



**DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
BUREAU OF ENTERPRISE SYSTEMS AND TECHNOLOGY
55 Farmington Avenue, Hartford, CT 06105
1:00 – 3:00 PM**

MINUTES

March 6, 2017

Commission Members in Attendance

Raymond, Mark – Commission Chair, CT DAS-BEST, Chief Information Officer
Casey, Doug – Executive Director, CT Commission for Educational Technology
Baillie, Colleen – Director, West Haven Library (Connecticut Library Association)
Dillon, Thomas – Founder, Flagship Networks (Minority Leader of the House)
Elsesser, John – Town Manager, Town of Coventry (Connecticut Council of Small Towns)
Feinmark, Russell – CT General Assembly (Speaker of the House)
Mundrane, Michael – Chief Information Officer, University of Connecticut
Rodriguez, Isabelina – Interim Chief Academic Officer, State Department of Education
Shanley, Scott – General Manager, Town of Manchester (CT Conference on Municipalities)
Shellard, Susan – Chief Administrative Officer, Department of Economic and Community Development (for Commissioner Catherine Smith)
Vittner, John – Director of IT Policy, Office of Policy and Management
Wiggin, Kendall – State Librarian, Connecticut State Library

Facilitators, Presenters, Guests, and Others in Attendance

Deprey, Brynn – CT Education Network
Kocsandy, Ryan – Director, Director of Hartford Information Technology Services

Agenda Items

Welcome

Chairman Mark Raymond welcomed meeting participants and thanked them all for their participation in this Commission.

Approval of Meeting Minutes, December 5, 2016

A motion to accept the minutes as written was made by Ken Wiggin and seconded by John Elsesser. Having no discussion, the minutes were unanimously approved. Scott Zak and Nick Caruso abstained.



Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Doug Casey provided a report that included the following items:

- Open Education Resources
 - Open education resources are digital learning objects — lesson plans, assessments, videos, audio, etc. — that educators and learners can use and recombine openly, usually with a Creative Commons copyright and usually for free or at low cost
 - This is an ongoing focus area that began back in October, with a set of stakeholders from K – 12, higher education, and libraries.
 - A smaller set of OER specialists met again on Friday, March 3, to put together a plan for statewide initiatives that include professional development; events; a statewide platform for creating, sharing, and using OER; and leveraging the U.S. Department of Education's GoOpen framework.
 - The team had a productive meeting (see minutes posted on the [Commission's Web site](#)) and agreed to a number of next steps. This work will include data gathering to assess current use of OER across K – 12, higher education, and libraries; adopting the GoOpen framework; running an OER session at the CEN conference; participating in a regional summit in June at UMass; and advocating for the instructional and cost-savings benefits of OER.

- CEN Legislative Meetings
 - With support from the CEN team and input from Mark Raymond, Doug developed a one-page summary of CEN's impact, benefits, and significant (5X) return on investment (see <http://bit.ly/CENROI2017>).
 - To raise awareness of these benefits, Doug reached out to members of the legislature, concentrating on the committees of cognizance (Education as well as Energy and Technology) and caucus leaders.
 - To date, DAS counsel and Doug have met with six legislators or members of their staff, including Senator Slossberg, Franklin Perry and Ricky Baltimore of Representative Ritter's office, Senator Winfield, Representative Lavielle, Senator Osten, and Senator Gerratana. The meetings have proven productive in terms of raising awareness of CEN's value to a variety of constituents. All of the legislators and staff members have stated that they gained a greater appreciation of the network after these conversations.

- Student Data Privacy
 - Doug shared several updates regarding the student data privacy law that was passed last summer (PA 16-189).
 - He has been working with the Department of Administrative Services procurement team, led by Rachel Whitesell, to engage with educational software companies that



many districts use and that house sensitive student data to revise the data and privacy terms of those companies' products to ensure that they align with the requirements of Connecticut's law.

- That list of nearly 20 providers includes Google, Microsoft, Apple, and PowerSchool, along with SNAP, which houses medical data.
- All of the companies are grateful to review and revise their agreements through a single set of conversations on behalf of all districts, and several are close to compliant. In response to Scott Shanley's question, Doug responded that national experts in school law have found our legislation to be straightforward, streamlined, and reasonable as compared to laws in other states.
- Doug also shared the significant efforts of school district staff to reach compliance with the law. In January, he conducted a statewide survey of district leadership teams about the law's impact. Estimates based on respondent data point to approximately 80,000 staff hours needed statewide to reach compliance, a total that represents efforts above and beyond normal data and privacy activities. This total also does not represent additional out-of-pocket expenses such as legal fees, conservatively estimated statewide at more than \$600,000. Doug and DAS have also invested several hundred hours of time into supporting districts and educational software companies.
- To bring about efficiencies for schools, educational software providers, and supporting agencies, Doug introduced the idea of building a registry that would allow companies to create profiles of their firms and the products they provide school districts, then vouch for compliance with data privacy laws after they have had an opportunity to review statute against their own products' terms. Districts would use this registry to find compliant software. For both schools and software companies, this type of "self-service" registry would save significant time in reviewing and negotiating privacy terms.
- While the law's implementation date may be delayed to July 1, 2018, as House Bill 7207 proposes, most districts are already well underway in compliance efforts. Districts must review privacy terms whenever they enter into a new or renewed agreement with software providers. Michael Mundrane asked Doug to share some of the concerns around the law, in addition to the impact on direct and indirect costs. Doug indicated that the requirement to notify parents each time a district enters into a new or renewed contract has the potential to cause parents to "tune out" or even opt out of communications from their children's schools, even time-sensitive announcements of great importance, such as open houses, school closings, or even lockdowns. Another concern expressed by many district leaders is that the additional review and communication requirements will dissuade districts from using educational technology, forgoing the power of software to support personalized learning, data-driven decision making, and collaboration, among other



key benefits. Michael Mundrane explained that the onerous mandates allow the larger companies to flourish by removing smaller companies who cannot compete due to the demands of legislative compliance.

- EdAdvance Letter
 - The Commission members considered a motion to endorse the work of the Skills21 center at EdAdvance as they pursue National Science Foundation (NSF) funding to develop innovative science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) curriculum and educational materials and run STEM programs.
 - The NSF recommended that EdAdvance apply for the latest round of funding, based on their past success in terms of quality and student achievement outcomes.
 - Commission members received a draft letter of endorsement last week, and printed copies were available for review during the meeting.
 - Ken Wiggin recommended that if the Commission endorses a third party, a representative from the Commission should serve in some advisory capacity. Isabelina Rodriguez shared that this initiative was discussed as a professional development topic at the State Department of Education. Michael Mundrane stated that the overall approach should be as reasonable and supportive as possible. Bill Vallee recommended that when the Commission members provide their support, they intend to be truly engaged. John Elsesser shared that we should add a provision in letters of endorsement requesting that these organizations keep us apprised of their progress and the outcomes in services to teaching and learning. Mark Raymond suggested that we should consider two tiers of support, one that is just an endorsement because we support what they are doing, and the other an actual commitment to become involved in their work. Mark recommended that if the commitment involves Doug's time, it should go before the Commission. Ken Wiggin noted that there are other members from the Commission besides Doug that can play an active role in grant and other endeavors. Michael Mundrane stated that if there is a role for the Commission in the grant, the requestor should articulate it in the application. Scott Shanley recommended the creation of a Commission policy for consideration at the next meeting, clarifying how and to what degree the Commission provides endorsements.
 - Having concluded the discussion, Scott Shanley made a motion for the Commission to support the letter of endorsement to Skills21. John Vittner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.



CEN Updates

- Mark Raymond introduced Ryan Kocsondy as the new Director of CEN, who will assume that role effective Friday, March 17, 2017. Ryan briefly introduced himself to the Commission members and expressed his enthusiasm for serving in the new role.
- Brynn Deprey reviewed the quarterly updates, also [posted to the Commission Web site](#):
 - The CEN Conference will take place on Friday, May 12, 2017 at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford. There are already more than 350 people registered to attend.
 - Brynn shared an update on staffing. In response to Scott Shanley's inquiry, she confirmed that we currently have nine employees. Filling the vacancies would bring the total to 11.
 - The first round of buildouts to connect libraries to CEN is underway, leveraging both State bond dollars and federal eRate funds. As of now, plans are underway to connect 46 libraries with the first year of funding. The first point of connection was Coventry's Booth Dimock Library, brought online last week.
 - Brynn also mentioned that she has worked with Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) staff with guidance from Mark Raymond on the development of a one-page CEN overview. DECD plans to use this marketing piece in speaking with companies and other organizations considering moves to or expansions into our state. Ken Wiggin shared that the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC), which administers the eRate program, has not approved reimbursements for all library locations.
- Mark Raymond shared that the Governor's budget includes a reduction in the General Fund appropriation of 10% in FY18 and 100% in FY19. That budget also includes \$3.7 million in capital funding set-asides. He reminded the Commission members that the budget is still under review with the General Assembly, with final appropriations following input from the Legislature and pending approval by Governor Malloy.

He stated that the 10% reduction should not have a large impact on CEN. In response to Ken Wiggin's inquiry, Mark affirmed that advocacy on behalf of the Commission's members could benefit all users of the network. Michael Mundrane recommended that the Commission or CEN prepare information reflecting "the big picture," i.e., who will be paying for shortfalls in revenue caused by the General Fund reduction (FY18) and elimination (FY19). The proposed funding change would effectively mean that CEN funding shifts from income taxes (via the General Fund) to property taxes (via direct payments from towns). He felt that this shift would result in increased costs overall.



John Elsesser reinforced the importance of conveying the reliability of CEN as compared with services from private carriers. Ken Wiggin shared that we need to explain the value of the State supporting the Network through General Fund appropriations. Scott Shanley said that we should continue to advocate for slower reductions in funding, rather than dropping 10% in one year and the remaining 90% in the following year. Tom Dillon underscored the security benefits of CEN that commercial carriers do not offer. John Vittner referenced the pie charts on the [CEN handout](#) and stressed the importance of maintaining the 20% funding level from the State.

- Mark welcomed the feedback and requested input from the Commission members on improving the language in the handout.

Expansion of CEN Services

- Doug opened discussion on a topic that the Commission addressed at its December 2016 meeting and at the November Infrastructure Advisory Council meeting. In summary, CEN stakeholders see a need to provide services in a cost-effective manner that benefit members while not impacting delivery of CEN's core services.
- He pointed to Mark Raymond's recommendation to see new and existing services as supporting different constituencies, from (1) all members of the Network to (2) all members in a sub-group (e.g., libraries) to (3) individual members.
- The Commission should consider different models of service provision to account for these different Network member groups as well as the complexity and cost of services offered. For example, the K – 12 group might collectively pay for and use the student data privacy registry via the Network, a service that libraries, universities, and private members would not need or pay to use.
- Mark suggested searching for other streams of revenue to look creatively at the value of the network. Solutions that require the hiring and re-training of staff remain difficult and expensive to implement and sustain. However, services such as the DDoS detection and mitigation have a high value and benefit for all members with a relatively small investment.
- Scott Shanley inquired about the agreement with FiberTech and recommended that we consider the possibility of leasing any unused fiber. Mark explained that we may have some smaller pockets of unused fiber, but that it is more cost effective to increase bandwidth on existing fibers than to light up new strands.
- In response to Ken, Mark shared our current funding streams and recommended leveraging value whenever possible.
- John Elsesser encouraged efforts that would benefit many members, such as collective purchasing of PowerSchool.



Strategic Initiative Review

- Doug facilitated a discussion around strategic planning toward the development of a statewide technology plan. He guided members through a few presentation slides to share the strategic planning process. He also shared responses that Commission members shared to a survey he sent recently, asking for their quantitative and qualitative feedback on educational technology priorities. In a comment regarding the proposed Vision and Mission statements, Michael Mundrane suggested that “teachers” be referenced along with “learners.” John Vittner recommended adding specific measures to each initiative. Michael Mundrane referenced digital equity as it applies to libraries. Colleen Bailie summarized that the lowest-funded libraries tend to have the greatest need. Libraries remain one of the few places where people can still get paper tax forms and have contact with people. Isabelina Rodriguez shared that libraries would benefit from providing data to substantiate their value to the public.
- Mark Raymond summarized that there is clear support for the Access and Connectivity set of initiatives as the top priority for the Commission’s work. Scott Shanley underscored the critical role of libraries importance of funding them.
- Ken Wiggin stated the importance of positioning CEN’s complete value to members and the State, beyond simply connectivity services. Nick Caruso encouraged the Commission members to consider long-term investments and benefits in the area of equity and connectivity. Mark explained that K – 12 groups depend heavily on CEN for connectivity, while institutions of higher education have a wider range of needs.
- Doug emphasized that work should concentrate on the highest priority initiatives but not ignore efforts that represent “low-hanging fruit,” essentially easy lifts that promote the effective use of educational technology.
- Colleen Bailie emphasized the importance of collectively communicating the importance of libraries. Scott Shanley referenced the fact that if \$15,000 (the total Colleen cited her library would need to pay additionally in FY18 under the proposed budget) for a town the size of West Haven is an issue, the public is not getting the message about how important the libraries are. Michael Mundrane suggested that the more narrowly an issue is presented, the more negatively it will be viewed. If it can be promoted more broadly, it will be supported more broadly.
- Doug Casey will continue to work on the strategic plan and bring another draft back to the Commission by the June meeting.



Advisory Council Reports

- Nick Caruso - Digital Learning: GoOpen (OER) Motion
 - Nick referenced the [one-page motion](#) that Doug provided in advance to Commission members, as well as print copies available at the meeting. He cited the productive OER planning meeting that Doug referenced in his Executive Director report and endorsed adoption of the motion.
 - The framework, developed by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Technology, connects us to a global community of OER users and to a larger collection of more than a billion standards-aligned OER learning objects.
 - Nick Caruso made a motion that the Commission endorse the motion. Scott Shanley seconded the motion, which the Commission members unanimously approved with no discussion or abstentions.
 - Doug Casey took this opportunity to thank Joe Campbell for his leadership and advocacy on behalf of the OER movement.

- Tom Dillon - Infrastructure: Digital Equity Toolkit
 - Tom began the discussion by referencing the meeting minutes from the November 2016 Infrastructure Advisory Council regarding digital equity. Print copies were also available at the meeting for members to review.
 - Work is underway to develop a digital equity toolkit that will offer communities the resources they need to quantify and address gaps in online access for learners.
 - Tom thanked those who have offered their input on this effort.
 - Doug mentioned that we are also gaining insights from the nonprofit Tomorrow.org, which conducts the national Speak Up survey that collects out-of-school broadband access data from every state in the nation.
 - Tomorrow.org's CEO, Julie Evans, has offered support at no cost from her organization in the form of guidance and customization of survey items. Funding for Tomorrow.org comes from nearly 100 educational stakeholders, from state and county boards of education to companies that support the educational community.
 - Tom closed out the discussion by mentioning that the Infrastructure Advisory Council members are reviewing a draft of the toolkit next Thursday, March 9, and invited Commission members to participate if they have interest.

Mark thanked all the Council members for their participation in this Commission.

Public Comment

Chair Raymond opened the floor to any members of the audience, but none offered comment.



Future Meeting Dates

The 2017 schedule of Commission meetings appears below:

- June 5, 2017 DAS-BEST, 55 Farmington Avenue, Hartford, CT
- September 11, 2017 Location to be announced
- December 4, 2017 Location to be announced

Adjournment

Having no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Scott Shanley and seconded by Nick Caruso. The motion was unanimously passed without discussion or abstentions at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Aleshia M. Hall, Executive Secretary
Office of Chief Information Officer Mark Raymond
State of Connecticut, Department of Administrative Services
Bureau of Enterprise Systems and Technology
55 Farmington Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut 06105
Office: (860) 622-2416 Email: aleshia.hall@ct.gov

