CONNECTICUT READING ASSOCIATION

CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION FOR READING RESEARCH

Summary of the Connecticut State Board of Education (CSBE) Meeting

September 5, 2018

Attending: Allan Taylor (Chair), Eric Clemons, Estela Lopez (Vice Chair), Erin Benham, Donald Harris, Terry Jones, Diana Roberge-Wentzell (Commissioner), Malia Sieve, Robert Trefry (Ex-Officio), Joseph Vrabely

Absent: William Davenport, Maria Mojica, Robert Ojakian (Ex-Officio), Stephen Wright

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The following participants spoke in support for approval of the Danbury Prospect Charter School:

P.J. Prints

Stephen Nocera

Valerie Schultz Wilson (and in support of the Norwalk Charter School for Excellence)

Irving Fox

Joss Pimeutel

Rev. Leroy Parker

Carl Bailey

Andy Sternlieb

Benita Clark

Maura Ivan

Tricia Robinson

Rachel Chaleski

Anna Perier

Brendan Davies

Jennifer Ellis (and in support of the Norwalk Charter School for Excellence)

Stephen Tracy

The following spoke in support of the Norwalk Charter School for Excellence.

Brian Hampton

Chris Mercer

Susan Alvarez

Lucena Madrigal

Amanda Brown

Cathy Dumas

Donna Revlus

Nakia Hall for Susanna Franco

Gregg Bourrett

Tami Williams

Mary Yardin, Norwich Federation of Teachers, requested that the Board deny the Charter request for the Norwalk Charter School for Excellence and the provisional approval for the Relay Graduate School. She cited difficulties with the organization.

The following addressed the Board in support of granting provisional approval to the Relay Graduate School:

Mayme Hosteller

Challa Flemming

Liz Cox

Claudia Cox

John Taylor

Mark Morrison

Tonya Claiborne

Sarah Harvey

Rebecca Good

Robert Goodrich

Johana Haynes, 2017 National Teacher of the Year

Heather Lasell, psychologist for the district of Torrington, Andrew Feinsten,Christina Ghio, and Dian Willcutts reported to the Board regarding the submission of a Whistleblower Complaint. They are concerned about the district’s isolation of students without due process.

Attorney Kyle McClain and Francine Loss addressed the Board regarding the Thomaston Petition for a Declaratory Ruling

Tom Stringfellow, Manchester activist, presented the Board with materials related to current issues, including Columbus Day.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board convened in Executive Session to consider the pending litigation of the Thomaston Board of Education for a Declaratory Ruling.

ITEMS REQUIRING ACTION

A. Adoption of the Position Statement on Comprehensive STEM Education for All Students K-12. Ellen Cohn, BureauChief, Melissa Hickey, Reading/Literacy Director, and Ronald Michaels, K-12 Science Consultant, presented the plan to the Board. The plan was developed with the Mathematics, Science, and Technology, Leadership Council that was composed of representatives from 19 STEM related educational and industry organizations. The plan was approved.

B. Approval of Danbury Prospect Charter School, Danbury. Desi Nesmith, presented to Board with the application of Danbury Prospect Charter School. Documents in the application included letters from the School Superintendents of Danbury, Bethel, Region 9, and New Fairfield, citing negative impacts on the districts and questioning the need for another charter school in Danbury. Danbury Mayor Mark Boughton, and House Representative Michael Ferguson wrote letters of support. The motion to approve was accepted.

C.Approval of Norwalk Charter School for Excellence, Norwalk. Desi Nesmith, presented the Board with the application of the Norwalk Charter School for Excellence. Members of the Board expressed concerns regarding the plans for student assessment and the supporting documents contained a letter from Superintendent Steven Adamoski questioning the appropriateness of putting the school in Norwalk when the district has yet to receive its Educational Cost Sharing Grant. The motion to approve was accepted, with Erin Benham voting not to approve.

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

No report.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER

Commissioner R. Wentzell reported on her legislative, internal, and external CSDE activities.

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Continuing Program Approval: Connecticut Relay Graduate School of Education Altrnate Route to Certification Program.

The Consent Agenda was approved

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A. Petition for a Declaratory Ruling, Thomaston Board of Education. (Thomaston does not maintain an agricultural science and technology center but has designated that operated by the Region 6 BOE as its center. The petition is the result of a dispute between the TBOE and the R6BOE concerning the enrollment of Thomaston students in the Region 6 center. Peter Haberlandt, Chief Legal Officer, recommended to the Board that members deliberate and consider the legal advice of the memorandum, and prepare to vote on the motion at the November 7, 2018 CSBE meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Marie Mulready