

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

Special Meeting of the Legislation and Bylaws Committee
And Policy Development Committee
September 21, 2009

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

Theresa Hopkins-Staten, Chairperson of the Legislation and Bylaws Committee, called to order the joint meeting of the Legislation and Bylaws Committee and Policy Development Committee, at 1:05 p.m. The meeting was held in Room 305, 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut. In addition to Mrs. Hopkins-Staten, the following members were present: Janet Finneran, Patricia Luke, Kathleen O'Connor and Jay Voss.

II. Introduction

Commissioner McQuillan noted that the eight proposals submitted for discussion today were prepared by Department staff members in response to a request from members of the Legislation and Bylaws Committee to prioritize the list of proposals that was submitted to the committee on September 2nd. He noted the importance of moving forward with proposals that would support Connecticut's Race to the Top application.

Kathleen O'Connor inquired as to whether the legislature and the Governor's office would be receptive to convening a special session to address those proposals for the Race to the Top application that may require adoption prior to next session, which is not scheduled to begin until February. The Commissioner informed Mrs. O'Connor that we will not know whether a special session is necessary until the final guidance for the Race to the Top grants is released next month.

III. Discussion Regarding 2010 Legislative Proposals

Attorney Jennifer Widness, Division of Legal and Governmental Affairs, summarized the proposals, as follows:

- On-line learning credit opportunities. Although this proposal was not successful last year, it remains very important and has gained momentum during the course of the past year. Discussion ensued regarding the documented value of such learning opportunities, and the certification of providers of on-line instruction. *Consensus: Agreement.*
- Adult Education Credit. Ms. Widness described the proposal which would prohibit full-time high school students from earning credits through adult education programs. Patricia Luke expressed concerns about this proposal. She is worried that prohibiting students from earning credits in adult education may force some students to drop out of school who need flexibility to attend classes outside of normal school hours. In order for this proposal to be successful, schools would need to be required to provide educational alternatives outside of the traditional school day. Other members agreed with her concerns and members of both committees agreed not to pursue this proposal at this time. *Consensus: Table.*
- Conferring Authority to Commissioner of Education to require districts in the Sheff region to accept Open Choice students. Committee members noted the fiscal benefits of this proposal,

as well as the fact that there is a Consent Decree in place, and the Commissioner should take measures to enforce the court order. *Consensus: Agreement.*

- Legislation redefining the standards and procedures for evaluating and supervising teachers and administrators in Connecticut. Commissioner McQuillan noted that this proposal links a students' academic performance to teacher evaluation. Mr. Voss questioned whether this had already been proposed in by the Board a number of years ago and whether such authority already exists in the accountability legislation (i.e., CALI). Associate Commissioner Martinez noted that the data systems now in place allow us to look at multiple forms of data and to tie student performance to prior teachers. *Consensus: Staff should revisit the Guidelines for Teacher Evaluation and other sources to determine whether such authority already exists.*
- The Connecticut Plan for secondary school reform, with modifications to include World Language. Discussion ensued regarding the draft language which revised the school accountability statute to require districts in need of improvement to adopt Connecticut's Plan for Secondary School Reform, if Race to the Top funds were received for this purpose. *Consensus: Under subsection (g), add "or other such funding source" following the reference to the Department securing funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act; and change verbs in the list of requirements in that section from a passive to an active voice; review legislation of other states that have been successful in this area.* Committee members discussed whether the technical high school system, should it become a district in need of improvement, should be exempted from these proposed requirements. The Commissioner noted that two factors for consideration are scheduling, and the fact that the CTHSS receives students in Grade 9. Committee members agreed that while it might be difficult for students to meet that requirement, students who choose to attend college will need that coursework. As such, it was decided that technical high school students should not be exempt from this requirement but that alternative methods to obtaining these credits should be provided. *Consensus: CTHSS students should not be exempted from requirements.*
- New competitive grants to support school drop-out prevention programs. Under subsection (g)(2) of the draft language pertaining to secondary school reform: *Consensus: Expand the competitive grants to Grades 6 through 12.*
- Full-day Kindergarten Classes for all Priority School Districts. *Consensus: Current legislation already provides this authority.*
- Selective Access to longer day and/or longer school year in all districts in 4th year of improvement, or corrective action. *Consensus: Current legislation already provides this authority.*

Mr. Voss left the meeting at 2:27 p.m.

- Charter Schools. Ms. Widness noted that the current funding cap on Connecticut charter schools is not consistent with the direction of the Race to the Top application. Committee members discussed funding for charter schools, including the state's role. Topics included funding charters on par with other public schools, the state paying the difference between the charter school rate and the sending district's average per pupil cost as well as transportation, and implications on local school districts. *Consensus: Additional discussion required.*
- Reducing District and State Department of Education Reporting Requirements. Ms. Widness referred to tab 19 in the binder distributed to committee members on September 2nd, which

contains proposals for reducing reporting requirements. These include changes to the reporting cycle on Youth Service Bureaus and the requirement for postural screenings.
Consensus: Agreement.

IV. Adjourn

By unanimous consent, the meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.