection with Department and State Board of Education Priorities

Commissioner Wentzell thanked the group for their thoughtful responses to the draft definition. She noted that this is an ambitious project and it will result in tools for changing practice in schools and communities. School and community leaders are expressing a great interest in family engagement. She feels that the work of the Commissioner's Roundtable and the Blueprint are quite timely in building the capacity of professionals to partner with families and support children's success.

V. Update Regarding Statewide Symposium Scheduled for December 13, 2017

A statewide symposium on family and community engagement will take place on December 13, 2017 at Gateway Community College. The event will be by invitation only. Roundtable members will be invited to attend.

VI. Meeting Dates for 2017-18

The Roundtable will continue to meet quarterly. Remaining meeting dates for the 2017-18 school year are January 24, 2018 and May 9, 2018. All meetings will take place from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. (locations to be determined).

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.