



**DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES  
BUREAU OF ENTERPRISE SYSTEMS AND TECHNOLOGY  
Legislative Office Building Room 1C  
210 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106  
1:00 – 3:00 PM**

**MINUTES**

**September 11, 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)  
Caruso, Nick – Senior Staff Associate for Field Service, CAFE  
Dillon, Thomas – Founder, Flagship Networks (Minority Leader of the House)  
Dumais, Charles – Superintendent, Amity (Region 5) Public Schools (Office of the Governor)  
Elsesser, John – Town Manager, Town of Coventry (CT Council of Small Towns)  
Feinmark, Russell – CT General Assembly (Speaker of the House)  
McCoy, Jack – Town of Manchester (for Scott Shanley, Town Manager, Town of Manchester – CT Conference of Municipalities)  
Mundrane, Michael – Chief Information Officer, University of Connecticut  
Maura Provencher – Vice President of Research and Administration, Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges (for Jennifer Widness)  
Shellard, Susan – Chief Administrative Officer, Department of Economic and Community Development (for Commissioner Catherine Smith)  
Vallee, Bill – State Broadband Coordinator (Office of Consumer Counsel)  
Vittner, John – Director of Information Technology Policy, Office of Policy and Management  
Wiggin, Kendall – State Librarian, Connecticut State Library  
Zak, Scott – Senior Director of Learning Technologies, Board of Regents

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

Bruckhart, Dale – Vice President, Advanced Corporate Networking  
Kocsosdy, Ryan – Director, Connecticut Education Network



## Agenda Items

### Welcome

Chairman Mark Raymond greeted the attendees and called their attention to the Legislative Office Building safety information for visitors. He extended a special welcome to Chip Dumais, Superintendent of Amity (Region 5) Public Schools and recently appointed to the Commission by the Office of the Governor. He outlined the meeting agenda, including important progress against the Commission's Strategic Goals and Plan as well as a discussion of new service and revenue models for the Connecticut Education Network (CEN).

### Approval of Meeting Minutes, June 5, 2017

Bill Vallee made a motion to accept the [June 5 minutes](#) as written, and Nick Caruso seconded the motion. Having no discussion, the members unanimously approved the minutes, with two abstentions.

### Executive Director's Report

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

- Outreach: Doug shared details of outreach efforts to raise awareness of the [2017 – 2022 State Educational Technology Goals and Plan](#), thanking the Department of Administrative Services Communications team for developing and distributing a press release about the Plan. He has shared the Plan with more than 30 organizations, including state agencies, national educational technology organizations and advocacy groups, the U.S. Department of Education, and educational technology news outlets. Feedback so far has been positive.
- Educational Innovation Study: At a past meeting, the Commission endorsed the study on innovation in K – 12 education, funded by the Jacquelyn Hume Foundation in partnership with the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) and conducted by Innovation Partners, an education consultancy led by Lisa Duty. The study addresses the resources supporting and challenges in implementing digital and blended learning in the state.

To gather input, the team reached out to more than 40 educational stakeholders, including teachers, leaders of unions and professional organizations, and the Commissioner of Education, and have completed interviews with 21 individuals. Conversations and data capture through a survey have focused on questions concerning leadership, shared vision for 21st century learning, equity, statewide resources and human capital, and policy. A report with findings and recommendations will be available in early November.



- eRate Maximization: Work on assessing gaps in utilization of the federal Universal Services Fund, or eRate, program continues. Doug reminded the group that eRate provides offsets to pay for data connections to schools and libraries, as well as internal networking for those institutions. Preliminary research indicates that Connecticut is not fully leveraging the program, so the Commission is engaged in quantifying these unused funds and identifying the underlying reasons why schools and libraries may not be taking advantage of the program. Doug has spoken with some school districts as well as representatives of [Education Superhighway](#), a nonprofit that provides data collection and reporting on school connectivity nationwide, both to vet and possibly leverage their data to identify opportunities to leverage eRate funds.
- Digital Equity: Doug addressed the challenge of connecting learners outside of schools and universities to online learning resources, a problem that the design of a Digital Equity Toolkit should help remedy. Representatives of the Infrastructure as well as the Data & Privacy Advisory Councils have contributed to and are reviewing a draft of the Toolkit, with resources that communities can use to help get learners online outside of formal learning institutions.

The document includes sections on establishing a leadership team, collecting data on student needs, identifying and sharing existing resources, and developing new programs. Once review of the Toolkit has taken place, the Commission plans to work with communities on pilot rollouts of the Toolkit. Manchester, for example, has already gathered stakeholders and explored different options for getting students online outside of school.

- Data and Privacy: The Commission launched the Connecticut Educational Software Hub ([connecticut.learnplatform.com](http://connecticut.learnplatform.com)) on Friday, August 25, hosting an online demonstration of the site to more than 50 K – 12 school technology leaders from across the state. The site serves as a registry of software products whose developers have signed the Connecticut Student Data Privacy Pledge ([bit.ly/CTSDPP](http://bit.ly/CTSDPP)), providing accountability for their compliance with our State’s laws governing the capture, use, and protection of student data, information, and records. Doug noted updates to the legislation that drove demand for the Hub, with this past session’s [Public Act 17-200](#) delaying the effective date of the contractual requirements of last year’s [PA 16-189](#) until July 1, 2018.

In addition to providing a single point of reference to software that complies with Connecticut student privacy statutes, the Hub allows educators to share information about the effectiveness, cost, and operational demands of software in their districts. The features of this online professional community should lead to better purchasing decisions, cost savings, and — most importantly — better learning outcomes for students using educational software. Doug thanked Jeff Kitching, former Commission member and Chair of the Data & Privacy Advisory



Council, for championing the project among the executive directors of the state's Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs) to secure funds for the first year of LearnPlatform licensing, allowing the Commission to offer it free of charge to districts during the 17 – 18 school year.

In a relatively short time, the Hub has already gained the enthusiastic support of educators across the state. Doug shared one e-mail he received, from Susan Moore, Supervisor of Blended Learning in Meriden Public Schools:

*"I am thrilled to have the Educational Software Hub available as a resource to help ensure compliance with CT's Student Data Privacy Act. It will quickly become a go-to resource for administrators and teachers in our district and the first step in determining whether or not we will consider adopting the use of a particular product."*

- Doug concluded his updates with a reference to progress against other Commission initiatives, including open education resources and technology proficiency standards. Details on that work would come during Nick Caruso's report of the Digital Learning Advisory Council later in the meeting.

### **CEN Updates**

Following the Executive Director's Report, Mark turned the floor to Ryan Kocsondy, Director of the Connecticut Education Network (CEN), for his updates. Ryan referred to the [one-page handout](#) with details on a number of topics, from staffing to new connections.

- Staffing: Ryan welcomed Rick Cheung as CEN's Senior Network Engineer. He brings a wealth of experience from his prior experience at Sprint. A vacancy still exists for a marketing and publicity position, vacated when Brynn Deprey left CEN for NJ EDGE.
- Funding: The Network has some funding this fiscal year, with the expectation of a zero General Fund allocation next fiscal year. Work progresses on a 5-year budget addressing operations and capital as well as the exploration of new sources of revenue through an expansion of services to CEN members.
- Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) Attacks: Ryan shared that these incidents continue and that the CEN staff has addressed them in a timely manner to ensure continuation of service to affected members. The CEN team provides an initial notification as well as a report to targeted schools and libraries after each incident to provide details on the attack and the results of mitigation efforts.

Just after Labor Day, CEN experienced its most severe attack, one that targeted a K – 12 school system with a volume of 1.7 million packets per second. Rick



Cheung was instrumental in mitigating the IP fragmentation event, which otherwise would have shut down the school district's fiber network.

- New York City Connection: The North East Research and Education Network (NEREN), of which CEN is a partner, is working to establish a point of presence at 32 Avenue of the Americas in Manhattan. Ryan underscored the potential value of this connection, allowing CEN to tap into one of the world's foremost peering hubs. The presence in New York will allow CEN to broker direct peering agreements, allowing for faster, more secure connections and minimizing costs for members by keeping traffic on-network and off the Internet. These advantages already exist through CEN's connection into Cambridge, Massachusetts. The buildout should finish by spring of 2018.
- Library Connections: Ryan began by commending Maria Bernier of the State Library, who has served as an enthusiastic resource for communicating with libraries across Connecticut, helping them get connected with fiber. This work addresses the digital equity gap, with many libraries in remote areas of the state serving as the only nearby source of high-speed Internet in the community. The project will connect 56 libraries statewide across 3 phases completed over 2 years and should reach completion next spring.
- Discussion: With Mark opening the floor for questions regarding CEN, Jack McCoy noted that the Network stands as a strong asset to attract businesses to the state, offering multi-gigabit per second connections. He cited the RFP by Amazon and Manchester's interest in responding to this opportunity.

Michael Mundrane brought up the DDoS topic, underscoring the difference in experience of CEN members versus those who use commercial providers in terms of the responsiveness, customer service, tools, and capabilities brought to bear in mitigating and reporting on attacks. He noted that the carrying cost of this type of high-skilled, responsive service that helps ensure network operations is simply not supportable by many organizations using open-market providers. Mark agreed with Michael's remarks, noting the ease with which individuals, at relatively low cost, can initiate sophisticated DDoS attacks at scale against schools, hospitals, and towns. The CEN team's services remain vital to the continued health of the state's research and education connections.

On the topic of library connections, Bill Vallee asked about the total number of libraries connected to fiber through CEN. Ken Wiggin clarified that the project, organized and funded through the State Library, initially identified 90 libraries in need of broadband. Some of these libraries have expressed concern over committing to 20-year maintenance agreements as well as the need to filter content in order to collect eRate funds.



The State Library has addressed these concerns and has an effective model in place, with its Board awarding more grants the week of September 17. The State Library has broadened the program to help pay for library branch connections as well as equipment and even electrical connections to power network equipment. Its goal is to connect all libraries in Connecticut to high-speed broadband. Colleen Baillie underscored the importance of connecting branch libraries, pointing to the wide disparities — sometimes even within the same town — between connection speeds at different library locations, some of which still connect via digital subscriber line (DSL) with speeds as slow as 1.5 Mbps.

Ken highlighted the importance of using eRate funds to offset costs and tied the conversation back to the Commission's initiative to maximize funds (approximately \$6M) available to, but not used by, Connecticut schools and libraries. The State Library has addressed these shortfalls by creating a consortium to streamline the eRate filing and reimbursement process. Bill noted the lack of affordable connectivity options in locations such as the North End of Hartford and the value of having centralized eRate coordination in the state.

Doug commented that many districts pay one of two national consultants for eRate services. If consolidated, those municipal costs could offset and arguably provide a higher level of service and stronger coordination through in-state eRate consultants. Mark reminded the group that the Commission's governing statute calls for statewide eRate submission, a function envisioned at the outset of the CET and an ongoing obligation of the group.

Rounding out the conversation around fiber buildouts and eRate, Jack asked if municipalities could appreciate reimbursements through the Universal Services Fund. Many towns share connections between the municipal and board of education operations. Ryan clarified that towns need to procure circuits as dedicated for educational purposes to receive eRate reimbursements for these connections.

### **Advisory Council Report**

As an introduction to Nick Caruso's report of the Digital Learning Advisory Council, Doug reminded the members of their [previous motion](#) in March 2017 to adopt the national Go Open framework around open educational resources (OER) as well as the September 2016 endorsement of the ISTE Student Technology Proficiency Standards. Commission members would soon consider a motion to endorse the ISTE Educator standards. Doug noted that he would serve in the coming months on ISTE's Technical Working Group to define the Administrator, or leader, Standards.

Nick began his report by commending the work of the Digital Learning Advisory Council, a diverse set of subject matter experts representing K – 12 and higher



education as well as adult education, RESCs, the State Department of Education, and libraries.

- Open Education Resources: At its August 3 meeting, the Digital Learning Advisory Council discussed the features of a statewide platform for finding, sharing, and curating learning resources. A key theme emerged around the importance of aligning content with state and national academic standards. A question arose around who would vet such resources for quality and alignment, not to question the initiative but more to design a sustainable model that would help ensure the value of these resources to educators and students. Other themes discussed and reflected in more detail include governance, support, and training. Nick articulated the Advisory Council's stance that educators become aware of whatever platform the state adopts for OER and that they receive professional development for the effective use and sharing of high-quality digital resources. He noted the energy and excitement around such a platform among the Advisory Council members.

Doug echoed Nick's comments, stating the objective of this initiative to provide a platform sharing for videos, text, assessments, and other learning elements that teachers could use alone or in concert with other curriculum materials. With no financial resources at this time to support the OER platform, Doug pointed to the importance of leveraging existing, standards-aligned materials from OER repositories of other states as well as those already developed in Connecticut's schools. Crowdsourcing and peer-to-peer review approaches can support quality-control and standards-alignment work with Connecticut's educational content. He also mentioned an initial qualitative survey of OER specialists among libraries and higher education, with strong enthusiasm from these individuals to support the repository.

- Endorsement of Educator Technology Proficiency Standards: Nick reminded the group of its endorsement of the Student Standards last September and the importance of operationalizing the Standards, ensuring that this framework sees adoption in classrooms through assured student learning experiences. He also mentioned the discussions underway in partnership with the State Department of Education to present the Student Standards for adoption by the State Board of Education, as indicated by the [statute governing the Commission's work on standards](#). That step should serve as a departure point for making sure every student has the skills and mindset to use technology to its full potential in preparation for college and careers.

With this work as context, Nick referred to and made a motion to adopt the [Proposed Endorsement of Educator Technology Standards](#), shared with Commission members on September 1. Mark acknowledged Nick's motion to adopt the ISTE Educator Standards and called for a second, which Michael



offered. Mark called for a discussion of the motion, and Michael offered his thoughts. He pointed to the responsibility of the Commission to make progress in ensuring the effective use of technology by the educational community. He cited the extensive research, subject-matter expertise, and public input that went into and helped refine the Educator Standards. He commended the framework as an instrument to provide educators with proficiency goals and to start substantive discussions around this topic.

Chip Dumais expressed the desire of superintendents to see all educators as models and accelerators of learning for students, and adopting the motion serves as an important step in that direction.

Doug provided some background on discussions already underway with the State Department of Education around standards and cited the Commission's responsibility to work in cooperation with the State Board on student standards adoption. He has had productive discussions with Deputy Commissioner Cohn, who supports these standards. She agrees that true adoption into practice will come from the work of many people and organizations statewide. The Commission Goals and Plan points to the multiple avenues through which standards will become practice. Just last week, Doug presented the Educator standards to the board members of Connecticut's ISTE chapter, the Connecticut Educators Computer Association (CECA), and enlisted their support in operationalizing the ISTE Student and Educator standards. That group is contributing to a joint plan around this work.

Mark commented on the importance of all learners to have a strong mastery of technology in the increasingly "self-service" aspects of many parts of society (business, education, government, etc.). Just this summer, the State released its [Connecticut Cybersecurity Strategy](#), which addresses the importance of cybersecurity literacy. Endorsing the Student and Educator Standards aligns with this theme of ensuring that citizens have a strong understanding of the effective use of technology and its role in supporting all aspects of individual life and society.

With no further comment, Mark called for a vote of the members on the proposed endorsement of the ISTE Educator Standards, which passed unanimously with no abstentions.



### **Public Comment**

Dale Bruckhart, Vice President of Advanced Corporate Networking (ACN) in Norwalk, had previously requested time during the Public Comment portion of the meeting to address the topic of managed services and public-private partnerships.

He provided an overview of his company's history and its support of Connecticut school and town technology needs. Currently, ACN provides managed and bundled services that promise efficiencies to customers who may not have the internal resources to support networking, security, and other types of technology services.

Nick asked for clarification from Dale about the message and takeaways for the Commission. Dale clarified that managed services may work well for small districts as well as any district with a high eRate reimbursement rate.

John Elsesser commented that ACN is also a paying customer of CEN and helps defray the Network's operational costs. He followed with a comment about how municipalities would appreciate having alarms, cameras, and other security devices connected via the Public Safety Data Network. Dale acknowledged these components are part of the "Internet of Things" and how the high-speed and secure connections offered through CEN and PSDN will enable growth in this area.

Bill thanked Dale for his presentation and pointed to the opportunity for libraries as well as schools to take advantage of Category 1 eRate offsets. Dale echoed the importance of leveraging all available funds but pointed to instances in which schools or libraries may be eligible for matching eRate funds but will not commit to their local balance of the technology investment.

Marked thanked Dale for his presentation and asked the members if they had any other topics to discuss. With no further input, he began drawing the meeting to a close.

### **Future Meeting Date**

The last meeting of 2017 will take place on Monday, December 4, tentatively scheduled at the Legislative Office Building. The Commission will share 2018 meeting dates soon.



### **Adjournment**

Having no further business to discuss, Mark welcomed a motion to adjourn the meeting. Nick offered the motion, seconded by Russell Feinmark. The members unanimously approved the motion, and Mark adjourned the meeting at 2:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas Casey

*Executive Director*

**Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology**

55 Farmington Avenue

Hartford, CT 06105

(860) 622-2224

[Doug.Casey@ct.gov](mailto:Doug.Casey@ct.gov)

[www.ct.gov/ctedtech](http://www.ct.gov/ctedtech)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Douglas Casey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping tail on the "y".