

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Hartford**

**Legislation and Policy Development Committee Meeting  
February 1, 2017**

**Minutes**  
(Approved 5/03/17)

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the Board of Education Legislation and Policy Development Committee met in Plaza North Room B, State Office Building, Hartford, Connecticut, on February 1, 2017.

**I. Call to Order**

Committee Chairperson Theresa Hopkins-Staten called the meeting to order at 8:49 a.m. Also present were Committee members Joseph Vrabely, and Terry Jones and Malia Sieve (who both arrived at 9:04 a.m.).

Ms. Erin Benham, Ms. Maria Mojica and Mr. Robert Trefry were absent.

Also present for all or part of the meeting were the following Department of Education Staff members: Assistant to the Commissioner for Board Matters Pamela Charland, Chief of Fiscal Operations Kathy Demsey, Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Attorney Laura Anastasio, Legal Director Peter Haberlandt; and Recorder Mildred Pagán.

Kenneth Di Pietro, Superintendent, Plainfield Public Schools, Abby Dolliver, Superintendent, Norwich Public Schools, and Sally Keating, Superintendent, Lisbon Public Schools, were also in attendance.

**II. Connecticut's Student Data Privacy Law**

Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan gave a brief explanation of the Connecticut Student Data Privacy Law. He explained that this law expects school districts to limit the disclosure of student information as much as possible, and requires written agreements with operators and researchers. He indicated that student data appears in many school software programs, and that several are provided by third party vendors. The law was created primarily to place restrictions to how third parties use the information they access. Initial state level response to this legislation includes statewide privacy contracts for the commonly used vendors, as well as a vendor registry in partnership with DAS.

Mr. Gopalakrishnan introduced Plainfield Superintendent Kenneth Di Pietro, who discussed the initial response to the new state law as it relates to his district and issues they have encountered. He explained that there are many software programs and tools

the district and schools utilize, and so there are many individual contracts with each computer program vendor. There is considerable time and cost involved with these contracts; and they are not always expedited quickly because there is a great deal of back and forth between both parties (district and vendor/attorneys). If there is no agreement, the computer program or tool cannot be used. Once the contract is executed, the language has to be uploaded onto the school website. There are also questions of how to track and monitor program/tool usage as well as liability concerns for reporting to parents.

A question and answer session followed. Committee members appreciated the update and encouraged that CSDE continue to collaborate with districts, DAS, and the legislature to make this law more workable for districts. They also suggested that Mr. Di Pietro would be a good member for the task force recommended in the law.

Attorney Anastasio offered some observations concerning the various legal criteria for contracts as established in the data privacy law.

### **III. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

On a motion made by Committee Chair Hopkins-Staten and seconded by Mr. Joseph Vrabely, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes of the December 7, 2016, Legislation and Policy Development Committee meeting.

### **IV. Endowed Academies**

Legal Director Peter Haberlandt briefly explained that there are three endowed academies, The Gilbert School, Norwich Free Academy (NFA) and Woodstock Academy. He stated that these schools are unique under Connecticut law. The primary difference between endowed academies and traditional public schools lies in the funding. Endowed academies charge tuition to sending school districts.

At this time, Director Haberlandt introduced Norwich Public Schools Superintendent Abby Dolliver. Ms. Dolliver then introduced Lisbon Superintendent Sally Keating who accompanied her to the meeting. Ms. Dolliver explained that the NFA offers many programs and the school district's concerns do not relate to quality but rather the fact that the district lacks sufficient funding to cover all of the programs. She indicated that the Prekindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> Grade program suffers because of the financial demands NFA's contract places on the Norwich school district. There is a five-year contract that delineates the rules on how to manage the funds and it is very much regimented.

Board Member Malia Sieve noted that, in addition to the challenges presented by the fixed long-term contract costs, the municipalities are not in a position to increase funding.

Some questions were raised, but time did not allow for further discussion of this topic.

Committee Chair Hopkins-Staten thanked all of the presenters for attending the meeting. Committee Member Joseph Vrabely thank Committee Chair Hopkins-Staten for her leadership and guidance throughout the years.

## **V. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:37 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Mildred Pagán, Recorder