

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

**Ad Hoc Committee On Educator Certification
Meeting Of September 23, 2009**

Draft Minutes

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DRAFT MINUTES

I. Call to Order

Commissioner of Education, Mark K. McQuillan, called the meeting to order at 1:15 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, Mr. Michael Meotti, Commissioner, Department of Higher Education.

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

II. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner McQuillan opened the meeting by asking if there were changes to the minutes of the August 19 meeting. If none, asked for a motion to approve. Dr. Rong asked for corrections to the minutes. He read the corrections and offered to e-mail them to the commissioner. The commissioner asked for any other corrections. Hearing none, he again asked for approval of the minutes with the stated amendments. Mrs. Luke moved. Mr. Voss seconded. The minutes were approved with amendments.

III. Discussion of Early Childhood Certification PK-3 and Overlap with Elementary Education

Commissioner McQuillan reviewed with the committee the request from Dr. Carlota Schechter to examine the overlap between the early childhood education (ECE) endorsement for nursery through grade 3 and the elementary K-6 endorsement. Dr. Schechter presented materials for the committee's review and consideration and presented a summary of the issues. In the proposed revisions for the certification regulations, she asked the committee to consider removing the authority to teach kindergarten under the elementary K-6 endorsement so that the sole authority for teaching kindergarten would fall to the early childhood teachers; the new ECE endorsement would then be valid for grades pre-kindergarten through grade 2. Because the elementary endorsement covers grades K-6, candidates choose to enter elementary programs over entering the early childhood programs. In 2007-08, there were 978 elementary education program completers in Connecticut versus 78 early childhood program completers. 13 other states have removed the authority from elementary endorsements to teach kindergarten, reserving it for early childhood trained teachers.

The area of ECE is confusing as there are not necessarily ECE certified teachers in head start or independent programs, but are required in public school pre-K programs. The data about public school staffing shows that 78% of

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kindergarten teachers are not holding an ECE endorsement. Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten is like a subject area like mathematics at the secondary level. Elementary teachers are not appropriately prepared for early child development in the areas of cognition and behavior development. ECE curriculum and teaching style is different than elementary level. The setting is different and is in response to the sensory learning style that children need at that early age. Therefore, Pre-K and K teachers should be required to have ECE preparation and certification; in order to do that, we would need to eliminate Kindergarten from the elementary K-6 endorsement.

Connecticut is one of the first states to have an ECE endorsement. Other states look to our certification to develop their own. The ECE endorsement was part of a broader reform, vision specialization. In 2003, the elementary endorsement was previously 1-6, but legislation passed to add the authority to teach kindergarten back into it. Subsequently, there was a decline in the number of students prepared in ECE because kindergarten was added back to the elementary endorsement. Many candidates are prepared at the graduate level with particular interest in ECE. With new proposed changes around “blended” we would eliminate the special education role in ECE and further exacerbate the decline of ECE. As we look to the future, we see the public schools embracing the idea of Pre-K classrooms and the day that all ECE will be required to be certified. At that time, we will need ECE, but many may not be prepared to staff these Pre-K classrooms if decline continues. The issue is, the vision of specializing versus generalizing preparation of teachers.

ECE is a specialization like a subject area teacher at the secondary level. We shouldn't match the grade configuration of school buildings to the grade levels for certification, we should be focusing on child's needs. Teacher preparation programs need to do a good job if the elementary teacher span is K-6, this is a broader range of development levels and grades. ECE teachers are specially geared to help individualize instruction for students at their developmental level. We know there is some concern that ECE preparation is not as rigorous at the elementary level. ECE preparation programs need to meet exactly the same standards as the elementary programs, as well as meet pre-kindergarten standards. Eliminating kindergarten from the elementary endorsement will result in more teachers being prepared to teach pre-K and K and for a career in ECE education.

Dr. Feroe: What grade spans are proposed currently—K-3, 1-6, 7-12?

Dr. McQuillan: The structure proposed is PK-3, K-6 and 6-12.

Ms. Pugliese: In 2003, statutory amendment was proposed to add Kindergarten back into the Grades 1-6 Elementary Endorsement because superintendents had complained that there were insufficient numbers of ECE teachers available to hire and they needed to hire elementary teachers for kindergarten positions.

Ms. Pugliese: Some teachers are hired in pre-K settings but not paid as a regular contracted teacher, like other K-12 teachers with retirement benefits. So why would they want to get the ECE certification?

Dr. Schechter: There are separate issues between teachers who are not certified versus those who are—preparation and salary/employment – and issues relating to non-certified ECE teachers has its own complexity.

Ms. Pugliese: Have spoken with superintendents who hire certified ECE teachers (in school readiness or others programs) but do not pay them as a regular teacher with benefits like K-12 teacher. If forced to do so, they have stated that they would shut the preK program down as it would be fiscally prohibitive to pay the ECE teachers on the teacher's salary schedule.

Dr. McQuillan: What are the consequences of eliminating K from the elementary endorsement? It would compel a search for a clientele of certified teachers and greater opportunity to build a workforce—is that envisioned?

Dr. Schechter: We don't want this to be retroactive. We don't anticipate there to be a downside. It is important to couple the certification change with an explanation for those hiring ECE teachers and direct district's to hire based on the needs of the student population.

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Dr. Ruby: While the candidates may want to teach young children and complete ECE programs, parents direct their son or daughter to go into the certification program with the greatest employment opportunity – elementary education. We need to educate the parents and the general public about the programs.

Mr. Coleman: What do you lose? Potential to attract those who want to work with younger children. Don't have capacity to pay ECE teachers. By moving K to ECE we create an environment whereby people would have better skills for Kindergarten. If we believe there is a greater need for ECE, what do we do to ensure sufficient numbers of ECE teachers?

Dr. McQuillan: Even now if remove K from elementary K-6, there is not sufficient demand to attract teachers to the field and openings are only in K, 1, 2.

Dr. Schechter: It's true we have two worlds; one world with ECE teachers not properly certified and the second world of public pre-K where compensation is not an issue. Students do not make compensation choices but make educational decisions based on marketability. Once we have more ECE classrooms and more ECE teachers, we can revert to K-6. If we don't have the pipeline then won't have any ECE teachers.

Dr. McQuillan: Would we prevent the 2003 regulations issue from happening again? Can we produce the numbers of teachers needed for Kindergarten positions?

Dr. Schechter: I believe we can.

Dr. McQuillan: Is it a matter of educating the public school superintendents?

Mr. Meotti: To move the agenda forward, we need to articulate the broad assumptions. Whatever we put forward to decision makers, we should include key assumptions that drive and address issues that validate why we are doing this. Otherwise, we are locked down in specifics. People have certain assumptions or job tradeoffs about the overlaps. Flip side is school district trying to fill positions. Professional education assumption: to what level does public school education address generalist, specialist and developmental needs?

Dr. McQuillan: Explicit detail teased out to the SBE. On one hand, if told workforce of tomorrow, we don't have workforce funding and candidates. Then if this is where we are going, may hurt ourselves. Assumption made thus far: read history don't make this mistake again.

Ms. Finneran: Difference between 6th and 12th grade similar to difference between PreK and 3rd grades. Why not have Pk-6. There would be specific courses for PreK versus upper elementary. A person would have a broad range of certification and bring expertise to certification.

Dr. Voss: Put in the position of candidates, could I complete coursework in both areas (preK and elementary)? Would it require two student teachings – one in upper and one in lower elementary; would it require coursework appropriate to those levels?

Dr. Feroe: To do this, we need to consider that preparation is not at the baccalaureate level but at the master's level.

Dr. McQuillan: On the one hand, need to go where Carlota proposes. On the other hand, the practical side, it's tough to go there given what's happened in the past. What's been proposed by CSDE gives us a chance to get it both ways.

Dr. Schechter: The broad range for elementary forces preparation at the middle not for Kindergarten and the ECE pipeline will dwindle.

Dr. McQuillan: May not have people in programs if we remove K from mix.

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Mr. Meotti: Spell out assumption on broad level to help decision making process. Fully agree but also discussed this and counterbalanced with other policies. K-6 has 7 difference employment opportunities. PK-3 has 5. Why would 78 people choose ECE?

Ms. Pugliese: Original intent was to move to model of PK-3, 4-8 and 8-12. But instead also implemented overlapping endorsements for K-6 and 7-12. Can't run two parallel models.

Mr. Meotti: Doesn't get much worse than the overlapping of PK-3 and K-6.

Dr. Ruby: What are the statistics on B-3? Will there be a surge in pre-K?

Dr. McQuillan: There will be a decline; the dilemma here is we don't have huge numbers of students.

Ms. Nemr: The dilemma we have with the training for PK-3 versus elementary and teachers not being fully trained for the grade range is applicable to all other endorsements, 7-12 secondary, PK-12 music, even administration which spans PK-12. Preparation programs cannot fully train candidates for the full range of grades covered by each endorsement.

Mr. Meotti: This makes the issue of assumptions more important. PK-3 may be developmentally different than 1-6, but we can't get bogged down in the details of grade 5 or 6. Get people to understand assumptions in the absence of common values.

Mr. Coleman: Do we value preparation at the BA level to have trained teachers in ECE? Not having that group limits our ability to move pools of people in ECE. Unless there is a hook, ECE programs are not strong enough on their own to attract people.

Mr. Meotti: If put ECE people on salary schedules, it still does not solve the problem of marketability. Disproportionate numbers of 78 versus 973.

Mr. Coleman: Now we don't have Pre-K in school, no funds to pay. If we pay them commensurate salaries, we would have large numbers potentially seeking jobs in ECE.

Dr. Schechter: With overlap, still don't see that big a difference happening.

Dr. McQuillan: Carlota looks to rectify the imbalance between PK-3 and K-6.

Dr. Feroe: Appropriateness of training—define for me what a new teacher should know and do.

Ms. Pugliese: We tried to have that conversation about special education—elementary versus secondary—but no teachers were interested in special education at the high school. Therefore, proposed PK-12 special education to ensure we would have special educators at the secondary level.

Mr. Meotti: Availability of teachers for the market is an issue for employers. Assumptions trump logical choice about preparation and training. We need to develop 10-12 assumptions.

Mrs. Luke: IHE has to ensure that candidates demonstrate competency and we need to make it possible through the regulations. Otherwise, we still end up counting seat time.

Dr. McQuillan: NCATE process is aimed at ensuring competency – the system of measure that IHEs use to ensure competency of candidates.

Dr. Rong: The State revamped program approval standards which are solidly in place now. It took a few years for IHE to learn and adapt. The real practice across programs focus on competencies. How do you know that candidates

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have it? IHEs show rubrics and specialized professional associations (SPAs) critique the instruments (assessments of competencies). Must provide 3 years of data to show how candidates demonstrate competencies. We are moving away from courses and credits, but the certification requirements are very different. Framework of regulations has specific coursework language. The regulations talk about competency in a very different way than NCATE standards. do

Dr. McQuillan: Suggested we move on to the next item.

Item IV: Proposal for Alternative Administrator Internship Requirement

Ms. Pugliese reported that we have incorporated language in the proposed regulations for administrative candidates to provide for a 700 hour equivalent internship option as an alternative to the 10 month full-time internship in a position requiring the intermediate administration or supervision endorsement.

Dr. Voss: Will we get guidelines on how to meet the requirement? Now have 240 hours; how would they meet the requirement if they are already doing jobs that are close to a principal's except for supervision and evaluation? Are we talking seat time or experience as an administrator without being in the role?

Ms. Pugliese: Direction will be provided through the accreditation process.

Mr. Meotti: DHE has concerns on activity growing via licensed/accredited IHEs from outside of CT or on-line providing practicum or internship in CT to CT residents who are taking these long-distance programs but who need "on-ground" experience. DHE is unable due to resources to accredit these IHEs from out-of-state.

Ms. Pugliese: CSDE has the same issue. Univ of New England offers on-line program in administration to CT residents. They requested that we look at their curriculum to determine if it meets current regulations for administrative certification. We responded, but explicitly asked that they not advertise that their program is approved in CT.

Item V: Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development

Dr. McQuillan: We plan to convene a committee to review and update teacher evaluation guidelines (not regulations) and define principle components for both teacher and administrator evaluation; identify underlying assumptions. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding requires us to connect teacher evaluation to student outcomes.

Item VI: Focus on Teacher/Principal Evaluation Committee and P-20 Council

Dr. McQuillan: We will present the draft regulations at November's board meeting and ask for public comment during the 30 day comment period. The State Board will be given a summary outline of all the comments on the regulations. We plan to conclude the work of this committee by December with further discussion will be directed in two ways:

1. Matters concerning teacher evaluation will be referred to the committee yet to be announced.
2. P-20 council, to be co-chaired by Marion Martinez and Louise Feroe, will take up a variety of broad policy issues from PK to college, look at transition points and management of data. There will be two workgroups one on data and the second on teacher effectiveness and a variety of extensions of this conversation.

Dr. Feroe: Will we use now through December to discuss certification regs in relation to NCATE? Need "show and tell" how NCATE standards relate to cert regulations.

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Dr. McQuillan: Confusing how current NCATE process will change. The Board needs to align what its doing with NCATE. SBE reviews program approval based on NCATE, but I'm hearing you say there may be mis-alignment between NCATE and certification regulations.

Dr. Rong: There are some assumptions out there about process. I have the job of ensuring that UCONN meets NCATE standards. It's a tremendous amount of information. Proposed initial cert regulations are not outlining expectations around competencies. There is no change in the basic standards, but change in the process to ensure that ensure that preparation programs are doing what is relevant to meet the needs of schools. If IHEs are doing well, what are they doing to make preparation more relevant—continuous improvement. Requires that current state process aligns with NCATE. At next meeting, will share UCONN documents for accreditation for one certification area (Elementary) and compare with proposed cert regulations.

Mr. Meotti: DHE has a general set of regulations, lowest common denominator, minimum standards. Struggle with DHE role. NCATE is one of few accrediting bodies to use process to drive continuous improvement. DHE accredits institutions not programs.

Next meeting: Examination of how NCATE standards align with certification regulations and how it can inform P20 workgroups.

**Next Meeting: October 29, 2009
9 a.m. -12 noon
Room 307A, State Office Building
165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut**