



Meeting Minutes - DRAFT

Special meeting of the
School Building Projects Advisory Council

September 12, 2022 at 1:00 pm

Video link:

https://ctvideo.ct.gov/das/Special_meeting_of_the_School_Building_Projects_Advisory_Council-20220912_130655-Meeting_Recording.mp4

Members.

First	Last	Designee Of	Present
Noel	Petra	DAS	y
Paul	Hinsch	OPM	y
Donald	Poulin	SDE	y
Lance	Hall		y
Antonio	Iadarola		y
Angela	Cahill		y
Louis	Casolo		y

7 of 9 seats

Staff in attendance.

Eleanor Michael, DAS; Omarys Vasquez, DAS; Jenna Padula, DAS; Darren Hobbs, DAS; William Turley, DESPP; Lora Rae Anderson, DAS; Kermit Thompson, DAS; Andrea Boyle, DAS; Robert Celmer, DAS; Barbara Fabiani, DAS; Timothy O'Brien, DAS.

Meeting business.

1. Meeting opening. Deputy Commissioner Noel Petra, as Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:07 pm. Chair Petra introduced guests including, Rep. Robert Sanchez, Chair of the House of Representatives Education Committee, Omarys Vasquez, the newly appointed State Building Inspector and William Turley of DESPP.
2. Seating of new member. Chair Petra recognized and seated Angela Cahill, AIA, NOMA, NCARB, LEED AP, newly appointed to the Council by the Governor to the seat for a person with experience and expertise in construction for students with disabilities and the accessibility provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
3. Approval of minutes. Chair Petra called for a motion to approve the minutes (Petra/Poulin) for 12/13/2018, 11/10/2020, 12/10/2020, 6/17/2021, 12/1/2021, 6/1/2022. Approved unanimously.
4. Discussion on Operable Windows in Schools.
 - a. Rep. Sanchez introduced the discussion, citing concerns arising from Uvalde and Sandy Hook; noting that a recent project in New Britain made windows inoperable, causing the district to spend \$300,000 to retrofit windows to make them operable during the COVID-19 crisis; and that two windows per classroom should be openable going forward to allow escape from dangerous situations.
 - b. Discussion (Casolo, Thompson, Petra) on state reimbursement policies for windows and there not being a reimbursement program for retrofitting of school windows.



- c. Discussion (Poulin) on HVAC being able to provide fresh air without operable windows, proper procedures making the classroom the safest place during a school violence situation and that HVAC operation and window systems are interrelated.
 - d. Comments by Julia McFadden.
 - e. Discussion (Vasquez) on a possible requirement for operable windows and that that there is presently sprinkler exemption when there are operable windows.
 - f. Discussion (Turley) that DESPP supports the lockdown school safety method.
5. School Safety Subcommittee. By unanimous consent, a subcommittee was announced by Chair Petra on school safety to review operable windows in schools and the School Safety consisting of volunteers from the Council.
 6. Adjournment. By unanimous consent, the meeting was adjourned at 1:35 pm.



Appendix. Other comments by members on operable windows.

From William Turley at DESPP:

My View, yes, there can be operable windows in schools. We are seeing more schools train staff and students in run, hide, fight for hostile intruder incidents. We also saw in the Uvalde incident, public safety officials helped students escape the building via classroom windows. Many schools have applied films to first floor windows, making "smash and rake" techniques to gain entry or egress difficult.

From Donald Poulin at CTECS:

Understanding the intent and what's behind this conversation, here are a few things to consider when discussing operable windows:

- **Size and Functional Design;** window openings would need to be sized to permit quick and rapid passage, be outward swinging, designed and constructed to prevent intrusion from the exterior, and possibly be hinged vertically on one side. Functioning like an outward swinging casement window, but without a cranking mechanism to speed up egressing. Probably having some form of a quick releasing mechanism and be alarmed to deter their use for anything other than their intended purpose.
- **Placement/Accessibility;** typically speaking window sill heights **ARE NOT** easily, or readily accessible. A window's sill can be 36" or even 42" above the finish floor elevation. They would require assistance aids (desks, chairs, etc.) or something positioned to climb onto to gain access for egressing purposes. There is some instability with that approach, and this would be extremely problematic for those with mobility impairments. Additionally, let's assume best case scenario, exterior grade is mostly level, and nearly in line with the interior floor finish; individuals urgently egressing through these windows would have what many would deem to be a survivable drop. However, in the case where the elevation differential is significantly greater (where the terrain drops significantly, or where there is a second, or more floors above the exterior grade elevation) how would this be addressed? Emergency ladders? Do we stagger the placement of the emergency windows so as not to have one directly above another? Etc., etc. etc..
- **Building Environment, HVAC;** as we improve upon our building technologies (High Performance/High Efficiency Building Standards, NetZero, etc., etc., etc.), our buildings are being built with inoperable windows. If operable windows, or emergency egressing windows are provided, other than for emergency egressing purposes, these would need to remain closed at all time in order to maintain proper balance of the HVAC systems.
- **Ease of Identification;** It would be my belief that unless all windows are designed to permit egressing, that the window, or windows intended for that purpose would need to be conspicuous and obvious to all occupants of the room.

I believe that I'm just scratching the surface on some of the things that we'll need to be taken into consideration. There's more to consider than making windows operable. I'm hoping all of this will trigger a thoughtful and meaningful dialog.
