



**Legislative Office Building Room 1C  
210 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106  
1:00 – 3:00 PM**

## **MINUTES**

**December 5, 2016**

### **Commission Members in Attendance**

Raymond, Mark – Commission Chair, CT DAS-BEST, Chief Information Officer  
Casey, Doug – Executive Director, CT Commission for Educational Technology  
Bailie, Colleen – Director, West Haven Library (Connecticut Library Association)  
Dillon, Thomas – Founder, Flagship Networks (Speaker of the House)  
Elsesser, John – Town Manager, Town of Coventry (Connecticut Council of Small Towns)  
Kitching, Jeffrey – Executive Director, EdAdvance (Governor’s Office)  
Mundrane, Michael – Chief Information Officer, University of Connecticut  
Pellegrini, Lisa – First Selectman, Town of Somers (Minority Leader of the Senate)  
Rodriguez, Isabelina – Interim Chief Academic Officer, State Department of Education  
Shanley, Scott – General Manager, Town of Manchester (Connecticut Conference on Municipalities)  
Susan Shellard – Chief Administrative Officer, Department of Economic and Community Development (for Commissioner Catherine Smith)  
Vittner, John – Director of IT Policy, Office of Policy and Management  
Widness, Jennifer – President, Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges  
Wiggin, Kendall – State Librarian, Connecticut State Library

### **Facilitators, Presenters, Guests, and Others in Attendance**

Deprey, Brynn – CT Education Network

## **Agenda Items**

### **Welcome**

Chairman Mark Raymond welcomed meeting participants and introduced Dr. Isabelina Rodriguez, Interim Chief Academic Officer with the State Department of Education (SDE) as the new Commission member representing the SDE.



### **Approval of Meeting Minutes, September 12, 2016**

A motion was made by Scott Shanley and seconded by John Elsesser. Having no discussion, the minutes were unanimously approved as written with abstentions by Kendall Wiggin and Isabelina Rodriguez.

### **Executive Director's Report**

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

- Computer Science Education Week (December 5 – 9, 2016) begins today.
- Strategic Retreat
  - The Strategic Retreat originally scheduled for October has been changed to take place on December 20, 2016. We have received commitments from the Governor, Commissioner Wentzell, Provost Gates of the Board of Regents, and other educational leaders.
  - Education strategist Lisa Duty of Innovation Partners will lead the afternoon's activities and share national best practices around personalized learning.
  - Attendees will share exemplars and ideas on student-centered, digital learning.
  - We will contemplate partnership opportunities across our schools, universities, and libraries to improve outcomes for all learners.
  - Input will also help the Commission in our mission to improve teaching and learning through technology.
- Annual Report: A draft is being created and will be shared with the Commission upon completion.
- Personalized Learning Grant Updates (Nellie Mae and Hume)
  - Doug expressed gratitude to Commission members for their flexibility in quickly reviewing and providing feedback on these opportunities.
  - The Nellie Mae grant would have supported mastery-based learning across the state. Unfortunately, the RESC Alliance members backed out of the proposal-writing process just days before submission was due. Because they provided the critical training and support resources needed for the initiative, the team led by the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) and the Commission could not complete the application.
  - The Hume Foundation, located in San Francisco, has awarded \$50,000 in funding through Innovation Partners to research the barriers to competency-based learning in Connecticut and develop a model for expanding this approach to instruction across our state's schools. Planning among Innovation Partners, the Commission, and CAPSS will begin early in 2017.



- Education Leaders (EdSurge) Workshop March 21 (Handout)
  - To establish its presence regionally and gain insights on developing an innovation cluster within Connecticut, the Commission will co-sponsor and send Mr. Casey to represent the membership at the EdSurge Tri-State Tech for Schools Superintendents Summit on March 21, 2017 (see [tristate2017.eventbrite.com](http://tristate2017.eventbrite.com)).
  - The event will connect education leaders to technology companies to solve instructional as well as school operations challenges.

### **Statutory Changes**

- Chair Raymond shared a few updates regarding the review of possible changes to the statute that governs the Commission structure and activities (Chapter 61a).
- On November 8, the Commission Chair, Executive Director, Colleen Bailie, Nick Caruso, and Bill Vallee convened to discuss changes to the statute. While some participants suggested that we consider changes to the membership of the Commission, which the statute determines, the group concluded that the existing members should be able to serve the diversity of constituents they represent.
- The group also considered more strategic revisions to reflect the changes in educational technology since the statute's original passage in 2000. However, developing the Commission's multi-year strategic plan seemed a necessary prerequisite to revising the statute. Based on the scope of that plan, changes to the law that governs the CET may make sense to support the Commission's work and strengthen alliances with other educational stakeholders.
- The group and greater membership moved to hold off on any statutory changes until the 2018 legislative session, at the earliest.

### **CEN Updates**

Brynn Deprey, Marketing Communications Manager of the Connecticut Education Network (CEN) provided an overview of the [written report](#) shared with meeting attendees.

- The next CEN Conference will take place on Friday, May 12, 2017.
- A review of candidates for the CEN Director position is underway. Posting for the vacant network engineer positions will take place soon.
- The network continues to see heavy activity across schools and libraries especially, with traffic levels averaging 65 Gbps.
- Engineers have put in place distributed denial of service (DDoS) mitigation technology that has minimized the effects of 167 attacks since September 8.
- CEN has completed an upgrade to the West Haven router and is in discussions with CenturyLink on pricing, availability, and lead times for a 100 Gbps connection.



- Work continues with CEN partners through NEREN to build out to New York City. NEREN has submitted a letter of intent to the vendor, GDT, for purchase of optical equipment for the build. A formal purchase order from NEREN has not yet been issued, though NEREN is still optimistic of the target completion date of March 2017.
- The first member connections to Amazon AWS Direct Connect service through our MASS-IX connectivity have been established.
- Pricing
  - While the current year's pricing remains in effect until July 1, 2017, the CEN has released its FY 18 pricing (page 2 of handout, also online at CET Web site).
  - These rates and service tiers reflect the needs that members have expressed. Monthly costs remain either the same as those of the current (FY17) across all service levels except the entry tier, where members will appreciate both a price decrease and increase in bandwidth provision.
  - The pricing announcement comes earlier this year to align with members' budgetary planning and eRate cycle for FY18.
  - Discussion ensued around state (General Fund) appropriations to the CEN, with Scott Shanley asking if the FY18 prices assume any level of direct support on the part of the State. Chair Raymond stated that pricing does take into account roughly \$1 million of state support, down 10% from last year in accordance with the guidance that we have been given. We do have a favorable benefit in this current fiscal year because of open positions for which we have budgeted salaries and benefits. He also noted that CEN looks to increase participation on the network (e.g., purchase of additional or higher-tier circuits) to control costs.
  - Chair Raymond noted that when we made the transition to charging schools and libraries for circuit usage, we only lost seven connections across one charter school and six libraries. During the same time, the Network has brought on board 25 municipal, 2 university, 1 public K – 12, 6 library, 3 private school, 4 state agency, and 4 business connections. In short, we have steadily increased commitments and usage despite the transition. The CEN needs to continue our efforts to keep these customers active members of the Network.
  - Ken Wiggin offered that the State Library has increased its effort to assist libraries in pursuing eRate offsets by establishing a consortium. The State Library Board has also awarded \$872,430 in grants for 38 libraries to join CEN this year.
  - John Elsesser noted that the DDoS offering to schools is a big benefit, a high-value service that other providers do not offer as part of standard networking. This is a great selling point for the network that many may have not considered. Brynn noted that we are looking to automate DDoS notifications to ensure that they are advised and appreciate when the CEN mitigates attacks to their locations. Chair Raymond noted that the other upgrades are somewhat related to DDoS as well because the



size of the attacks is increasing. We will be looking for the connections to network hand-off points as well to ensure that they can manage the volume.

- In response to Lisa Pellegrini's inquiry, Brynn Deprey offered that there are now a total of 92 towns on the network.

### **Advisory Council Reports**

- Data & Privacy Advisory Council
  - Given that Jeff Kitching, who chairs the Advisory Council, was absent from the November 21 meeting, Doug shared updates from the discussion and referred members to the print copies of the [meeting minutes](#).
  - Student Data Privacy (Public Act 16-189)
    - The Department of Administrative Services (DAS) Procurement team continues to support efforts around securing custom agreements with major educational technology providers to help ensure compliance with provisions in Connecticut's new student data privacy law.
    - Other partners supporting these efforts include members of the CAPSS technology committee and the Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs).
    - Doug will host an upcoming meeting with the DAS Procurement team and representatives of the RESCs to discuss the priorities and process behind negotiating statewide terms.
    - These custom agreements will only address a relatively small number of software titles, so Doug has secured discount pricing for Education Framework, a service that supports schools in reviewing the compliance of their software against the specific provisions of Public Act 16-189.
    - Doug also shared that he will develop a survey to collect data on the indirect and direct costs of the new law to reflect its financial impact and to argue for assistance in paying for a statewide compliance solution or toolset such as Education Framework or Learn Trials.
    - Representative Gail Lavielle, the chief author of the law, indicated plans to revise PA 16-189 to take effect January 1, 2018, to afford districts more time to review their software for compliance.
    - Doug shared that he has delivered a number of presentations to help school leaders comply with the act, including talks at the SDE privacy forum in September, multiple RESCs, and the Connecticut Educational Technology Leaders (CTETL) privacy summit December 1.
  - CEN Services
    - The meeting also addressed the possible expansion of CEN's services, based on member needs.
    - The Advisory Council members expressed interest in shared security, forensics, governance, and incident response services.



- The group agreed that getting broader input on future service offerings from CEN members would provide insight on future directions.
- Self-Modernization of the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA)
  - Advisory Council member Michael Swaine of Gaggle argued for the need for greater support around the digital literacy component of the law.
  - The focus to date has been on filtering, keeping out inappropriate or malicious content from districts.
  - The group agreed that schools need to place a greater emphasis on digital literacy skills for students.
  - Michael vowed to provide a more detailed outline and list of suggestions for the Advisory Council.
- Practices Advisory Council
  - In the absence of Council Chair Nick Caruso, Doug Casey reviewed the progress of the Council and the minutes from the [November 28 meeting](#).
  - Student Technology Standards
    - Doug reminded the members of the Commission’s endorsement of the ISTE Student Technology Proficiencies at September 12 meeting.
    - Next steps on final endorsement of the Student Standards include review by the State Board of Education (SBE) Standards and Assessment Committee, with the support of Deputy Commissioner Ellen Cohn, and final review by the SBE members.
    - The ISTE standards team has shared draft teacher standards with Doug and is gathering public input on these frameworks. Members of the Practices Advisory Council are reviewing these standards, scheduled for final release in June 2017.
  - Library Media Framework
    - Members of the Practices Advisory Council discussed the need for updated library media specialist (LMS) standards and certifications. Professional groups across the state have also called for these updates.
    - The group articulated a need for a set of consolidated standards to include academic and technology components.
    - Shelley Stedman, president of the Connecticut Association of School Librarians (CASL) and a member of the Practices Advisory Council, will look at developing a statewide survey of library staffing, standards, and resource needs, similar to efforts underway in Massachusetts.
  - Computer Science Education
    - Chinma Uche, president of the Connecticut Computer Science Teachers Association and member of the Practices Advisory Council, shared the push



nationally and statewide for an increase in access to computer science (CS) education.

- Progress has come about through efforts including the passage of Connecticut Public Act 15-94, U.S. Representative Esty's STEM Education Act of 2015, President Obama's CS for All initiative, and the SDE's Position Paper on Computer Science, recently approved by the SBE.
  - Chinma indicated that there are plenty of curricular resources for CS (e.g., Code.org, new K12 CS, etc.) but an apparent gap in access to CS education.
  - Of the 939 high school students in Connecticut who took the Advance Placement CS exam in 2016, only 216 were female, 76 were Hispanic or Latino, 31 were Black, and none were Native American, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander.
  - Programs exist to prepare teachers for CS instruction, such as the cohort of 48 educators who completed the Mobile CSP program through Trinity this year.
  - The Commission can support general CS education and work with our Practices and Digital Learning Advisory Councils to identify and pursue grant opportunities.
- Infrastructure Advisory Council
    - Tom Dillon, Council Chair, reviewed the group's progress as documented in the [minutes of the meeting from November 30](#).
    - Digital Equity (Homework Gap)
      - The group discussed the first step to addressing the "Homework Gap," or connecting students outside of school.
      - Tom underscored the need, that students' lack of Wi-Fi access inhibits their learning and their success.
      - The "Speak Up" survey developed by Tomorrow.org, a nonprofit educational organization, provides a means of collecting broadband connectivity data across all Connecticut communities. However, the survey takes 20 minutes to complete and so has a relatively low response rate in our state.
      - Bill Vallee has initiated a partnership with the Connecticut Economic Resource Center to conduct data collection among families with school-aged children via phone interviews and to leverage U.S. Census data as a baseline for our needs.
      - Doug stated that the Advisory Council members also discussed the need to develop a Connecticut-specific survey instrument that communities can use to collect broadband access data. The group underscored the importance of making the survey easy to complete while still capturing meaningful, actionable data. Community and educational leaders in each town could then



use the survey and accompanying promotional materials as they saw fit, capturing input from families across a variety of “anchor institutions” such as schools, libraries, and community centers. A subset of the Infrastructure Advisory Council will convene to begin this design process.

- John Elsesser noted that there is a new Internet service provider coming into Norwalk that offers a “digital divide” program to connect needy families. Scott Shanley shared that the service is available for \$15 per month to qualifying families. He believes the provider has the capacity to have this program operational within a year. Scott noted that there are an increasing number of companies entering the market with low-cost solutions to close the digital divide. The Commission can use its knowledge to leverage discussions on how and at what costs services could be provided to all.
- John Elsesser also mentioned the buildout activities of Mobilitie, an Internet provider offering services through installed antennas. His understanding is that the company uses current regulations to allow a lead pole every 5 miles and feeder poles every 1 – 2 miles. All other utilities provide fiber spots on their poles in exchange for their “rent” of the ground they use.
- CEN Services
  - The November 30 meeting also addressed the possible expansion of services by the CEN.
  - The group addressed different delivery models, from direct services provisioned by staff members of the CEN, to the reselling of products and services managed through the CEN, to pass-through services managed and billed completely by trusted partners.
  - Members cautioned against expansion into areas that might detract from the high-quality, core services of the CEN.
  - Tom pointed to the Eduroam offering as a service that would deliver high value to members with relatively low risk and costs. He recommended against adopting services that require a significant level of professional support, versus those with a lower entry and operational cost.
  - The DDoS service provides a great example of expanding the value of CEN to all members.
  - Advisory Council members noted that, with limited state subsidies, the CEN is subject to private competition.
  - The group agreed that casting a wider net of input from CEN members and stakeholders would provide valuable insights into the needs and risks behind possible new services offered through the Network.
  - Tom briefly discussed the staffing challenges at CEN. He expressed his appreciation to all those at CEN for their efforts through this time.



- Digital Learning Advisory Council
  - Doug Casey reviewed the progress of the Council, referring to the minutes from [the November 30 meeting](#).
  - Open Education Resources
    - At the August Digital Learning meeting, the group agreed for the need to convene a meeting of state leaders in OER. That meeting took place October 3 and included leaders from the State Library, local libraries, state universities and colleges, and K - 12 schools. Detailed minutes are available [online from the Commission Web site](#).
    - That discussion led to likely next steps:
      - Go Open Initiative: Adopt the U.S. Department of Education's Go Open framework, which establishes standards and best practices for adopting OER on a district and state level. Becoming a Go Open state would allow Connecticut to tap into the experience and documented best practices of the other 19 states that have taken the Go Open pledge already.
      - Conference: Whether as part of an existing conference, such as the CEN annual conference, or a standalone event, bring together OER proponents to learn from each other across a variety of topics. Sessions could address issues such as repository options and features, training for staff, standards, and funding opportunities. The DoE would provide resources to support such an event in the form of staff representation and planning time.
      - Presentation to the General Assembly: In close partnership with members of the existing Open Textbook Task Force, meet with legislators to raise awareness of the cost, quality, and collaboration benefits of OER usage.
      - Grant Opportunities: Pursue grant funding, which may help to launch and sustain OER efforts in the state. Doug mentioned that he has partnered with Partner in Publishing, a Glastonbury-based education consultancy, to support a grant-funded OER pilot enlisting professors from Connecticut's public colleges and universities.
    - Advisory Council members explored the benefits of OER, including the provision of searchable, standards-aligned, grade-level resources that educators can combine to provide resources that educators can combine to provide personalized learning materials and assessments to learners.
    - The group agreed to pursue the above initiatives, especially the establishment of a free, statewide OER portal.



- Computer Science and Digital Literacy
  - The group discussed progress has been made to date in CS education, echoing many of the points in the related conversation during the November 28 Practices Advisory Council meeting.
  - However, as Doug noted, there remain more than 6,700 unfilled jobs in our state that require CS skills.
  - The Digital Learning Advisory Council members agreed that a team representing Connecticut schools and agencies should pursue funding through a \$20 million round of National Science Foundation grants recently announced.
  - Scott Shanley ask that we remember that a four-year degree is not necessarily a requirement to getting a high-paying job in Connecticut. High-level manufacturing jobs remain unfilled. Mark Raymond mentioned looking at certificate programs and other certifications that can fast-track students to fill these jobs and meet the needs of Connecticut businesses.
  - Isabelina Rodriguez thanked the Commission for its efforts and enthusiasm to date especially as it applies to CS teacher training, student and educator standards, and other initiatives. She stated that the CS Position Statement will go to public hearing and likely approval on Wednesday, December 7, and she invited the Commission members to attend. She shared that the SDE is looking to establish a CS framework rather than prescriptive standards. She invited Commission members to continue lending their experience and expertise to these efforts.
  - Dr. Rodriguez reinforced the earlier conversations around careers, that high-skilled jobs do not all require a four-year degree, and that what matters is that we prepare our students for meaningful careers, whether through college, trade school, or other learning pathways.
- Following each of the Advisory Council briefings, Doug noted the strong overlap of content and recommendations coming out of the Digital Learning and Practices Advisory Council meetings. This overlap has come up in prior Commission and Advisory Council meetings, with the suggestion to combine the two Advisory Councils. In the interest of making the best use of the Advisory Council members' time, Doug announced that the two Councils would merge, with Nicholas Caruso taking the lead as chair of the combined Digital Learning Advisory Council. No questions or concerns followed this announcement.
- Chair Raymond thanked Doug and all the members of the Commission who are assisting in the Councils.



### **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:

- March 6, 2017                      Location to be announced
- June 5, 2017                        Location to be announced
- 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 and unanimously passed without exceptions or abstentions at 2:18 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](mailto:aleshia.hall@ct.gov)

