

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

**AD HOC COMMITTEE ON EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION
MEETING OF AUGUST 19, 2009**

DRAFT MINUTES

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

**Ad Hoc Committee on Certification
Minutes of August 19, 2009, Meeting
(as corrected at 9.23.09 meeting)**

A. Call to Order

Commissioner of Education Mark K. McQuillan called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. The meeting was held in Room 307 of the State Office Building, 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford.

In addition to Dr. McQuillan, the following committee members were present: Dr. Louise Feroe, Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, Connecticut State University System; Ms. Janet M. Finneran, Vice Chairperson, State Board of Education; Ms. Patricia B. Luke, State Board of Education; Dr. Maureen McSparran Ruby, Assistant Professor, Eastern Connecticut State University; Dr. Yuhang Rong, Assistant Dean, School of Education, University of Connecticut; and Mr. John Voss, State Board of Education

Committee Member Absent: Michael Meotti, Commissioner, Department of Higher Education

Others in attendance: Deputy Commissioner George A. Coleman; Dr. Carlota Schechter, Department of Higher Education; Dr. Christine Thatcher, Department of Higher Education; Attorney Jennifer Widness, State Department of Education; Dr. Marion H. Martinez, Associate Commissioner; Assistant to the Commissioner of Education Pamela Bergin; Georgette Nemr, State Department of Education Consultant; and Nancy Pugliese, Bureau Chief.

Commissioner McQuillan opened the meeting by explaining the purpose of this committee is to obtain input and use it to shape development of the certification regulations which will be written by Georgette Nemr and Nancy Pugliese. The draft regulations will be presented to the State Board of Education at the October 7th meeting. This will commence the public comment. The ultimate decision about approval of the regulations will be made by the State Board of Education.

B. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Luke requested that the July 29, 2009, minutes be corrected as follows: page 2, fourth paragraph should read: "Mrs. Luke stated that this might not be ideal for the education of middle grade students, particularly Grade 6 students." On a motion by Mrs. Luke, seconded by Ms. Finneran, the committee unanimously approved the minutes, as corrected.

C. Discussion of Old Issues

1. Discussion of Recommendation on General Education ("Integrated Certificates") and Special Education Endorsements

Commissioner McQuillan noted that the committee had reached consensus around the importance of all general educators developing skills to address the diverse learning needs of all students. However, a special education endorsement would be required for self-contained and other segregated special education settings and would require a graduate planned program at the master's or sixth year level.

2. Review of Proposal for Grade Overlap of Elementary K-6 and Secondary 6-12

Mr. Coleman discussed a query done by Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) in response to questions submitted regarding cohort performance of middle grade students based upon their teachers' holding a comprehensive certificate versus a content area teaching certificate in the discipline and grade span they teach. Evidence found that "teachers' subject-area certification or authorization is one of the teacher qualities most consistently and strongly associated with improved student achievement, especially in middle school and high school mathematics."

Ms. Luke then referred to a 2007 Duke University study conducted to answer the question: "Are sixth grade students better off in middle or elementary school?" The results were that the sixth grade students were better off in elementary schools; these students had fewer disciplinary problems and scored higher on standardized end-of-year tests. She added that a study done in Philadelphia showed similar findings. Ms. Luke stated that sixth graders do not belong in middle schools; secondary prepared teachers are not developed to teach them.

Dr. Voss stated that he understands both sides of the issue. Overlapping may provide more flexibility for administrators, but we have to do what is best for students.

Ms. Luke stated that grade configurations are oftentimes based upon budgetary considerations and existing school buildings, not necessarily on what is ideally best for students.

Dr. McQuillan noted that in Massachusetts teachers must pass content area tests and, in the future, he would like to have a mathematics test just as we now have a reading test.

Bureau Chief Nancy Pugliese and Education Consultant Georgette Nemr discussed Attachment C, "Which Endorsements Can Serve in a Grade 6 Classroom." Every teacher would have to pass the appropriate Praxis II exam.

There was general agreement with the flexibility for either elementary or secondary endorsed teachers as represented in Attachment C to teach in departmentalized subjects in the 6th grade.

D. Discussion of Remaining Issues: Proposed Certification for Administrators

Discussion ensued regarding proposed certifications for administrators. Dr. Voss stated that central office personnel should have 092, yet he had concerns regarding the internship requirement (i.e., having completed a one-year internship and possibly being denied certificate at the end of the year). Dr. Voss explained that at Sacred Heart University, there is 240 hours of internship required. He noted that the 6-credit admin internship was a very valuable experience.

Dr. Voss stated that many students in the graduate program are in leadership roles, although being paid at a teacher salary, and are assuming responsibility when a principal is out, and should be granted credit toward the internship hour requirement. He expressed his support for allowing "equivalent" internship experience.

Dr. Rong agreed that there should be language to allow for equivalent administrative internship experience to one-year full-time service as an administrative intern. He noted that it is important to keep in mind that we are dealing with adult learners and should allow for and accept gradual internship preparation. This can be addressed through the accreditation/program approval process.

Dr. McQuillan requested Ms. Pugliese develop a proposal for equivalent-type internships.

Ms. Nemr stated that we should be supporting new administrators with not only district support but also institutional support.

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Dr. Feroe stated that the certification revisions should relate to outcome based standards and not the number of courses completed.

Ms. Pugliese stated that 40% of the certificates are issued to out of state candidates. Therefore, using only competencies will not work; the 2003 regulations were developed using competencies and they were repealed.

Ms. Finneran stated that she has no objection to the internship requirement, but we must provide different routes to fulfill the requirement.

Other Comments:

Dr. Feroe expressed her concern that, after examining the framework and some isolated specific language of the proposed teacher certification regulations shared with the ad hoc committee members, institutions of higher education are required to align their preparation programs with desired competencies, but the regulations are still focusing on courses and credits. It appears that educator preparation programs are asked to be innovative and meet high standards but the state regulatory environment will continue to use a framework that does not appear to be innovative.

Dr. Rong concurred by reiterating his concerns that the specific language of the state initial educator certification regulations (those we have seen) is not aligned with the state educator preparation program approval standards. The proposed standards are, in fact, lower than the national content standards. The state regulations specifically adopted the NCATE institutional standards and the national specialty professional association program content standards for Connecticut program approval. The state should align its initial certification standards with its own program approval standards.

Ms. Pugliese expressed her concern that if the NCATE standards are adopted exclusively, it is difficult to evaluate those certification applicants from outside of Connecticut, because 40% of them are from out of state.

Dr. Rong pointed out that more than half of the educator preparation programs in the nation are NCATE accredited. For those who completed their programs from non-NCATE accredited institutions, the state could certainly adopt specific languages to address the equivalency.

Dr Feroe asked that this issue to be examined and fully discussed at future meetings.

E. Next Steps—September Meeting

Dr. McQuillan suggested that we review preschool certification and its overlap with elementary certification. In previous regulations we did implement a PK-3 early childhood and a Grade 1-6 elementary endorsement; however, districts found it difficult to staff schools and had a shortage of kindergarten teachers. Legislation was passed to add kindergarten to the elementary certification. Discussion will continue on this topic at the next meeting.

Dr. McQuillan stated that we will discuss the direction for the CSDE Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development Guidelines. We will focus discussions on overarching goals for the new guidelines to be developed by a working committee.

Next Meeting: September 23, 2009
1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
Room 307A, State Office Building
165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut