

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

Minutes
State Board of Education Meeting
December 2, 2015
(approved January 6, 2016)

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the State Board of Education (hereinafter "Board") met on Wednesday, December 2, 2015, in Room 1D of the Legislative Office Building, 300 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut.

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Allan Taylor called the meeting to order at 9:42 a.m.

Present: Allan Taylor, Chairperson
Theresa Hopkins-Staton, Vice Chairperson
Erin D. Benham
Erik M. Clemons
William P. Davenport
Terry Jones
Estela López
Maria Mojica
Timothy J. Noel-Sullivan, Student Member
Malia K. Sieve
Robert J. Trefry, Ex Officio
Joseph J. Vrabely, Jr.

Absent: Susannah M. Beyl, Student Member
Mark Ojakian, Ex Officio
Stephen Wright

Oath of Office

Attorney Peter Haberlandt, Commissioner of the Superior Court, administered the Oath of Office to new members Erik M. Clemons and Malia K. Sieve.

II. Public Participation

1. State Board of Education member William Davenport introduced the following students from the Wamogo Regional FFA Chapter and their advisor, Casey Dunn: Meagan Samele, McKayla Ford, Amanda Fowler, and Emma Wood. These four students won the

National FFA Veterinary Science Career Development Award at the National FFA Convention and Expo. Each student addressed the Board and spoke about her experience in the Wamogo FFA Chapter, the national competition, and career goals. In addition, Robert Losee, a University of Connecticut student and former Woodbury FFA member, was introduced to the Board. Mr. Losee was named the national winner of the Nursery Operations – Entrepreneurship/Placement Proficiency Award at the National FFA Convention and Expo. Board members congratulated the students on their significant accomplishments.

2. Samantha Pacheco, mother of two children who attend SAND School in Hartford, asked the Board to conduct an investigation into a training exercise on differentiated instruction held at SAND School, in which stickers were placed on SAND students' shirts to designate whether they were English learners and/or students receiving special educational services. A copy of Ms. Pacheco's prepared statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
3. Millie Arciniegas, executive director of the Hartford Parent University, expressed her objection to the recent professional development exercise in differentiated instruction at SAND School, and her support of the SAND School parents. Ms. Arciniegas stated that the Board needs to intervene in districts that are immersed in institutional racism. A copy of Ms. Arciniegas' prepared statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
4. Richard Furlow, New Haven Alderman, spoke about school bus safety. He stated that school bus drivers should be allowed to call 911 directly in the case of an emergency. Requiring bus drivers to contact the dispatch office rather than dialing 911 as a first step results in a delay in receiving services.
5. Megan Ifill, parent of two children in the New Haven Public Schools, referred to a medical emergency in New Haven that resulted in a student's death. As a mother of a child with medical needs, she supported authorizing school bus drivers to call 911 first, and stated that this should be a standard practice across the state.
6. Tonya R. Jackson, a public school parent who holds a master's degree in counseling psychology, addressed the need for mental health services for children, and our collective responsibility to unite to overcome injustice and a lack of cultural understanding in our schools. She spoke about disciplinary practices and policies at Achievement First charter schools that she witnessed while serving as a behavioral therapist, requiring students to spend time in the basement for disciplinary purposes. A copy of Ms. Jackson's prepared remarks is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
7. Lashawn Robinson, parent of a student attending Rawson School in Hartford, stated that her son's learning needs have not been met as a result of paraprofessionals being reassigned to the six Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) classes at Rawson, without proper training in ABA. She noted that this has had a negative impact on other students, leaving classes without consistent paraprofessional support. She asked the state to become involved in this situation. Ms. Robinson expressed her outrage regarding the

SAND School professional development training. Ms. Robinson stated that her daughter, a student at Betances School, is not being provided therapeutic support, has been physically mistreated, and that her educational needs are not being met.

8. Gwen Samuel, Connecticut Parents Union, asked the Board to take their responsibilities as members of the State Board of Education seriously, and to protect the rights of Connecticut's students. She expressed her belief that school bus drivers should be authorized to call 911 directly in the event in an emergency. Ms. Samuel further stated that the Board must intervene in the SAND School matter. A copy of Ms. Samuel's prepared remarks is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
9. Katie Augustyn, Connecticut Association for the Gifted (CAG), thanked the Board for its service to students. Ms. Augustyn explained the advocacy role of CAG, a non-profit, primarily volunteer organization. CAG provides informational resources to parents and teachers, promotes awareness about identifying children with the potential to achieve at high levels, and educates educators about gifted pedagogy. Ms. Augustyn spoke about recent endeavors sponsored or supported by CAG, including "Minds in Motion." A copy of Ms. Augustyn's prepared remarks is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

Mr. Taylor left the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

10. Ann Monroe-Baillargeon, Dean of the School of Education, University of St. Joseph and representing the AACTE-CT, asked the Board to propose a statutory change that would postpone for two years the requirement that in order to qualify for a professional educator certificate, a person shall hold a master's degree in an appropriate subject matter area (Public Act 12-166). This would allow additional time for the development of guidelines, and would ensure that the current requirement does not impact students presently enrolled. A copy of Ms. Monroe-Baillargeon's prepared remarks is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
11. Kevin Basmadjian, Dean of the School of Education, Quinnipiac University, spoke in support of postponing the effective date of the subject matter area requirement for a master's degree, and holding harmless those students currently enrolled in a teacher preparation program. He spoke about the impact of education reform initiatives on teacher preparation programs, and offered to work with partners to develop sound policies. A copy of Dean Basmadjian's prepared remarks is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

Mr. Taylor returned to the meeting at 10:35 a.m.

12. Sharon Patterson Stallings, a former member of the Hartford Board of Education, questioned how the SAND School staff training session that labeled children was sanctioned. She stated that our attention should be on educating children, not labeling them.

13. Cynthia Jones, parent of students attending Rawson School in Hartford, stated her concerns about the number of ABA classes, inadequate staffing levels, staff turnover, and paraprofessionals not receiving proper training. Ms. Jones asked the Board to intervene immediately. She also expressed her dismay with the SAND School staff development session.

Mrs. Hopkins-Staten stated that this morning's public testimony about SAND School requires immediate action by the Board, and noted that she would like the State Department of Education to conduct an independent investigation in a thorough and expeditious manner.

Discussion ensued regarding the Board's policy role and legal authority as well as its moral outrage regarding this matter. Board members agreed that it was their responsibility to do everything within their purview to ensure that a situation such as this does not occur in the future, and to pursue this with urgency. Mr. Vrabely stated that he would encourage the Superintendent to personally apologize to parents and students, as a matter of public record. Board members requested that these comments be entered into the record of this meeting.

Commissioner Wentzell stated that she appreciates Hartford parents coming forward to share their concerns this morning. The Department has already begun to explain to these parents the complaint process. Commissioner Wentzell noted that the Department has been in contact with the Superintendent of the Hartford Public Schools. She stated that the Department will immediately commence an investigation of the SAND School incident. Commissioner Wentzell noted that, as requested by the Board, the Department will provide regular reports to the Board on the status of the investigation.

III. Consent Agenda

There were no items on the consent agenda.

IV. Executive Session

The Board did not meet in Executive Session.

V. Consideration of Minutes of the November 4, 2015, State Board of Education Meeting

Mr. Vrabely moved, Mr. Davenport seconded, that the Board adopt the Minutes of the November 4, 2015, State Board of Education meeting.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried.

VI. Items Requiring Action

A. Approval of Legislative Proposals

Mr. Vrabely moved, Mrs. Benham seconded, that the State Board of Education adopts the 2016 Legislative Proposals and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

VOTE ON

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

Motion carried unanimously.

VII. Items for Discussion

A. Alliance District Successes: Bloomfield and New London

Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Performance Officer, and Desi Nesmith, Chief Turnaround Officer, introduced the Alliance District panel presenters from Bloomfield High School and New London High School.

Bloomfield High School

The Bloomfield High School panel presenters were: Dr. James Thompson, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Daniel Moleti, Principal, Bloomfield High School; Dr. Beryl Irene Bailey, Director of Literacy; Mr. Jesse White, former Director of Science & Numeracy; Mr. Ross Hanson, Math Coordinator and Mathematics Teacher; Mr. Thomas Poland, ELA Coordinator and ELA Teacher; and Mr. Ventine Richardson, Parent.

The Bloomfield High School panelists presented a PowerPoint presentation, "Making an IMPACT on Student Achievement," to the Board. The panelists spoke about the four priorities: (1) Holistic Accountability; (2) Rigorous Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, (3) Positive School Climate, and (4) Family and Community Engagement. Questions and answers followed. The Board members complimented Bloomfield High School on its turnaround achievement. A copy of Bloomfield High School's presentation is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

Mr. Clemons left at 11:15 a.m.

New London High School

The New London High School panel presenters were: Dr. Manuel J. Rivera, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Tommy Thompson, Principal of New London High School; Ms. Laurelle Texido, Director of the Science and Technology Magnet School; Ms. Kristen Maynard, English Language Arts Teacher; Ms. Sandra Silva, English Language Arts Teacher; Ms. Grace Conti, RTI Coordinator; and Louise Hanrahan, Parent.

The New London High School panelists presented a PowerPoint presentation, "Turn-Around Successes," to the Board. The panelists highlighted NLHS's (1) improved performance on the 2014-15 Smarter Balanced Assessments; (2) a decrease in out-of-school suspensions; (3) an increase in attendance, and (4) an increase in graduation rate. Questions and answers followed. The Board members complimented New London High School on its achievement. A copy of New London High School's presentation is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

B. Connecticut Council for Education Reform (CCER) Education Initiatives to Support Connecticut's Alliance Districts

Jeffrey Villar, Ph.D., Executive Director of Connecticut Council for Education Reform ("CCER") presented a PowerPoint presentation to focus on the methods through which CCER works to improve districts' system-level capacity. CCER works with Alliance Districts to bring resources such as (1) school system funding analysis; (2) data systems analysis; (3) data-driven professional development, (4) comprehensive needs assessment, and (5) development of district accountability model and implantation of leadership teams. CCER's objectives are: (1) pursuing policy priorities; (2) direct work with schools and districts; and (3) raising public awareness. Discussion followed. A copy of Dr. Villar's presentation is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

C. Update on Connecticut Technical High School System Strategic Plan

Robert J. Trefry, Chairperson of the Connecticut Technical High School Board, introduced Dr. Nivea L. Torres, Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Torres outlined the system's progress toward its three strategic goals: (1) partnering with business and industry to develop career technical education programs; (2) creating an alignment between K-12, post-secondary and adult programs to provide a continuum of educational services resulting in readiness for career and college; and (3) transforming the CTHSS with innovative program designs that are responding to Connecticut's workforce needs. Three students from A.I. Prince Technical High School, Hartford, Robert Kennedy-Plumbing/Heating, Carla Perez-Carpentry, and Jose Tirado-Carpentry described the process and their experiences in building an E-House at their school. A copy of Dr. Torres' presentation is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

VIII. Report of the Chair

Chairperson Allan Taylor referred Board members to the "Report of the Chair" in the Board's supplemental materials folder. A copy of the Chair's written report is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

IX. Report of the Commissioner

Chairperson Allan Taylor referred Board members to the "Report of the Commissioner" in the Board's supplemental materials folder. A copy of the Commissioner's written report is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

X. Financial Matters

No report was given at this time.

XI. Committee Reports

A. Academic Standards and Assessment.

It was reported that at the January 28, 2015, meeting, the committee will consider the arts standards.

B. Accountability and Support

Dr. López reported that the next meeting will be held on February 8, 2015.

C. Finance, Audit, and Budget

Mr. Taylor reported that the committee met on November 18, 2015, and reviewed several audit matters.

D. Legislation and Policy

Mrs. Hopkins-Staten reported that the committee met this morning. The committee received an update on the Alternative Education Workgroup, stating that it is working on developing policy and protocols for students in alternative education programs. Upon completion, the report will be presented to the SBE Legislative Policy and Development Committee. The committee received an update on the appointment of hearing officers, the desire to increase the level of diversity and how to accomplish this goal.

E. Connecticut Technical High School System

No report was given at this time.

F. NASBE

Mr. Taylor reported that the NASBE board will meet on January 16, 2015. NASBE's New Board Member Institute will be held on July 21-23, 2016, in Arlington, Virginia.

Adjourn

By unanimous consent, the meeting was adjourned at 2:33 p.m.

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