

**CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION FOR READING RESEARCH**  
**Summary of the Connecticut State Board of Education (CSBE) Meeting**  
**December 2, 2020**

Attending: Bonnie Bauer, Erin Benham, Miguel Cardona (Commissioner), Karen Dubois-Walton, Elwood Exley, Janet Gates (for Marc Ojakian, Ex-Officio), Estela Lopez (Vice-Chair), Donald Harris, Martha Prou, Awilda Reasco, Malia Sieve, Robert Trefry (Ex-Officio).

Absent: Eric Clemons

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The following addressed the Board by video in support of adopting the *African American, Black, Latino and Puerto Rican Curriculum* as mandated by P.A.19-12:

- Megan Hatch Geary, 2020 CT Teacher of the Year,
- Leah Russel, Public representative to the committee, and videographer
- Dr. Benjamin Foster, former principal of Bloomfield High School and Curriculum Consultant for NAACP
- Adrian Solis, Social Studies Teacher at Henry Abbott Technical High School, and committee content developer
- Fran Rabinowitz, Executive Director, CAPSS
- Amy Huffnagle, Director of Programs, Harriet Beecher Stowe House
- Gwen Samuel, President, CT Parent Association

The following addressed the Board regarding the Board's dismissal of a 10-4b Complaint regarding the Greenwich Board of Education's failure to provide an appropriate education to Special Needs students:

- Jennifer Kutai, parent advocate, Special Education Advisory Council
- Mahel Listro, parent of a blind student
- Caroline Lerum, parent
- Lorelei O'Hagan, parent
- Alain Gutai, parent of a Special Needs student and Language Arts teacher in Greenwich, speaking on behalf of Diane Martinez, parent of a Special Needs student.

Isaac Gottesman, AACTE Vice President, and Professor of Education at the University of St Joseph, thanked the Board for developing teacher certification flexibility during the current crisis, but cautioned against the broad disregard for strong teacher qualifications in order to remedy current teacher shortages, both generally and in shortage areas.

Nicole Rizzo addressed the Board regarding the dangers posed to teachers and students by in-person school attendance during the current COVID crisis. She emphasized the need for safety and the equitable distribution of resources to provide the correct hygiene products and adequate space.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Chair Taylor called for a motion to retire to Executive Session to discuss the matter of certification in *Item VI.C*.

### **ITEMS REQUIRING ACTION**

- A. Legislative Proposals. Laura Stefan, Legislative Liaison, presented the Board with the final legislative proposals by the Education Committee for the 2021 Legislative Session. The proposals include a change of age for the initiation of Special Needs transition services from age 16 to 14. The department also proposes changes to Bilingual Certification requirements to allow Bilingual teachers to teach in content areas. There is also a proposal to remove Grade Point Average barriers for entry into Schools of Education. The proposals were accepted.
  
- B. African American, Black, Latino and Puerto Rican Curriculum. Desi Nesmith, Deputy Commissioner of Academics and Innovation, along with Ingrid Canady, Executive Director of SERC, Irene Parisi, Chief Academic Officer, and Gladys Labas, Director of Equity and Language, presented the new course requirement developed by the CSDE and SERC for the study of African American, Black, Latino and Puerto Rican studies. The curriculum employs a two-pronged, inquiry-based approach to develop content knowledge and explore identity formation. The curriculum aligns with the Connecticut Common Core, Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Frameworks, and English Language Proficiency Benchmarks.

Subsequent to Board approval, the CSDE will post all curriculum materials on the department website. The CSDE will also carry out legislative obligations and report to the General Assembly on the completed course development and monitoring the required implementation by districts.

- C. In the Matter of RV, Certification. The certification of the individual in question was revoked by a unanimous roll call vote

### **REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER**

Commissioner Cardona reported on his internal, external, and Legislative activities. He focused on the Departments cooperation with the USDA to distribute food to students and on efforts to obtain feedback from Special Education teachers. He congratulated the newly appointed Kid Governor, Reese Naughton from Southington, the CAPSS Superintendent of the Year, Paul Freeman from Guilford, the 2021 Teacher of the Year, Rochelle Brown from Windsor, and Para Educator of the Year, Maria Sau, from Windsor.

The Commissioner also emphasized the staffing flexibility resulting from the ability of districts to waive some certification requirements and the work with the NextGen Educators project which helps sophomore and junior preservice students to work in schools for salaries before student teaching.

### **REPORT OF THE CHAIR**

No report

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

No agenda

## **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

- A. Agency Update. Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Performance Officer, reported on attendance trends over the past month. Definitions have been developed for a legal ½ day, remote, hybrid, and in person attendance.

All data is available on EdSITE. Major concerns include an overall 5% drop in attendance from last year. This is equivalent to about one extra absence per month. Highest attendance is reported on in-person days, with critical drops in English Language Learners and Homeless students on hybrid and remote days.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Marie Mulready