

CHAIRPERSONS: Representative Joseph Gresko

SENATORS: Duff, Formica, Hartley, Kelly,
Kushner, Somers, Looney, Moore

REPRESENTATIVES: Godfrey, Kennedy, Quinn,
Yaccarino, D'Agostino, Perillo,
Vargas

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Okay, great. Thank you. My gavel. I'm calling the February 4th, 2021, public hearing of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee to order. And it's 10:08 AM. I'm Joe Gresko, the House Chair. Thank you for navigating on to our Zoom link. As you know, this Committee interviews nominees on their way to public service, it's a check and balance and vetting process. Nominees are allowed an introductory statement, and then following questions by Members as well.

So far, our Clerk has let us know that there was no public testimony submitted. So we will move forward after our Members have a chance to ask questions.

Our agenda has the three new nominees for the State Board of Education, nominated by Governor Lamont. So congratulations to all three of you on that nomination.

Our first individual on the agenda is Woody Exley of West Hartford. Mr. Exely, thank you for being with us this morning. And if you would please have your camera on and raise your right hand.

Do you promise, swear, or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

ELWOOD EXLEY: I do.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Great. It's customary that when we begin these interviews, we allow the nominee to make an introductory statement. And as I said,

after those remarks, we open it up for questions.
So, Mr. Exley, the floor is yours.

ELWOOD EXLEY: Thank you. Good morning, Committee Members. I'm Woody Exley. And I'm honored to be nominated by Governor Lamont to be a member of the State Board of Education. I'm grateful for the opportunity to meet with the Committee and I'm happy to talk about my commitment to serving the students and teachers and all the people of Connecticut.

If I'm confirmed, my immediate priorities as a member of the State Board of Education include finding a new Commissioner of Education who is as capable, inspiring, and visionary as Dr. Miguel Cardona. Continuing the safe reopening of our schools, remediating the learning loss from the pandemic, increasing the diversity of our teachers and educational leaders, reducing racial, ethnic, and economic isolation among students, ensuring equitable financing of school districts.

It's not in my written statement, but I'd like to see property tax be formed, addressing the learning gap among our students, ensuring equal educational opportunity for all students, emphasizing the cultural cultivation of students social and emotional skills, ensuring that school is a place where students want to be. For example, with students of colour amounting to almost half of our students. I supported the introduction of an elective in black and Latino history, which of course is good for all students.

My community activities indicate my interest and priorities. Twenty-five years ago, I established the Alma Exley Scholarship Program in cooperation with the community foundation of Greater New Britain. Our program provides support and recognition to college students of colour who are preparing for careers in education.

This was the first private initiative in Connecticut dedicated to encouraging diversity in the teacher workforce. I'm glad that this is a high priority for the State Board of Education and the General Assembly.

Our recipients are having a major impact in Connecticut and across the nation. Many have risen into leadership positions, including Dr. Miguel Cardona, President Biden's nominee for US Secretary of Education, and also another recipient, Desi Nesmith, who was Deputy Commissioner of Education.

Many years ago, I served as Chair of the Enfield Human Relations Commission, which works to foster mutual understanding and respect among all members of the community.

After moving to West Hartford, I served on the Board of Democracy Works, which promoted greater participation in the democratic process. We pioneered in backing measures such as Election Day registration, and voting rights for formerly incarcerated individuals.

I served for several years as a hospice volunteer visiting terminally ill patients while relieving family members. This was one of the experiences that led to my interest in end-of-life issues.

I served on the Board of Community Partners in Action, which advocates for criminal justice reform and works to reduce recidivism. As a volunteer before joining the board, I lead a CPA-sponsored effort to inform criminal justice organizations of the voting rights of individuals convicted of felonies.

When living in Bloomfield, I served on the Board of the Bloomfield Education Foundation, which raised funds for educational enrichment programs. For the past five years, I've taught English to immigrants at literacy volunteers of greater Hartford. This,

along with my own study of foreign languages, has given me an appreciation for the challenges facing English learners.

I grew up in Philadelphia, and I came to Connecticut in 1968 to work for the Hartford Times, which closed in 1976. I worked in Corporate Communications at Connecticut General, now Cigna, and United Technologies now Raytheon, I also worked in the UTC International Business Unit. Along the way, I earned a Master of Arts in Liberal Studies from Wesleyan University.

Thirty-two years ago, I established my own business, Exley Communications LLC. I provided editorial services for major companies in Connecticut and beyond, including writing speeches for senior executives.

I'm grateful for being chosen as a candidate to serve on the Board of Education. And I'm excited about the opportunity to have an impact. And I hope you'll approve my nomination.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Thank you, Mr. Exley. I'm gonna open it up for a couple of questions right up the -- right out of the gate here. Once you're confirmed, what will you be looking for in that nominee for Education Commissioner that you make to Governor Lamont? I know we have a high bar to follow with commissioner Cardona. But what are you gonna be looking for?

ELWOOD EXLEY: Yeah, we definitely do have a high bar. But I'd be looking for somebody who is interested in the education of all students who's interested in equity and equal opportunity for all students. And who can inspire the people within the Department of Education, to work on behalf of all students.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Thank you. And then my last question, my second question is, in your opinion --

what is your opinion, I should say, of the state saying to municipalities, "You have to include Holocaust. You have to include African American Latino Studies"? There's even a push for climate change studies in an individual curriculum, but then they want to maintain local control. How do you view that going forward?

ELWOOD EXLEY: Yeah, I saw even that Senator Saud Anwar is introducing a Bill to promote the Asian, and Pacific Island studies. I think those are good initiatives. And I think that they're done, I think, in cooperation with local education agencies and [inaudible] initiatives that they would like to do.

So I think it should be a collaborative effort. I think the State Board does have responsibility for providing leadership.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Thank you. That's -- in the interest of time, I'm going to see if my esteemed Co-Chair, Senator Duff has any questions for you. Senator?

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Great. Good morning. Thank you. And thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Woody. Congratulations on your nomination for the State Board of Education. It is obviously an important role, for sure. And one of which I think that, you know, this General Assembly takes very seriously.

So we're glad to have your testimony and glad to hear some of your comments with regard to how you, you know, some of the goal would be, you know, for going forward.

I would wanna ask you a couple things. One is, with regard to opening up our schools again, and in making sure that teachers feel safe students feel safe. What role do you think the State Board of Education plays in that aspect of opening up

schools, and ensuring that teachers and students feel safe?

ELWOOD EXLEY: Well, yeah, I think that the board has encouraged the schools to open safely. And I think there's a consensus that the children or students are safer in school and outside of school.

So I think that we just have to provide the guidance. And hopefully, that the federal government will provide the funds necessary to support the safe opening of the schools. And I just think we can serve to get the word out that it is -- that the schools are safe.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Okay, great. And I do think that the State Board of Ed has, you know, policy, I would assume, would have -- wanna have policy objectives around that. Because we know that there have been gaps between certain districts in the state urban and suburban, and rural districts with students in the way they have been able to keep up with their schoolwork this year.

And we're very, you know, obviously very happy that, in Connecticut we're the first state in the nation where children had the ability to have laptops. And also, we've done pretty well with internet access, but we know that does not -- has not been really equalized across the board. And do you see yourself playing a role in that in the State Board of Education as well?

ELWOOD EXLEY: Yeah, I think, in particular, with the fact that, as you said, that we have been able to provide access to all the students who had still a concern about absenteeism with many students not participating. So we should be encouraging the local districts to make sure that the attendance is there and not -- we're not losing -- we're not losing attendance. Yeah.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Right. Well, I would just argue that, you know, should you be confirmed that the, you know, working with the new Commissioner, whoever it is, and as a member of the State Board of Education, from the statewide perspective, you know, as will be done in the Legislature with the Education Committee. That the board look at, you know, the gaps from over the last year with COVID, especially as relates to some of our pours students, those English as a second language, those who don't have the ability to be able to connect properly.

And those who may, even some further back because some districts don't have the same tools as other districts do. What could be done to either catch them up or what can be done in order to realign so that we understand and work towards an education system that is equal for all of our children? And I think that is gonna be a very important thing for members of the Board of Education to tackle over the next several years.

ELWOOD EXLEY: Now, once I've stood that enable students to catch up, maybe the district should be looking at summer school to help them learn with the learning loss.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Yeah, well, you know, everything costs money, and we understand that. I do think that a policy perspective is going to be important for the Board of Education -- State Board of Education, to provide direction to local boards. And ideas, and also provide some ideas to the Legislature as well.

So I would just ask an urge that members of the board take a active approach in helping us in the state, ensure that our children have those opportunities that -- and reclaim those opportunities that might have been lost over the last year. And also help us to fix those cracks in the system that have long been there, that had been

more exposed during this pandemic. So thank you, sir. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ELWOOD EXLEY: Thank you.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Thank you, Senator. In the meantime, if any other Members have any questions, please use the raise hand feature, the Zoom feature to raise your hand. But in the interim, we are now going to go to our house Ranking Member, Representative Kennedy. Floor is yours, ma'am.

REP. KENNEDY (119TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for your testimony. Mr. Exley, you have provided very detailed information for us. And more than anything, I wanna thank you for your willingness to serve on the State Board of Education. I'm sure it's gonna require a lot of time, but I do thank you for that.

Just going along the lines of some of the questions that Senator -- the good Senator asked. One being some of the courses being offered the Asian Studies, African American Studies our climate change was mentioned. What I hear a lot of times is that these end up being unfunded mandates to the districts. Can you address that for me, please?

ELWOOD EXLEY: Yeah. I'm sympathetic with that concept of unfunded mandates. But I think that those courses are important. And I think that educators throughout that should support those.

REP. KENNEDY (119TH): Thank you, sir. And I absolutely agree with you. They are very important subjects. Right now, at this time now, I know the local municipalities putting together their budgets. So it is always -- and then we do our Legislature at the same time, so their budgets sometimes already in place. So it's always concerning how the municipalities are going to find the fiscal dollars.

You had mentioned in your testimony, property tax reform. Can you just tell me a little bit more about that?

ELWOOD EXLEY: Yeah. Well, I learned recently that Michigan in 1994, changed their property tax situation. And the state took over the property-tax away from the municipalities. And it actually reduced the revenues that came in from the property tax. So to make up the difference, they increase the sales tax from 4 to 6 percent, with the additional 2% going for education.

And the result was that, you know, there was a big gap between the wealthier districts and the poor districts. And what it did was it closed the gap in spending between the lower spending districts and the higher spending districts.

So I wanna look -- I wanna find out more about that from Michigan. Because I think, the property tax reform is really something that needs to be done to provide more equal education throughout the state.

REP. KENNEDY (119TH): Thank you, Mr. Exley, for the explanation. And I agree with you. Providing every child with every opportunity to be successful, is most important. And I thank you for your questions -- I mean, for your answers, and for the very detailed information you provided with us. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Thank you, Representative Kennedy. Next, we'll go to our Vice-Chair. Representative Quinn. Sir, the floor is yours.

ELWOOD EXLEY: I can't hear you. You're muted.

REP. QUINN (82ND): Yeah, I'm getting good at doing that. As I was saying, thank you, Mr. Chairman. And good morning again, Mr. Exley. And thank you for your willingness to serve in this important role with the state. I'm a graduate of the Lyman Hall

High School vocational agriculture program. And my grandfather went to Wilcox Tech in Meriden. And my niece currently goes to Wilcox Tech in Meriden.

Do you have any positions on expanding both the agriscience and technical schools, either at the existing schools or through additional programs through our other public high schools to give students who are not necessarily on a college track, more career-based opportunities for the four years that they're in high school?

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Did we lose him?

REP. KENNEDY (119TH): He's there. I think he's having audio trouble.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Yeah.

ELWOOD EXLEY: I lost you.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): There we go.

ELWOOD EXLEY: I don't know if it was me, or you. Can you hear me now?

REP. QUINN (82ND): Yes.

ELWOOD EXLEY: Representative Quinn froze up on me. I don't know if I'm -- if it's my problem or yours.

REP. QUINN (82ND): All right. I will just briefly repeat it. Basically, what I was getting at was, your position on either expanding the vocational, technical -- vocational-technical, and agriscience schools to allow for more students to participate, or to expand opportunities in the regular public high schools for students to get career pass, who may not be on the college path?

ELWOOD EXLEY: Yes, I think that's so important to have more of vocational and technical training. I think that's especially important. So I'm not

really sure, you know, I'm not aware how much vocational-technical training there is in the regular high schools, but I think that's very necessary.

REP. QUINN (82ND): All right. Thank you.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Thank you, Representative. Next to we have Representative Yaccarino. You have the floor, sir.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you for stepping up to want to serve on the State Board of Education. I'd like to follow up on the good Majority Leader's questions about -- during the pandemic, in the school systems, we always like to have local control, but it seems so disjointed from district to district as far as education, and in-person learning, virtual learning. What could you foresee in the future to either have a better-coordinated effort for our school systems, which are vitally important, obviously, for all of us? What's your vision? Or what would you do differently?

ELWOOD EXLEY: Well, I don't know, the state needs to provide the leadership. As you say, we like to let -- we like the local control. But I guess it's a balancing act between the state providing guidance and leadership and still maintain local control. I would think, you knowm regionalization has been talked about ever since I came to Connecticut in 1968. And it never seems to make any progress. I think that regionalization can be a positive thing, in that regard.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): Yeah. Yeah. It's -- I think all of our eyes were open with the pandemic because, in this situation, you see how many schools do things differently. But at the end of the day, we all want our kids to be educated, in either urban, rural, you know, suburbs. And in this case, if you --- currently we could have superintendents - - we could share superintendents, and no town wants

to do that. They don't want to share one superintendent for two towns. They just don't want to let -- that's one thing. But as far as protocol, I think I would hope going forward, and I wish -- it's unfortunate we lost our Commissioner Cardona, I think he would have been terrific -- was terrific in the short time he was at our Commissioner Board of Ed, I mean, Commissioner of Education, but we need to have a complex and a balance for students, for educators. So I would hope you're going forward are gonna look at that with your fellow members. Can't speak this morning.

ELWOOD EXLEY: Well, yeah, yes, I will definitely that's good to hear that. And we'll definitely pursue that.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): And as far as the property tax, you mentioned Michigan, now most cities, large cities, get quite a bit of federal dollars. So would you envision if you want to equalize that, all that money would go to the state back to the cities? Cause that's -- they do get a share of federal dollars, but small towns don't receive.

ELWOOD EXLEY: Well, the cities that have so much non-taxable property, that I --

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): That's somewhat regarding your money. It's going directly to education.

ELWOOD EXLEY: Yeah.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): It's a complex issue, that's my point. It's easy to say that, but it's not that easy to actually implement.

ELWOOD EXLEY: Well, it just seems so unfair, that there's so much dichotomy between the poor districts in places like Hartford that has so much public property that's not taxed. And so it just seems so unfair, that we should be looking at a way to provide more equalization.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): Yeah, I mean, obviously, dollars are vitally important. You never wanna short -- give a shortfall to education, or educating our young children and our young adults. But the point of it is, it sounds good on paper, it's just very hard to implement.

And it is unfortunate when you have Hartford -- like I live in North Haven, or New Haven. The good thing about New Haven, they do lose some state dollar, but they gain so much from Yale University, you know, so it's a balance. But Hartford obviously has a tougher balance.

But as far as the Vo-ags and Vo-techs, I think are vitally important. And I think also too often, people discard that. And that's one of the best forms of education. Just look at Lyman Hall and Wallingford, the good Representative Quinn had mentioned. They give such a well-rounded education where 90 -- I think 99 or 98 percent of their students go on to get a job right after school and start college. Either a two-year college and earn to earn some biology or nursing program or some sort of skill. It's not just farming and construction. It's other skill sets.

And I think we really need to look at the State Board of Education, how we educate our children. I always mention the German model to a small country, obviously. But their students are ready to go to college right out of high school because they're getting training, starting and which equivalent to our eighth grade, through eighth-grade, ninth grade all the way through senior.

But we're not -- I think we've lost -- I don't think it's that complicated. We've made it much more complicated. We just have to look at the Vo-ags and the Vo-techs they do a tremendous job. And I would hope that people will realize that. I think Representative

Quinn made a valid point. It's vitally important to our education system.

ELWOOD EXLEY: Now we just saw a report from on the vo-ag vocational agriculture programs where they did a survey of students several years after they had graduated from high school. And they -- it was tremendous. The jobs that they went into were varied and very, very productive. Very good.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): Well, hopefully, you guys can coalesce around that and start making some positive changes here.

ELWOOD EXLEY: Yeah, that's very, very important.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): Well, thank you for your time. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And have a wonderful day.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Thank you, Representative Yaccarino. Any other Members have any questions for Mr. Exley? And the other Members have any questions? And seeing that there was no public testimonies submitted, and there are no further questions, I like to congratulate you and Mr. Exley on your appointment as a member of the State Board of Education.

But before you go, there's one question we asked of every nominee. Is there anything in your past that you believe might prove embarrassing to this Committee, to the Governor, or to the State of Connecticut?

ELWOOD EXLEY: No, nothing at all.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): That's great to hear. Thank you very much. And with that being said, we are going to move on to our second candidate and our second nominee on the public --

ELWOOD EXLEY: Thank you very much for listening to me today.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): No problem at all, sir. Our second nominee on the agenda, to be a member of the State Board of Education is Martha Paluch Prou. And Martha, thank you for being here with us today, and for as I said, navigating our Zoom link.

We have to first of all, have you get on camera there. Yeah, you are. Raise your right hand, please. Do you promise, swear, or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

MARTHA PROU: I do.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Good to hear. It's customary that when we begin these interviews, we allow the nominee to make an introductory statement, and then we'll open it up to questions after that. But ma'am, the floor is yours.

MARTHA PROU: Great. Thank you. Good morning, Senator Duff, Representative Gresko, Representative Quinn, Senator Kelly, Representative Kennedy, and Members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee. My name is Martha Prou, and I'm honored to be nominated by Governor Lamont to be a member of the State Board of Education.

I am nominated to fill a position on the board that is required to have manufacturing experience. I have spent the last 11 years of my career working and manufacturing at Phoenix manufacturing in Enfield, where I am the director of administration and compliance.

Prior to coming home to Connecticut, I worked for the office of manufacturing and services at the US Department of Commerce in Washington DC. Phoenix Manufacturing produces complex machine components for the aerospace industry. We are a family-owned

and operated business. The CEO is my mother, Christina Pollack, and my brother Peter and I are in place as the next generation of ownership. So you can say I've been in manufacturing my whole life.

In addition to my daily responsibilities, I have also worked on recruitment and workforce development projects within our company and our state. As a company, we have been working with local community colleges, and technical and comprehensive high schools to bring in new apprentices and new hires. Prior to the pandemic, we started working with Enfield high school to bring in students on tours and get them interested in manufacturing and technology.

In our sector of advanced manufacturing, the technical schools and community colleges are pumping out graduates. But those graduates still need more training when they reach our doors. We see apprenticeship as a critical tool to bridging the skills gap between recent graduates and our hiring needs.

We were also heavily involved in the CMC, Connecticut Manufacturers Collaborative, and ACM, the Aerospace Components Manufacturer. This legislative body, and the Lamont administration have been great partners in supporting the manufacturing and workforce development.

There are so many pockets of excellent around our state, ranging from individual school and district programs, to employers' programs, and great collaborations in between, including the work of the Governor's Workforce Council that is in progress.

I look to this appointment as an opportunity to serve as another link between K-12 education and the various stakeholders in the business and workforce development community, including the State Legislature. I look forward to taking your questions at this time. Thank you.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Thank you very much. I just had a question based on what you just said. The challenge of interesting are in making individual students interested in a manufacturing career. I know we have the manufacturing incentive program, among other things that you had mentioned.

But how do you approach a student and tell -- make them aware of the option that there is a good-paying job in the trains waiting for them, even as we struggle to fill the numerous vacancies that are coming up as workers aged out, and for me, you know, having given them the option of staying here in the State of Connecticut?

MARTHA PROU: Yes, I think from our personal experience here and what we've been working on with the industry is to start exposing the kids as early as middle school to what jobs are out there, what was the new technology looks like. Really still hammering home the point that manufacturing is not dirty, dark, and dangerous.

And that also includes a connection to the parents, because it's the parents who, you know, if they remember what their grandfather did, it may not be an updated model of the advanced skills that we need.

In our shop here, and we always welcome people, it's tougher now in the pandemic, but we always love having tours that look like a laboratory. You know, clean floors, bright lights, that's what the customers expect, clean manufacturing. And as the technology evolves, it gets more advanced, we need more people, smarter people, sometimes unfortunately, fewer people to run, you know, automation to run the advanced machines that we have.

So if programs where, you know, you bring in kids to for summer camps through the various schools, we can

go to the schools, the more points of exposure and the different types of jobs that we can start talking to them about, hopefully, can be effective in introducing them to a whole wide range of careers.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Thank you. Thank you for that answer. And as I said before, in the interest of time, we are gonna go to my esteemed Co-Chair Senator Duff, if you would like to ask a few questions, sir. The floor is yours.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity. And good morning, congratulations on your nomination. Question for you as you spoke as a manufacturer, and obviously that may be your -- one of the areas of which you concentrate on the State Board of Education.

What -- I guess, for us here in Connecticut, and there's, you know, we think of manufacturing as some of the bigger shops in Connecticut, like Pratt & Whitney or Electric Boat, or Sikorsky and others, but so many other manufacturing sites around our state. And I'm always so pleased and proud to visit manufacturers in where I represent in Norwalk and Darien. And there are quite a few of them here as well.

What -- as we kind of move forward and, you know, there's always the mantra of college or career, which is very important. But how do we -- how do you think it's best to be able to when we do college and career, help students understand that career doesn't always necessarily mean sitting behind a desk all day, but you could be doing manufacturing advanced manufacturing, jobs that pay very well that are needed? How do we kind of get that word out? I think you touched a little bit about that on your testimony. But we need to, I think, focus on that more, cause it's so critical for our state success.

MARTHA PROU: Yes, that's a very good point. One of the things that -- I guess, the many touchpoints, and one of those things can be the opportunities to have internships for students, you know, to work with different companies to bring them in. That's a model that the Technical High Schools have done very well. And going back to a discussion, you know, the discussion during Mr. Exley's questioning is, it's wonderful to see that many of these technical schools have waiting lists, it's something that should be expanded and to give the different opportunities.

So when students can go into a workplace and have an experience, whether they're the end of their high school career, or during their community college career, or whatever type of program they're in, that are -- the boots on the ground experience, really introduces them to what they have available to them at the first level, and how you can work up.

You know, in our facility, we still were able to hire people, you know, off the street without, you know, much training and train them internally. That you come in sweeping the floor running the saw, and eventually, you can work your way up to running a machine or working in quality. It's preferred that they go through training, you know, but at some point, it's hours and exposure helps open doors to people.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Right. And then lastly, I just want to ask, are you seeing manufacturing, as something that is open to all of our students that, you know, who may not always think of manufacturing as an option for them, but could be potentially a good fit? Meaning, you know, are you seeing students come in from urban suburban rural districts? Is it a one particular, you know, part of the state? Cause I wanna make sure, again, with manufacturing where and as you as a member of the State Board of Education, we're looking at all these educational opportunities from a diversity lens.

MARTHA PROU: Yes, absolutely. [inaudible] training in the different regions is really important. But it can help -- I think it's a great opportunity to promote equity, and offer opportunities to students of different backgrounds. I think what is so important that even as a small state, we have pockets or regional pockets of different types of manufacturing. So what they're making your Waterbury and those programs are a little bit different than what we're doing in the Hartford County area, with more than a complex machining for the aerospace industry, which means a little bit different than what's going on is the closest suppliers and broad.

And so, the fact that we do have regional workforce boards and different programs throughout the state, you know, it's important that we share best practices, but at some point, they also have to be tailored to the areas that they're in to have the maximum efficiency and efficacy.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Thank you, Senator. We are gonna open up the floor to our Members. If any Members have a question, please use the raise hand feature on the Zoom link, and we will go to your question. And right out of the gate, our Vice-Chair, Representative Quinn, sir, you have the floor.

REP. QUINN (82ND): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you Ms. Prou for your willingness to serve in this very important role. Just building off the question that I asked Mr. Exley, and based on some of your answers and your experiences, are our high schools today turning out enough qualified students to work in the manufacturing industry? And if not, what more can we be doing?

MARTHA PROU: I think that high school, on its own, is becoming more difficult to be enough. It is important though, that these high school graduates can transition into the next program, whatever it may be. We hear you know, the amount of remediation that has to happen at a community college level, if you take our industry, for example, you do need to understand and have completed basic math. So if you didn't do it in high school, they're spending time doing it in the next program.

And so I think that, you know, the continued focus on the necessary skills to succeed in college and career is really important. And, you know, the concept of the different schools, and also the different multiple pathways is really important.

Going back to your other questions is that, school is not a one-size-fit-all answer. And so the more opportunities we give our students to find the place where they fit and to find and grab onto something that they can run with, and make a career and, you know, a successful life out of all, that's incumbent on us to keep doing that.

REP. QUINN (82ND): Yeah, and I'm glad to hear you say that, because that's my concern is that, so many students are going through four years of high school, and they're coming to the end, and not really having any idea what they're going to do for the next sixty, seventy, eighty years of their life.

MARTHA PROU: You know, that's a tough situation. It's part of youth, I think, in my own personal experience that we wanna guide them, but they may end up starting something and then change paths, right? And the more access that we have to get on and off with different trainings, and hopefully help people finish the first time through, is really important.

And also because, you know, our industries are changing, you know, we're in investment

manufacturing are looking down, like what artificial intelligence is going to do to us. And so it's really important to have a base set of skills that hopefully can be added on and amended as people's careers evolve. But sir, I completely understand that concern about high school graduates who, you know, finish high school or then even a higher institution and have no place to go.

It even breaks my heart even more when I see people graduate and pay big money for post graduate -- you know, econdary programs, and don't have a place to go after.

REP. QUINN (82ND): Thank you very much for your answers. And again, congratulations on your nomination.

MARTHA PROU: Thank you.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Thank you, Representative Quinn. Again, the request to our Members, if you have any questions for Ms. Prou, please raise your hand. Any other questions? And we have Representative Yaccarino. Sir, you are next, and you have the floor.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Ms. Prou for stepping up. Am I mute?

MARTHA PROU: No, we can hear you.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): Okay. Thank you for stepping up. Is this a new position for the State Board of Ed?

MARTHA PROU: I don't know -- I am replacing somebody else. I will be replacing somebody else. I don't know the history of when it originally was passed by state law to have this position. But I feel -- I think it's a good thing -- it's a good voice to have on a diverse board.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): Oh, I agree a hundred percent. I know if you heard me earlier, I think it's vitally important. And you touched on something, I think we should go as far back as eighth-grade introducing different tech programs to students. I think it's -- I'm old enough to know, when I was a kid that I would, if you take over things, you fix things or try to build things, you at least have that aptitude to do that, or wanna do that, or have the understanding of doing that.

So I think it's wonderful. I think you bring a great perspective, practically and educational wise. I would hope, if there's any way you hit on something, either schools or parents, many times are resistant to trades or manufacturing. And I think it's vitally important for that opportunity for our young adults to have a future.

It is clean. And in North Haven, we have a Mossberg position, combustion, we have a number of them. And they're high paying skill set jobs, that you could work your whole life here, if you so choose. I'm making a very good living.

MARTHA PROU: Absolutely. And another -- sorry to interrupt.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): No, no, I'm sorry. You go.

MARTHA PROU: That connection with the parents is also important to have a connection to the guidance counsellors in the schools and those programs.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): So we -- I'm part of the Manufacturers Caucus and the bipartisan group of us in Hartford and many times, we wonder why is -- there's a gap in the messaging from the manufacturing community, to the guidance. And I think it's got to go through the guidance counsellors and the parents more than anything else. And it doesn't seem to ever -- hopefully, you can

bring it across the goal line, because it doesn't seem to get there.

MARTHA PROU: Right, I think we've made a lot of progress. But I -- you're talking, you know, we -- people are -- the fact that you have so much support from this Legislature, from the different interests from the different communities in manufacturing and technical skills is way better than we were 15 to 20 years ago when it really was a push for college for all.

But you're absolutely right, Representative, that we have something we need to keep bringing home and pushing to because it's a benefit for all of our students and the state.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): Well, I'm excited that you're gonna take up this position. I think the Governor made a good choice and keep up the good work. And thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Thank you, Representative Yaccarino. Will any other Members have any questions? Please use the raise hand feature on your Zoom link. Going once, going twice, since there's no public testimony that was submitted, and with no other questions, I'd like to -- Ms. Prou, I'd like to congratulate you on your appointment as a member of the State Board of Education.

And before you go, we have a question that we ask of every nominee. Is there anything in your past that you believe might prove embarrassing to this Committee, to the Governor, or to the State of Connecticut?

MARTHA PROU: No.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Thank you. Thank you for that answer. And we will now move on to the third item, our third Resolution, and that would be the Resolution confirming Awilda Reasco of New Britain

to be a member of the State Board of Education. I see you there. So we are -- I see you on camera. Awilda, can you unmute yourself? Can you hear me? Can you unmute yourself? Wendy, can you unmute her?

REP. QUINN (82ND): Or if she's using a laptop, she can just hold down the spacebar.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): There you go. Wait, you had it for a second. Hold on. Right. There you go.

REP. QUINN (82ND): You got to keep it held.

AWILDA REASCO: Okay. I just learned something new. So I have to hold on to it. Okay.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Yes. Well, we all learn something new. Thank you, Representative Quinn. While holding the spacebar down with your left hand, please raise your right hand. And do you promise, swear, or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

AWILDA REASCO: Yes.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Okay. It's customary that when we begin these interviews, as you've seen, we allow the nominee to make your introductory statement. And then we'll open up for questions after that. So, ma'am, the floor is yours.

AWILDA REASCO: Good morning, Senator Duff, Representative Gresko, Senator Looney, Representative Quinn, Senator Kelly, Representative Kennedy, and Members of the Executive and Legislative Nomination Committee. My name is Awilda Reasco. And it's with great honor to have been nominated by Governor Lamont for the appointment to the State Board of Education. And I express my sincere gratitude.

I was born and raised in the countryside in [Inaudible] in Puerto Rico. I had the honour of

being raised by a single mother and four activists siblings. We moved to New Britain, Connecticut for a better education. I'm sorry.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Oh, I thought we lost you. I'm sorry.

AWILDA REASCO: I attended public schools and EC Goodwin Technical School in a New Britain. I received my bachelor's degree from Central Connecticut State University and minored in communications. I attended a full -- I attended full-time graduate school while I was working full time at a Child Guidance Clinic in New Britain.

I was a doctoral candidate, but I was expecting my daughter Kayla, so after I decided to devote my time for my daughter. After completing the first course in good standing, it was most -- it was important to me that my daughter came first. I'm extremely proud to share that I'm a product of the CCSU Educational Opportunity Program known as EOP, in which I've been directing for the past 20 years.

I have been immersed in many educational issues related to assisting first-generation and low-income students aiming towards graduation. Hundreds of students have been served and achieved by my leadership and advocacy throughout my 34 years in schools and higher education.

I continue to be proud of my accomplishments serving on the Connecticut Puerto Rican and Latino Affairs Commission, and participated on panels as ways to improve graduation and retention, mentoring, and best practices.

Additionally, I have served on the CCSU's president special counsel on Latino affairs. As I reflect on this nomination, I realized that I must take this role seriously, since every child, every family member, and educator must come first. My experience working with middle kids, through college-level

students has taught me to be humble and passionate. Most importantly, never to forget where I came from, and the sacrifices that my family members encounter. It's all about giving back.

Therefore, I am convinced that I have prepared myself and dedicated my entire life with providing education access to a diverse population in Connecticut. And this represents another opportunity to continue doing the work that has a purpose, and I was called to do.

I hope to bring to the board my added voice and devoted attention to addressing equity, inclusion, and respect with making Connecticut a better place.

I thank Governor Lamont , each one of you, for the work you do and for taking the time to meet with me. Most importantly, your consideration and recommending my appointment to the Connecticut State Board of Education. I'm open to answer questions that you may have at this time.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Thank you, Awilda. And I guess I'll start the questions based on what you said in your unique experience, and then based on the answers from our previous nominee. Do you see the possibility of -- based on your work that you've done over the past 20 years, and to highlight our vocational and or manufacturing opportunities here in the State of Connecticut as -- have you done that? And will you be able to do that going forward? Cause I just think that in the interest of getting the word out to everyone, it would be a, you know, a good move for the State of Connecticut. I don't hear her. Does everybody else not hear her?

REP. QUINN (82ND): Maybe if she tries to spacebar.

AWILDA REASCO: Is this better? Is this better?

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Yes, we can hear you now.

AWILDA REASCO: Okay. All right. I started to say that I was a product of a graduate of EC Goodwin Tech here in New Britain on Slater Road. And the opportunities that the students had in the shop area, the two weeks of the shop and the two weeks of classes, provided the opportunity for us to go out and do kind of feel work. And I think our students today need hands-on, they really need the opportunity for high-impact practices in order to understand what it is to be out there in the working out in the manufacturing. So absolutely, I'm for it, being a product of technical schools.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Thank you, Awilda. We're gonna go down to my Senate Co-Chair, Senator Duff. The floor is yours, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Thank you very much. And good morning, Ms. Reasco. Good to see you. This is a reappointment, is that correct?

AWILDA REASCO: Yes.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Okay. So I know we've had the opportunity to ask you questions before. I know you've done a great job. I know your daughter, Kayla, and she says, "Hi." We're just texting back and forth. And so we're glad that you're being reappointed as well.

I guess I would just ask kind of what I asked before and I think your experiences in important. From a standpoint of what we've seen with COVID, and the inequities in some of our districts, how do you feel the State Board of Education plays a role in trying to mitigate some of those inequities that we see and especially as we move forward and trying to address some of those, some of which have always been there others have been more exasperated because of the fact that kids are home and not in school?

AWILDA REASCO: Oh, yes. Wow. It's a crisis for our communities and our schools because the first

thing that comes into my mind is the population of students who are under Representative of the vulnerable population, who are now not having the access to technology.

I speak to students who say to me, you know, "My family is suffering from COVID. And I can't attend classes," or I have to take some time away from, you know, from my school." And the whole attendance is an issue. I really think that we have to really look at this as a priority, so that we can try to get our kids back to school.

It continues to be personally and professionally a concern of mine, where students are missing out in terms of their academics, their social skills, social-emotional. And so, therefore, it just breaks my heart to have to meet kids that I talked to every day, whether it's middle-high school or college, and they're saying that this pandemic has prevented them from pursuing what they wanna achieve. And that is their education.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Good, thank you. And I think that's very important. So I would just say that right now, it's just extremely important for the State Board, especially as we have either an interim Commissioner or new Commissioner, that the State Board of Ed really works towards these issues and addressing these on a statewide basis.

I think with, you know, local boards of Ed obviously gonna do what they can, the Legislature is gonna do what they can, but there's a role for the State Board of Education as well. And I think you're well-positioned to help address that. And I appreciate your work on the Board of Ed. So thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's all the questions and comments I have.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Thank you, Senator. Are there any other Members that would like to ask a question?

I think Senator Kushner, you had a request to ask a question. Ma'am, the floor is yours.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH): Yes, thank you. And my -- this is more of a comment than a question. I do know your daughter, Kayla. And I'm sure you are as proud of her as she is of you. And she does an amazing work. And I have to say, I am really looking forward to working with you, if you're confirmed. I know that in my -- in my area, in Danbury, and certainly in Bethel as well. We have many English language learners. And I think your experience as coming to this country, learning English, could be incredibly helpful. So I look forward to meeting with you and discussing the challenges we face and the opportunities to do better. Thank you.

AWILDA REASCO: Well, yeah, thank you for those comments about the English language, because one of the things is that we've turned around into a society where languages in not becoming important. And in addition to being bilingual, being bicultural, brings in so much asset to this -- to this world.

I've had the opportunity of taking students to China. And they had a chance to see what it is to be in another country, and learn another language, and vice versa. So I really think that in this world, we can learn from each other and embrace the differences and cultures that we all bring along with us.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH): I so agree with you. I think it makes us a richer community when we have that diversity of cultural experiences. It also brings to mind a question I do have for you, because recently I had had an opportunity to learn a little bit about dual language schools. And I know -- I found that really something that we should strive for, in my opinion, and I'd like to know your opinion, because I know as a parent, in a world

where so many people speak Spanish, I would have really -- would have loved my children to be in a program, a dual language school where they would learn Spanish at the same time the English language learners were learning English. And I wondered if you had any experience, or anything you could inform us about that?

AWILDA REASCO: Sure, the reality is that the Latino population and the Latinx population continue to increase. So, therefore within the Spanish culture, that language is not going to disappear. So, therefore -- I live in a neighborhood where little kids who are non-Latino, speak Spanish to me, and they wanna practice with me. I think we need to move back into the middle schools where they had -- even at elementary levels, we have the dual enrollment programs.

And I know that some of the programs were dismantle, but I find it that we need to go back and put those programs in. And not only Spanish, but other languages. Because I live in a town where there's a lot of Polish speaking. and I've learned the basics with my peers in school, and with -- and with some of the neighbourhoods that I grew up into. So I really go back to embracing cultures and languages are so important, as children begin to develop so that they can become an asset to the workforce.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH): Absolutely. And also, I want to let you know, I've been to Saint Harmon I had an office there when I represented workers in that area. And it's a beautiful place to come from. So thank you and good luck on your confirmation.

AWILDA REASCO: I do agree. I do agree, my town is beautiful. It's very colonial, if you remember. Like being in Spain. Yes.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH): Yes.

AWILDA REASCO: Thank you.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH): Thank you.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Thank you, Senator. Next with questions is senator Formica. Sir, the floor is yours.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and good morning. Thank you very much for your comments this morning, ma'am. And I just wanna make a comment that echoes I think the importance of the comment you made. It's time to get people, children back working with their hands. It's time to get apprenticeships going. It's time to get trades going. It's time to get all of that pushed to the forefront

And I'm very pleased to hear that you're gonna have a voice on the board and I hope you really push that because I think that's something that. I'm old enough to remember having wood shop and auto shop and things in high school and, you know, we got away from it because of insurance. And maybe pushing people just to college prep. But not everybody is college prep.

And we need trades now more than ever. And I was really glad to hear you say that. And I just wanted to thank you for your service, and wish you luck as you move that forward.

AWILDA REASCO: You're welcome. You know, one of the pieces that I wanted to add is that, when I came from Puerto Rico here, I worked in a factory called Acme Monaco, here in New Britain. And my whole family work there. And that whole rich experience about learning the importance of working in a manufacturer convinced me that I needed a college degree.

But then I also left friends behind that said, you know, this is where I wanna stay, because I wanna build and grow. And they became owners. They

became business owners. They worked -- you know, their positions grew within the manufacturing. So like you said, one size doesn't fit all. And I do agree. I have seen it.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): Yeah, good. Well, I very much appreciate that perspective. And I wish you luck. Mr. Chairman, thank you for the time this morning.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Thank you, Senator. Any other Members have a question for Awilda? Please raise your hand, use the Zoom feature. Okay, seeing none, and the fact that we don't have any public testimony on this, I'd like to congratulate you on your reappointment as a member of the State Board of Education.

But before you go, there's the question we ask every nominee. And that is, is there anything in your past that you believe might prove embarrassing to this Committee, to the Governor, or to the State of Connecticut?

AWILDA REASCO: Absolutely not. No.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): That's great to hear. And thank you for participating. And thank you all to -- all of the nominees for your willingness to appear in front of us today and for your patience. And I do believe that concludes our public hearing. So I will entertain a motion to adjourn the public hearing.

REP. QUINN (82ND): So moved.

REP. KENNEDY (119TH): Okay. Okay.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): And seconded by Representative Kennedy. And I think that all in favour. We should just raise your hand or say Aye.

(MEMBERS): Aye

REP. GRESKO (121ST): So we are adjourned of the public hearing. And I'm just gonna pause for a moment to let Wendy, our Committee Clerk, gather herself before we go to the meeting, and just for a couple of seconds.

WENDY FRITZ: All right, everybody, ignore my dog barking. Okay, I think I am --

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Okay, here we go. We're gonna bang the gavel again. (Gavel) And I'm calling you to order the February 4th, 2021 meeting of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee to order. Any remarks by my esteemed Co-Chair?

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): No, thanks. I think we're good. Let's move on.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Here we go, we're moving on. Item Number three, the Resolutions for review. Our first one, I would like to make a motion to approve the nomination of Elwood Exley, of West Hartford to be a Member of the State Board of Education for a term ending March 2024. And I would entertain a second.

REP. GODFREY (110TH): Second.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Seconded by Representative Godfrey. And as our new Zoom world is dictating to us, wWe are going to do this by a roll call vote just to make sure that we are all registered properly. So again as a reminder, when the Clerk calls your name, please have your camera on and indicate your name and your vote. So Wendy, when you're ready.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): I just wanted to make -- Mr. Chairman, just make people aware these are House Resolution but they're joint, so Senators need to vote as well.

WENDY FRITZ: Thank you.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): We noted.

WENDY FRITZ: Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Senator votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Representative Gresko.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Gresko votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Senator Looney. Representative Quinn.

REP. QUINN (82ND): Representative Quinn votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST): Kelly votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Oh, sorry about that, sir.
Representative Kennedy.

REP. KENNEDY (119TH): Kennedy votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Representative D'Agostino. Senator
Fonfara. Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): Formica votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Representative Godfrey.

REP. GODFREY (110TH): Godfrey Aye. Godfrey votes
yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Oh, there you go.

REP. GODFREY (110TH): Yeah, I am.

WENDY FRITZ: Senator Hartley. Senator Kushner.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH): Senator Kushner votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Senator Moore. Representative Perillo. Representative Yaccarino. Representative Vargas. Senator Somers. That's the roll.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH): Senator Somers votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Thank you.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Great. Thank you, Wendy. The second item, the Resolution confirming Martha Paluch Prou of Bloomfield, to be a member of the State Board of Education. I would entertain a motion for approval.

REP. KENNEDY (119TH): So moved, Mr. Chairman.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Moved by Representative Kennedy. can I get a second, please?

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Second.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Seconded by Senator Duff. And again, Wendy, please call the roll.

WENDY FRITZ: Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Senator votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Representative Gresko.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Gresko votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Senator Looney. Representative Quinn.

REP. QUINN (82ND): Representative Quinn votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST): Kelly votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Representative Kennedy.

REP. KENNEDY (119TH): Kennedy votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Representative D'Agostino. Senator Fonfara. Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): Formica votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Representative Godfrey.

REP. GODFREY (110TH): Godfrey yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Senator Hartley. Senator Kushner.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH): Senator Kushner votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Senator Moore. Representative Perillo. Representative Yaccarino.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): Representative Yaccarino, yes. Wendy, did you get the yes last time cause I think I was on mute?

WENDY FRITZ: I did not. But I will get it afterward.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): I was a yes. All right. I just realized that I was on mute.

WENDY FRITZ: Okay. Representative Vargas. And Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH): Senator Somers votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: That's the roll, sir.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Thank you, Wendy. And now we'll go to our final Resolution, item number 4, the Resolution reconfirming Awilda Reasco of New Britain to be a member of the State Board of Education. I will entertain a motion to that end.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH): So moved. Senator Kushner.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Senator Kushner, makes the motion. Can I get a second, please?

REP. QUINN (82ND): Second.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): seconded by Representative Quinn. And Wendy please call the roll.

WENDY FRITZ: Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Senator votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: I didn't get you on camera, sir. Would you please say it again? Must have wiggled and made their microphone move.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Senator Duff votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Representative Gresko.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Gresko votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Senator Looney. Representative Quinn.

REP. QUINN (82ND): Representative Quinn votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST): Kelly votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Representative Kennedy.

REP. KENNEDY (119TH): Kennedy votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Representative D'Agostino. Senator Fonfara. Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): Formica votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Representative Godfrey.

REP. GODFREY (110TH): Godfrey votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Senator Hartley. Senator Kushner.
Senator Kushner.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH): Senator Kushner votes yes.
Sorry.

WENDY FRITZ: Senator Moore. Representative
Perillo. Representative Yaccarino.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): Yaccarino votes Yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Representative Vargas. Senator
Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH): Senator Somers votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: That's the roll.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Thank you, Wendy. As a
reminder, the votes will be held open on this Zoom
link until, at the latest, 4:00 this afternoon. We
had quite a few members having other commitments on
other Committees, and the like. So we will hold the
vote open to the latest 4 o'clock. But as a
courtesy to our Clerk, please if you can get the
word out to some of your colleagues to vote as soon
as possible, or text or when they are gonna join the
Zoom link, so the vote can be recorded properly.

And then, item number five. Our next meeting is
scheduled for Tuesday, February 9th, when we will
entertain more nominees to the State Board of
Education. So that being said, The Committee will
be in recess till at the latest 4 o'clock. And
then, subsequently after that, it will be adjourned.
Thank you, everyone, for your patience and your
participation today.

ELWOOD EXLEY: Thank you very much. It was a
wonderful experience to hear all those positive
votes. I appreciate it.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Well, it's better if it's in person, but we're working on it.

ELWOOD EXLEY: All right. Thank you.

AWILDA REASCO: Yeah, I too thank you. Gracias. Have a good day.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): Wendy, should I hold on?

WENDY FRITZ: Oh, yes, I can take your vote now.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): Yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Thank you.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. KENNEDY (119TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, everyone. Have a good afternoon.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): Bye.

REP. KENNEDY (119TH): Bye. Thank you, Wendy.

WENDY FRITZ: Bye-bye.

AWILDA REASCO: Thank you again.

WENDY FRITZ: You're welcome. I'll be here.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Have fun, Wendy.

WENDY FRITZ: Thanks.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): So Wendy, who do you have House Democrats that you need to vote, besides D'Agostino?

WENDY FRITZ: Vargas.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): I think he's on. I see him.

WENDY FRITZ: Oh, there he is.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Let me check. I'll start with Vargas, and try to get him to --

WENDY FRITZ: You know what happened? Here's why I can't unmute people.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Yeah.

WENDY FRITZ: Because I had a co-host, and she left. That's what happened. So I was unable to unmute anybody. And when she left, I lost that ability. So I can ask him. I have to remember that. Does he know he's muted?

REP. GRESKO (121ST): I just noticed him.

WENDY FRITZ: Sitting there on. You can just turn your camera off, and I'll just sit with my camera off and if somebody tells me otherwise, we'll just --

REP. GRESKO (121ST): And who else on the Republican side besides Perillo who're missing in House Members?

WENDY FRITZ: No one.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Just Perillo?

WENDY FRITZ: Mm-hmm.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Okay.

WENDY FRITZ: I'm gonna mute myself and we can text if we need to, regarding members.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): Wendy?

WENDY FRITZ: Yes.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): I would stay.

WENDY FRITZ: Hi.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): Am I all set?

WENDY FRITZ: you are all set.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): So my attendance is okay,
and my votes okay?

WENDY FRITZ: Yes.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): All right. Thank you so
much. Appreciate everything you do.

WENDY FRITZ: Bye-bye.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): Bye.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Hello Wendy, are you there?
Hello Wendy. Can you listen to me, Wendy? This is
Ed Vargas here.

WENDY FRITZ: My goodness, where are you?

REP. VARGAS (6TH): I'm in the doctor's office. I
had a pulmonary embolism so they released me from
the hospital.

WENDY FRITZ: Are you okay?

REP. VARGAS (6TH): They're doing a follow-up on me.
So I was trying to monitor the meeting. I got there
late because I didn't see it on my calendar, so.
But I did monitor part of the meeting.

WENDY FRITZ: Okay.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Anyway, I just called in to
vote.

WENDY FRITZ: Okay. Elwood Exley, for Board of Ed?

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Yes. I vote yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Okay. Martha Prou, Board of Ed?

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Awilda Reasco, Board of Ed?

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Okay. All set. And I hope you are doing all right.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, you know, I'm trying to -- they're running checks on me now. They don't know exactly what was the -- I had a big one of my right lung, a little one on my left lung. And how are you doing, Wendy?

WENDY FRITZ: I'm doing All right. Hanging in there.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Yeah, just keep cool. You know, I know it's tough during this COVID time for all of us, you know?

WENDY FRITZ: Yeah. Well, [inaudible] how are you doing.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Yeah, they think it might be -- they think it might even be related to COVID that I might have had one of those asymptomatic COVID.

WENDY FRITZ: Oh, yeah.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): And that it might be the embolism might be related to that because they've seen those things and people that have had COVID, so. Or it could just be sitting down with all these Zoom meetings at home and not getting walking time, you know?

WENDY FRITZ: Yeah.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): So who knows -- who knows what it is. But hopefully they'll find out and I'll be better but you know. For the time being, I'm trying to do the best I can, you know.

WENDY FRITZ: What else can you do?

REP. VARGAS (6TH): All right, well, good talking to you, Wendy.

WENDY FRITZ: You too. Send Silvia hello for me.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): I will certainly give her your regards. Thank you very much.

WENDY FRITZ: Thank you. Take care.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Bye.

WENDY FRITZ: Bye.

Hi, Senator.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Hey, I was just gonna text you. Sorry. So, can I vote?

WENDY FRITZ: You can. Elwood Exley, for the Board of Ed?

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Senator Hartley, yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Okay. Martha Prou, Board of Ed?

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Senator Hartley, yes.

WENDY FRITZ: And Awilda Reasco, Board of Ed?

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Senator Hartley, yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Great. Thank you so much.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Hey, Wendy, thanks for your great work. And thanks for helping out Ginger and everybody else who's calling on you.

WENDY FRITZ: Oh, gosh, thank you so much. I really do appreciate that.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Okay, and I want you to know, I just got to jump on screening, I still have your little note about Jack. And my daughter every time she comes home, she says, "This lady Wendy is great." I said, "She is."

WENDY FRITZ: Thank you so much.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Okay, be well.

WENDY FRITZ: You too. Take care.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Bye.

WENDY FRITZ: Bye.

HR-EXN: Wendy, you there, Wendy?

WENDY FRITZ: Sorry about that.

Hello, it worked.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND): Hi, Wendy.

WENDY FRITZ: Hi. I'm glad it worked.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND): Okay.

WENDY FRITZ: Okay so, the nominees are all for the State Board of Education. And they are -- I'm sorry, go ahead.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND): They're all State Board of Education?

WENDY FRITZ: Yeah.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND): Are there three individuals?

WENDY FRITZ: Three.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND): Okay.

WENDY FRITZ: Elwood Exley of West Hartford.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND): Yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Martha Prou of Bloomfield.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND): Yes.

WENDY FRITZ: And Awilda Reasco of New Britain.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND): Yes.

WENDY FRITZ: And that's it. Thank you so much.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND): All right. Take care. Thank you.

WENDY FRITZ: I will add this to every invitation.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND): Okay.

WENDY FRITZ: Is that helpful?

SENATOR MOORE (22ND): That is. That makes it a lot easier for me. Thank you.

WENDY FRITZ: No problem. I'll make sure that I do that. I'll put you [Inaudible] just in case.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND): All right. So Dorothy will put it on the calendar on the other one, and then I'll just navigate to log in, okay?

WENDY FRITZ: Yes, that sounds great.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND): All right. Thanks.

WENDY FRITZ: Bye-bye.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND): Bye-bye.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Wendy, can you hear me?
Wendy?

WENDY FRITZ: Hi, Representative.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): There you go.

WENDY FRITZ: Sorry about that. I just saw my
screen. We have three nominees for the State Board
of Education. Elwood Exley from West Hartford.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): D'Agostino votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Martha Prou from Bloomfield.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): D'Agostino votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Awilda Reasco from New Britain.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): D'Agostino votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Thank you so much.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Thank you.

WENDY FRITZ: Take care.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Take care.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): Hi, Wendy.

WENDY FRITZ: Hi, Rep. Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): Hi, how are you, Wendy?

WENDY FRITZ: [inaudible] Okay, all House Joint
nominations, and all for the State Board of
Education. We have Elwood Exley from West Hartford.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): Perillo votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Martha Prou from Bloomfield.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): Perillo votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Thank you. And Awilda Reasco from New Britain.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): Perillo votes yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Thank you so much.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): Thank you. Have a great day.

WENDY FRITZ: You too. Bye-bye.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): Bye.

WENDY FRITZ: Hi, [inaudible] Henry.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Hi.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Okay.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: I'm trying to get him into voting.

WENDY FRITZ: Okay. We are all set to vote. You're on.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Hi, Wendy.

WENDY FRITZ: Hi, Martin. So you're in -- you're in the Zoom meeting right now.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Okay, good.

WENDY FRITZ: We've been rolling on nothing for a while. So, I'm just gonna take your votes quick.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Okay.

WENDY FRITZ: These are all of House Joint.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): At point. Okay.

WENDY FRITZ: And they are for the State Board of Education.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): All right, very good.

WENDY FRITZ: First one is Elwood Exley of West Hartford.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Second is Martha Prou of Bloomfield.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Yes.

WENDY FRITZ: And the last one is Awilda Reasco of New Britain.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Yes.

WENDY FRITZ: Thank you so much everybody.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Okay, that's it. We're all done? Okay.

WENDY FRITZ: We're all good. Thank you so much.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Okay, Wendy. Thanks. Alrighty.

WENDY FRITZ: Bye-bye.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Bye.