

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

Accountability and Support Committee

Monday, December 10, 2018
450 Columbus Plaza North Hearing Room J
Hartford, Connecticut

Minutes

I. Call to Order

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, Committee Chairperson Dr. Estela López called the meeting to order at 2:59 p.m.

Committee Dr. Estela López, Chairperson
Members Present: Erin D. Benham
 Donald F. Harris, Jr.
 William Davenport

Committee
Member Absent:

Staff Present: Desi Nesmith
 Lisa Lamenzo
 Iris White
 Robert Kelly
 Felicia Canty
 Carla Ghostlaw

Guests Present: Melony Brady-Shanley, Superintendent, Winchester Public Schools
 Rosanne Field, Principal, Batcheller Early Childhood Center
 Barbara Silverio, Principal, Pearson School
 Andrea Weller, Director, Stamford Academy
 Rick D'Avino, Board Chair
 Craig Baker, Chief Education Officer, Domus
 Joseph J. Vrabely, Jr., Board Member

II. Approval of Minutes

Estela López moved, Erin D. Benham seconded, that the committee approve the minutes of the October 22, 2018 Accountability and Support Committee meeting.

Vote: In Favor: Benham, Davenport
 Abstained: 0
 Opposed: 0
 Absent: 0

III. Batcheller Early Childhood Center and Pearson School, Winchester

Superintendent Brady-Shanley opened her remarks by explaining how Winchester has used their Commissioner's Network and Alliance funding to develop a much needed curriculum, provide focused and job-embedded professional learning to teachers, and support a shift to inquiry based instruction which allows students to drive their learning based on interest curiosity, and exploration. Student behaviors have nearly disappeared due to the level of engagement in the classrooms. The district has focused on excellence, communication, and transparency. Parents and the community are pleased with the positive changes they see happening in the schools. Both Batcheller and Pearson schools have two areas

of focus for this school year: using student data to drive instruction and small groups and continuation of targeted and embedded professional learning. Both schools have created a student-centered coaching model to support teaching and learning in ELA, Math, Science, and Special Education.

Principal Field from Batcheller School, which is a PreK-2 school, shared that the Pre-school and kindergarten classrooms have embedded additional adult support in the form of paraprofessionals and teaching assistants. Students receive reading and math interventions. The school continues to partner with EdAdvance to make revisions to the curriculum and provide professional learning and coaching supports to teachers as they implement. The school's chronic absenteeism rate of 8.7 percent remains below the state average of 9.9 percent. The spring 2018 Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) shows an increase in the percentage of students at the 41st percentile or higher.

Principal Silverio from Pearson School, shared that students are receiving reading and math interventions by three full-time interventionists. Teachers are receiving targeted, ongoing professional learning which is aligned with the district goals. Topics for this professional learning includes Readers Workshop, Tier 1 Reading instruction, inquiry-based instruction, and trauma-informed practices. Pearson showed improved outcomes in both ELA and math on the 2017-18 Smarter Balanced Assessment. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding the achievement standard in ELA increased from 41.7 percent in 2016-17 to 47.4 percent in 2017-18. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding the achievement standard in math increased from 28.9 percent in 2016-17 to 47.7 percent in 2017-18.

IV. Stamford Academy, Stamford

Dr. López and Mr. Nesmith opened the meeting and talked about the need of the school to urgently address the issues. Mr. Nesmith indicated that Mr. Rick D'Avino, Stamford Academy (SA) Board Chairperson has provided a sense of urgency to get the issues addressed. Lisa Lamenzo provided an overview of SA's efforts thus far in collaboration with the Turnaround Office including monthly monitoring and support.

Mr. D'Avino, also spoke of the reasons behind the former school Board's lack of properly addressing the issues due to it being resistant to criticism and being "battle fatigued." He talked about the current Board's willingness to fully collaborate with the CSDE and SBE, and the CSDE's willingness to work with the school. He indicated how the Board moved to add three new board members with an understanding of working with schools and students with high needs. He indicated how the school has developed a process for reporting to the Board monthly on its progress implementing the corrective action plan.

Andrea Weller, Principal of SA, talked about the Student Attendance Binders being used by school staff to weekly track student attendance. Students receive the reports weekly from school staff and every Wednesday students meet with staff to discuss attendance. School provides different incentives to students to come to school, i.e. field trips. Quarterly, school administration meets to review student data. Students are required to develop student success plans which include enrollment goals and student achievement goals.

Joe Vrabely, SBE Member asked about the retention of students. Andrea indicated that the school is working on school culture as a means to get students to stay in school. They are working to include students on school committees so they understand they are part of the school. The school has developed new course offerings using student input as a means of improving student engagement and increase their daily attendance.

Dr. López asked Ms. Weller and Mr. D'Avino to identify their biggest challenges. They indicated that while attendance is a big issue, student achievement is also. SA's Board has sought additional funds to provide added supports including: an SAT test instructor and 2 interventionists. The literacy and math interventionists provide additional one-on-one and small group student learning support.

Mr. Vrabely also stressed the importance of keeping the progress moving forward.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Prepared by: Carla Ghostlaw