



Student Reports

High School Reimagined

State Board of Education

April 5, 2017

Brief History

- In the spring of 2016, twenty two school districts engaged in a series of local meetings with superintendents, students, teachers, community members (including local legislators when possible) to develop four or five policy changes that they would like to see adopted in our state in order to Reimagine High School in a way that would be better for that community.
- On December 6, 2016, Superintendents, students and teachers from 20 districts met in the House Chamber of the Capital Building to determine their policy priorities

- Teams submitted their resolutions in November.
- CAPSS reviewed them, combined those that were alike, and created a list of twenty resolutions that the teams would present and then vote on on December 6.
- When the teams broke out into four groups to discuss the presentations and attached resolutions, the unexpected happened.
- The students took over the conversations and immediately began to combine, rewrite and restructure the 20 resolutions.
- We spent the afternoon listening to the revised policy ideas; but never had time to prioritize the list.
- We then made the decision to have the students come together for a second work session. That happened on 12/20.
- Our group was smaller; but nonetheless, mighty.

- Given the events of our previous gathering, we knew that the resolutions were in good hands, so the adults stepped out of the room and let the students make the necessary revisions.
- Commissioner Wentzell stopped by to meet with the students and look in on their work.
- By noon, they had completed the task of revising the content of the resolutions into something that could be acted on.
- It is my pleasure to introduce PLEASE EMAIL NAMES SO I CAN INCLUDE THEM HERE who will review the resolutions with you.



Participants Listening to Reports

1. Be it resolved that all Districts will offer a variety of options, in addition to traditionally structured classes, for students to earn high school credit including but not limited to:

The permission of districts to develop credited community based programs as well as interdistrict collaborations that promote mentoring by local businesses, DCF programs, and community learning centers as approved by the district; for the purpose of sharing resources, and guidance to students.

Furthermore, the legislature will work with the Department of Labor to change restrictive regulations regarding unpaid experiential learning programs and student participation.

Be it further resolved that the legislature will work with the Department of Transportation to restore transportation funds to districts so that districts will have access to funds to transport students to internships.

2. Be it resolved that the state legislature take certain actions to promote equity among high school education and post-secondary opportunities and allow to the district's discretion the capacity to showcase mastery of skills beyond current learning pathways. This includes but is not limited to:

The college readiness programs at state universities (ex. ConnCAP, GearUp) add a portion of their seats for students under the care of the Department of Children and Families.

Be it resolved that the State of CT provide public schools that meet defined criteria with the option of using an e-learning environment when inclement weather forces the cancellation of school. This option would call for schools to develop protocols for assigning and conducting work, to determine during the PPT process how to address students with IEPs, and to develop accountability measures. The Connecticut State Department of Education will develop guidance for such programs.

Be it resolved that in order to acknowledge the ever-increasing need for and value of personalized and distance learning pathways for students, the legislature recommend the Connecticut State Department of Education develop a vetted, comprehensive online learning platform for students and districts, offer the platform and courses contained therein at reasonable cost to districts, and provide training to district personnel to facilitate and assess student learning via said platform.

2. Con't

Be it resolved that the Appropriations Committee reinstate the General Fund reduction of \$1.05 million from the funding for the Connecticut Education Network (CEN) in FY17 and direct the Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology to provide internet access to all public schools through the Connecticut Education Network (CEN) at no cost to school districts and further direct the Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology provide internet access to all public school student qualifying under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act through the Connecticut Education Network (CEN) at no cost to these students.

Be it resolved that the state will form a committee of public school educators and representatives from the Connecticut colleges and universities (including community colleges) to address issues of access, transition and retention for students from traditionally underrepresented groups in post-secondary education.

3. Be it resolved that districts are provided flexibility when designing the school day, week, year and structure of the classroom to meet the learning needs of each student on his or her path to mastering standards. This includes but is not limited to:

That students are provided opportunities to learn in a way that best fits their personal needs through a variety of options, in addition to traditionally structured classrooms and school year, for students to earn high school credit including but not limited to online demonstration and real-world experiences.

Graduation requirements are awarded upon the demonstration of mastery of skill, content, and emotional intelligence so that students are prepared to be contributing members of the workforce and society.

Flexible language needs to be incorporated in reference to seat time, Carnegie units, contact minutes, and attendance policies to allow students flexible pathways and timelines to earn a high school diploma. For example, be it resolved that the state eliminate the provision that calls for the school year to end by June 30 and adds flexibility to districts to determine the length of the school day and year.

3. Con't

The state offer schools a more varied set of options for standardized testing to allow a greater opportunity for success of all students. For example: assessment is offered four times a year and the teacher decided when the student is ready for the assessment.

That at the discretion of the district it is able to change its physical education requirement (a minimum of one credit over the four grades) to a “recommendation,” giving high schools a greater degree of flexibility in ensuring that all students regularly engage in physical exercise, and that successful completion of a full season in a recognized CIAC sports program at any public high school fulfill .5 credit towards the State of Connecticut Physical Education graduation requirement.

4. Be it resolved that high school teachers can demonstrate their qualifications based on their specific certifications and that they further prepare by showcasing mastery of teaching competencies. This includes but is not limited to:

All Connecticut-based teacher preparation programs require candidates to demonstrate mastery of a set of teaching competencies, which encompass a research component, curricula, lesson sequencing and clinical hours embedded in each education course. Be it resolved that the Department of Education will require all CAEP accredited teacher certification programs to implement “mentor development courses” for all Connecticut teacher certification candidates.

A Connecticut teacher who holds a valid 7 – 12 professional certification with a Master’s degree be recognized as qualified to teach under his or her content area certification at any Connecticut State community college in a public high school or in a dual credit courses.



Weighing Options

5 Necessities for an Ideal High School, According to College Freshmen

By Mary Kenkel, Knowledge Works

Here are some of the ingredients for an ideal high school, according to college students:

1. A welcoming environment. “If the school has a loving, respectful environment, chances are that the majority of students will be respectful too. I’ve seen low-income students bullied for wearing the same clothes every day, and I’ve heard teachers talk about those students and make fun of them, as well. Even though high school students are close to being adults, they still follow by example. Building a welcoming environment is one of the first and more important things a school could do to foster students who will passionately serve their community.”

2. A focus on students' futures beyond school. “A school should help students realize their values and guide them through their transformation into adulthood. Everyone involved needs to work to help students get where they want to go. That’s really all schools need to do. . . . I would want a school not to have a ‘just-get-them-out-the-door’ approach, but instead have a ‘set-them-up-for-success’ mentality toward student learning.”

3. Opportunities for real-world experiences. “School should value opportunities beyond the classroom. In an ideal learning experience, one half of the day would be spent in the classroom learning core material and the second half of the day would be spent in the field, at an internship, co-op or something that applies the concepts learned in the classroom. I feel like this would be the best approach to fully master something.”³.

4. Less importance on testing; more importance on comprehension. “We should have greater value on understanding the material than doing well on standardized tests.”

5. Greater emphasis on working as a team. “Ever since graduating, all the work I’ve done has included teamwork. There’s a need, not only to foster this type of environment in the classroom, but also to build value and understanding for teamwork throughout the school and student body.”