

Connecticut State Board of Education Hartford

State Board of Education Meeting November 3, 2021

(Approved December 1, 2021)

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State and posted on the agency's Web site, the members of State Board of Education (hereinafter "Board") held a meeting on Wednesday, November 3, 2021, in Plaza North Meeting Room C and D of the State Office Building, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, Connecticut. Public access to the building allowed for public attendance at the meeting.

I. Call to Order

Acting Chairperson Allan Taylor, called the meeting to order at 9:46 a.m.

Present: Allan B. Taylor, Acting Chairperson
Erin D. Benham, Vice Chairperson
Natalie Bandura
Rishabh Bhandari
Bonnie E. Burr
Karen DuBois-Walton
Elwood Exley, Jr.
Donald F. Harris, Jr.
Estela López (via phone)
Awilda Reasco
Malia K. Sieve
Robert J. Trefry, Ex Officio
Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Ex Officio

Absent: Erik M. Clemons
Dr. Jane Gates, (designee for Terrence Cheng, Ex Officio)
Martha Paluch Prou

Acting Chairperson Taylor noted for the record that Board Member Estela López was participating via telephone.

II. Public Participation

Acting Chairperson Allan Taylor announced that public participation would be tabled in order to allocate more time for those from the public to access the sign-up sheet to speak before the board.

Request to Amend the Agenda

Vice Chair Erin Benham requested through Acting Chairperson Allan Taylor for permission from the Board to add to the agenda a Recognition Certificate in Honor of Estela López. The Board members unanimously agreed.

Recognition in Honor of Estela López

Acting Chairperson Taylor presented Estela López with a ***Certificate of Recognition*** to honor her service on the State Board of Education working to ensure the best possible outcomes for all Connecticut students. Acting Chair Taylor read the Certificate of Recognition into the record of the minutes as follows:

CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION in honor of ***Estela López*** who has served with distinction as a member of the Connecticut State Board of Education, and with appreciation for her significant and lasting contributions to the State Board of Education and selfless dedication to Connecticut's children.

Approved Unanimously This Third Day of November, Two Thousand and Twenty-one.

Board Member Estela López responded that "it has been an honor and a privilege to serve with all of you." She indicated that she is continuing the fight for public education in her new location.

III. Executive Session

No executive session was held.

Acting Chair Taylor requested a motion for the minutes of October 6, 2021.

IV. Consideration of Minutes of the State Board of Education

Vice Chair Benham moved, Board Member Reasco seconded, that the Board adopt the State Board of Education minutes of October 6, 2021.

VOTE ON

MOTION:	In favor:	Benham, Burr, DuBois-Walton, Exley, Harris, López, Sieve, Reasco, Taylor
	Opposed:	0
	Abstained:	0
	Absent:	Clemons, Prou

Motion carried unanimously.

V. Report of the Commissioner

Commissioner Russell-Tucker referenced her written report in the Board's supplemental folders and highlighted the following:

- Health and Safety Tuesdays held its 60th call and continues to meet weekly.
- Issued Revised Addendum 7 – COVID-19 Reopening Considerations for Connecticut K-12 Arts Program
- Introduced new Public Health Commissioner Manisha Juthani, M.D.
- New Protocol for Screen and Stay
- She and Deputy Commissioner Nesmith met with the Black & Puerto Rican Caucus for post-session briefing
- Attended the 2022 Teacher of the Year Announcement with the Governor
- Continue to have School Bus Driver Shortage Taskforce meetings
- Provided Welcome Remarks at School Nutrition Association of CT Annual Conference
- Attended Google Career Certificates event with Secretary Cardona, Governor Lamont and Alphabet's Chief Financial Officer
- Voice4Change
- Afghanistan and newcomers to our state

II. Public Participation

Vice Chair Erin Benham announced that the agenda was ready to return to public participation.

1. Katherine Roe, Chair, Western Connecticut State University, a representative for American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, (AACTE-CT Chapter) spoke on the AACTE-CT identifying alternative means for fieldwork and student teaching placements, and WCSU's work with the CSDE. A written copy of Dr. Roe's written statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
2. Lauren Vernaglia of Bristol, spoke against mask and vaccine mandates, and representation of parents. A written copy of Ms. Vernaglia's written statement is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.
3. Callie Vernaglia, a 7th grader from Bristol, spoke against mask and vaccine mandates.
4. Amanda Thomas of Fairfield, spoke against the mask mandate and impact of a vaccine mandate.
5. Angela Ryan of Cromwell, against the mask mandate and parental decision-making rights.
6. Chari Norton of Marlborough, spoke against mask and vaccine mandates, and for representation by elected officials. An official copy of Ms. Norton's written statement is in the official file of this meeting.
7. Tyler Young of Southington, spoke against mask and vaccine mandates, and testing procedures.
8. Jeanne Wiggin, spoke against mask and vaccine mandates and school protocols.

9. Patricia Tavalozzi of Southington, spoke against mask and vaccine mandates, and funding.
10. Aaron McCool of Naugatuck, spoke on the importance of parental input and listening to parents.
11. Lorna Neag of Winsted, spoke against the mask and vaccine mandates, and testing. A copy of Ms. Neag's written statement is in the official file of this meeting.
12. Daniel Barreira spoke against the vaccine mandate.
13. Michael Edwards, spoke against the mask mandate for children, vaccine mandate, and parental rights. A written copy of Mr. Edwards' written statement is in the official file of this meeting.
14. Jackie Harris-Stone, spoke in support of the mask mandate, and in support of inclusive curriculum for Trans children.
15. Jenny Gauthier, spoke in support of collaboration with parents.

[Board Member Exley left the meeting at approximately 11:00 a.m.]

16. Sadie Patrick of Seymour, spoke against mask mandate, and on parental rights.
17. Jamie Bailey spoke against mask and vaccine mandates, and concerns with data collection and the responsibility to educate students.
18. Mona Colwell of Old Lyme, spoke against the vaccine mandate, medical disclosure and quarantine.
19. Nelson and Camila spoke against the mask mandate.
20. Ashley Pereira, spoke against the mask mandate, and on parental rights.
21. Camila Nelson, spoke against the mask mandate.
22. Jamie Mooney, spoke against the mask mandate.
23. Jennifer Van Gorden, spoke against the mask and vaccine mandates, and on parental decision-making.
24. Kristen Bevins of Bristol, spoke against the mask and vaccine mandates, and on parental representation.
25. Susan Zabohonski, spoke on advocating for the parents of Connecticut, and for local board control.

26. Rachel Buchanan of Plainville, spoke against masks for children, and for parental representation.

27. Casette Albert, spoke on the vaccine mandate.

[Board Member Reasco left the meeting at approximately 11:30 a.m.]

VI. Items Requiring Action

A. Adoption of the Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework

Board Member DuBois-Walton moved, Vice Chair Benham seconded, that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Public Act 19-91, adopts the 2021 Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Division Director John Frassinelli presented before the Board. Mr. Frassinelli stated that recent legislation called for additional content areas to be included in the health education curriculum. The Framework includes Health Education and Physical Education curricular content for students in pre-K through Grade 12. The 2021 Framework is updated to not only include the additional content areas but is now aligned with the current National Health Education and Physical Education Standards.

Mr. Frassinelli thanked and acknowledged (i) Tracy Stefano, East Hartford Public Schools, (ii) Joseph Gorman, Waterbury Public Schools, and (iii) Joseph Velardi, Connecticut Association of Schools.

VOTE ON

MOTION:	In favor:	Benham, Burr, DuBois-Walton, Harris, López, Sieve, Taylor
	Opposed:	0
	Abstained:	0
	Absent:	Clemons, Exley, Prou, Reasco

Motion carried unanimously.

VII. Report of the Chair

There was no Report of the Chair.

VIII. Financial Matters

There was no Financial Matters report.

IX. Consent Agenda

There were no Consent items on the agenda.

X. Items for Discussion

Commissioner Russell-Tucker requested that the Agency Update be tabled to allow for the two other Discussion items with external partners, to be brought before the Board.

X. Items for Discussion

B. African American, Black, Latino, and Puerto Rican Course of Studies Curriculum Update

Chief Academic Officer Irene Parisi, Social Studies Consultant, Stephen Armstrong, SERC Consultants Nitza Diaz and Paquita Jarman-Smith, presented an update to the Board. They reported on the 18 months of planning the course, two sets of workshops for superintendents and teachers, and the launching of a training series. There are approximately 50 schools piloting for next year. They spoke on teacher and school commitment to the implementation, as well as successes and challenges to implementation.

C. Fund for Teachers

Dr. Dale Bernardoni, CT Program Director, Fund for Teachers, Christopher Wethje, Director of Human Resources, East Hartford Public Schools, and Hiba Sarfraz, Science Teacher at Sunset Ridge School, East Hartford, presented to the Board. Dr. Dale Bernardoni provided an introduction on Fund for Teachers (FFT). FFT is a national 501(c)3 organization that invests in the professional development of Pre-K through 12th grade eligible educators across the country. FFT awards summer fellowship grants and experiential learning opportunities to pursue self-designed professional learning. FFT aims to strengthen instruction by investing in outstanding teachers' self-determined professional growth and development in order to support student success, enrich their own practice, and strengthen their schools and communities.

Mr. Wethje stated that 60 EHPS teachers have been FFT Fellows. He stated that there is no cost to the districts.

Ms. Sarfraz, a 7th Grade science teacher was a 2019 FFA recipient and traveled to Costa Rica. Ms. Sarfraz said that you become a life-long learner and a living force.

There was a period of questions and answers. Discussion ensued regarding how to introduce and promote this "no cost" opportunity to districts. Commissioner Russell-Tucker expressed to Dr. Bernardoni that the discussion would be continued.

A. Agency Update

Commissioner Russell-Tucker provided a summary of agency activities.

Introduction of Director of Legal and Governmental Affairs

Commissioner Russell-Tucker introduced and welcomed Attorney Michael McKeon to the Department as the new Legal Director.

ARP ESSER Update

Chief Financial Officer Kathy Demsey provided an update on the American Rescue Plan, Elementary Assistance to Non-Public Schools (ARP EANS) Program. She summarized that Connecticut received \$15.9 million in aid for Non-Public Schools.

Health and Safety

Division Director John Frassinelli provided an update on vaccination requirements. He reported that the CSDE continues to work with DPH and promote **#Vax2SchoolCT Toolkit**, the guidance for Connecticut schools and district leaders to host COVID-19 clinics. He highlighted that the FDA had approved the authorization for the Pfizer vaccine for children ages 5-11.

Talent Office Update

Chief Talent Officer Shuana Tucker provided updates from the Talent Office.

- CCSSO's Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership (AIPL) Initiative provides coaching and support to state education leaders. CT was selected as one of five states to partner with CCSSO in Cohort 2.
- Educator Evaluation Feedback Forums. The CSDE is seeking input from educators to support the ongoing review and forthcoming revision of the Guidelines for Educator Evaluation 2017 to help inform the Educator Evaluation and Support 2022 (EES 2022). The RESC Alliance and district partners will be hosting and facilitating six virtual forums to solicit input.
- Chief Tucker applauded Sharon Fuller, Education Consultant on the 2022 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year and the Connecticut 2022 Teacher of the Year public announcement events.
- Commissioner Russell-Tucker made comments on EdRising.

Special Education Update

Division Director Bryan Klimkiewicz, provided an update on the web-based Special Education IEP Data Management System, CT-Special Education Data System and the Special Education IEP Quality Training Topics and compliance with the State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR).

2021-22 FAFSA Challenge

Deputy Commissioner Desi Nesmith provided an update on the FAFSA Challenge. In September, CT launched its second FAFSA Challenge to increase FAFSA completion rates by 5 points by working to have greater partnership and collaboration between high schools and

institutions of higher education. Deputy Commissioner Nesmith concluded that there is a focus on Alliance Districts and charter schools.

Voice4Change

Madison Csejka, Commissioner's Office, provided an introduction of Voice4Change. A first-of-its-kind campaign administered by the Connecticut State Department of Education that will empower high school students to decide how 1.5 million of American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency (ARP ESSER) funding will be spent to impact their schools. It will allow students to suggest and have an opportunity to vote on how \$20,000 of the ARP ESSER state set-aside be spent in their school. The students' proposals must align with at least one of the five priorities.

Recognition - KnowledgeWorks

- CSDE was recognized in a recent **KnowledgeWorks'** article, "*Strengthening Systems: How States Are Rethinking Human Capital Systems and Technology Infrastructure in the COVID-19 Era.*"
- Highlighted AccelerateCT Taskforce, efforts to close the digital divide, and minority teacher recruitment.

Recognition - 2022 Teacher of the Year

On October 28, 2021, Governor Ned Lamont and Commissioner Charlene M. Russell-Tucker announced that Kim King, a PK-4 Art Teacher in Mansfield at both the Southeast Elementary School and the Annie E. Vinton School, had been selected as Connecticut's 2022 Teacher of the Year.

Shoutouts!

- Nutrition Efforts.
 - P-EBT: In partnership with the Department of Social Services, the implementation of the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer program has provided more than \$347,350,827 million in food benefits through electronic debit cards.
 - School Meals: September 2021 saw the largest reimbursement to school districts for meals served in the history of Connecticut's school meals programs (16,000 more meals; \$10.5 million more in reimbursements)
- Chronic Absence. LEAP has conducted more than 6,200 home visits with over 2,000 families in 15 school districts.

Shoutouts!

Deputy Commissioner Desi Nesmith congratulated Division Director Lisa Lamenzo, Turnaround Office, on being the recipient of the 2021 CT Management Advisory Council Distinguished Managerial Service Award.

XI. Committee Reports

A. Academic Standards and Assessment

In the absence of Committee Chair Clemons, Committee Member Benham reported that the committee would be meeting on November 9, 2021.

B. Accountability and Support

Committee Chair Benham reported that the committee's November 18, 2021, meeting was canceled.

C. Finance, Audit, and Budget

Committee Chair Harris reported that the committee would be meeting on November 4, 2021.

D. Legislation and Policy Development

Committee Chair Sieve reported that the committee met that morning and that SDE Attorney Laura Anastasio presented a district review on Racial Imbalance procedures.

E. Connecticut Technical Education and Career System Board

Interim Superintendent Dr. Ellen Solek reported that work is being done on the strategic plan, and on a draft separation and implementation plan. Superintendent Solek highlighted being able to offer the full suite of Google Career Certificates to CTECS high schools. She spoke on the shortage of drivers for W.F. Kaynor Technical High School.

F. NASBE

In the absence of Board Member Exley, Vice Chair Benham read the NASBE Report. Mr. Exley attended the Virtual NASBE 2021 Annual Conference. Erin Benham was reelected Northeast Area representative on the nominating committee and Mr. Exley was elected as Northeastern Area Director and as a member of the NASBE Board. He was named chair of the NASBE Government Affairs Committee. He continues to serve as a member of the editorial advisory board. Mr. Exley will attend the NASBE Board meeting on November 9, 2021.

G. SERC

Committee Member Benham referenced her SERC report in the Supplemental Folders.

H. CT Remote Learning Commission

Board Member Karen DuBois-Walton provided an update. She reported that the Commission met on October 18, 2021. They identified work group committees for the development of Commission tasks.

Announcement of Google Career Certificates

Commissioner Russell-Tucker highlighted the October 29, 2021, event that announced the offering of the full suite of Google Career Certificates program available to all community colleges and career and technical education (CTE) high schools. This makes Connecticut the first state in the nation to offer the full suite of Google Career Certificates. Program participants were U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona, Governor Ned Lamont, President Terrence Cheng, Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU), Alphabet's Chief Financial Officer Ruth Porat, and Chief Workforce Officer for the State of Connecticut Kelli Vallieres. Also in attendance were Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker, U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal, and U.S. Senator Chris

Murphy. The Commissioner elevated Stephanie, a student from H.C. Wilcox, on the panel for her dynamic participation.

Acting Chairperson Taylor adjourned the meeting at 1:49 p.m.

Prepared by: _____
Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Secretary
State Board of Education