

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

Policy Development Committee

**Estela López
Charles Jaskiewicz
Patricia Luke
Stephen Wright**

Draft Minutes of June 13, 2011, Committee Meeting

I. Call to Order

Chairwoman Estela López called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of State, the meeting was held in Room 305 of the State Office Building, 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT. Present were committee members Estela López, Patricia Luke and Stephen Wright. Charles Jaskiewicz was absent.

Also present were Associate Commissioners Barbara Beaudin, Marion Martinez and Charlene Russell-Tucker; Education Consultant Perri Murdica, and Assistant to the Commissioner Pamela Charland.

II. Approval of Minutes

On a motion made and duly seconded, the committee approved the Minutes of the February 9, 2011, Policy Development Committee Meeting.

**III. Discussion of Draft Position Statement on the Education of Students
with Special Needs**

Mrs. Russell-Tucker provided background information on the Committee's review in 2009 of all position statements, and the determination of those that required no revisions, minor changes, or substantial changes. She explained that the Board approves position statements, but the related guidelines for stakeholders are not approved by the Board. They are developed as a guidance tool for use by constituents as they implement the Board's position statements. Ms. Charland distributed a binder to committee members containing all current statements.

In 2009, the Committee concurred that two of the existing statements, one pertaining to the education of gifted and talented students and the second pertaining to the education of students with disabilities, should be combined to address the education of students with special needs. The Committee agreed to "key concepts" that would serve as the foundation for the statement.

Ms. Murdica introduced the "blended" draft position statement to the Committee. Members engaged in a discussion as to whether (a) the statement should be blended; and, if so, (b) whether the proposed title best represents the content and the populations being addressed. The term "special needs" often carries negative connotations, members stated. Suggested alternatives to students with "special needs" included "exceptionalities" and "learning differences."

The following suggestions were made during the discussion:

- move the language from the third paragraph (emphasis on every child) up front;
- remove statutory citations, as the legal requirements do not necessarily serve as the impetus for the Board's position on a given topic; if necessary, place them as a footnote;
- Move the definition of the student populations being addressed up front, as it ties into the rationale for combining the prior two position statements;
- Add a paragraph that specifically addresses children with extraordinary needs;
- Advocate for district support of programs that support the education of students who are gifted and talented.

Consensus was reached to:

- Combine the two statements into one;
- Reorganize the text and include a separate emphasis on special needs and talented and gifted, and to lead with the Board's beliefs and the definition of the student population which is being addressed;
- Use a stronger verb than "encourage" when referring to district support for and recognition of the value of a talented and gifted program and increased access to such programs;
- Develop a new title (e.g., Students with Exceptionalities).

Mrs. Rusell-Tucker will work on the revisions, share with her staff members and staff members across divisions, and then forward a revised draft statement to the Policy Development Committee.

IV. Other

Committee members discussed their preferences in terms of meetings via conference call, or "in person." There was a greater preference for meeting face-to-face.

Committee members then reviewed the list of position statements and agreed that it would continue its consideration of the Position Statement on Students with Exceptionalities, followed by a review of the Position Statement on Time in Relation to Student Achievement." Committee members will review the list and determine the next statement to be considered after "Time."

IV. Work Plan through June 2011

Committee members discussed the statements listed under the heading "to be scheduled" and recommended that the statements be presented for consideration in the following order: Students with Special Needs; Equal Educational Opportunity; Time; Principles of Education; Educational Leadership; Elementary, Middle and Secondary Education; Language Arts; and Distance Learning. Committee members told staff members that this schedule is flexible.

V. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

Prepared by Pamela V. Charland

