

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Janet M. Finneran, Chair
Lynne S. Farrell
Theresa Hopkins-Staten
Patricia B. Luke

Minutes of the Meeting of
April 1, 2009

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Janet Finneran called the meeting to order at 1:45 p.m. The meeting was held at the State Department of Education, 165 Capitol Avenue, Room 305, Hartford, Connecticut. Present for all or part of the meeting were Committee Members Ms. Janet Finneran, Chair; Mrs. Patricia Luke (arrived at 2:00 p.m.), Dr. Lynne Farrell, and Mrs. Theresa Hopkins-Staten. Also present were Commissioner Mark McQuillan, Associate Commissioners Marion Martinez, Barbara Beaudin and Charlene Russell-Tucker, Assistant to the Commissioner Pamela Bergin, Education Managers Cheryl Resha and Marlene Lovanio, Bureau Chiefs Barbara Westwater, Susan Kennedy and Paul Flinter, and Consultants Marie Glowski and Bonnie Edmondson.

II. Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Mrs. Hopkins-Staten, seconded by Dr. Farrell, the committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the February 24, 2009, Policy Development Committee meeting. (Mrs. Luke was not present for this vote).

III. Draft Position Statement on Coordinated Approach to School Health

Associate Commissioner Russell-Tucker introduced the draft statement, and initiated a discussion with committee members. The following suggestions were made: ensure that the guidelines address districts' responsibility for addressing mental health and ways to effectively do so; use the words "developmentally appropriate" when referring to the nature of instruction; rewrite the last sentence of the second paragraph of the statement; move "physical education" up on the list of the eight components of coordinated school health (paragraph 3 of statement); change the word "functional" to "essential" in line one of the fourth paragraph; note that the most effective way to address sexuality education involves schools and families working together; under State Department of Education Responsibilities, add "but not limited to" after the word "including" in the third bullet. Committee members then discussed the certification requirements for teaching health education at the elementary, middle and high school levels.

(Mrs. Luke arrived at 2:00 p.m.)

IV. Draft Position Statement on the Education of Students Acquiring English

Associate Commissioner Martinez initiated a discussion of the above statement, suggesting that the title would appropriately be "Position Statement on Children Who Are English Language Learners." Consultant Marie Glowski explained the terms bilingual education (for students in schools with 20 or more students of a given language), English as a Second Language, and English language learners, and the corresponding federal term Limited English Proficient. She distributed the July 2008 Data Bulletin on English Language Learners in Connecticut and a question and answer sheet on ELL.

Commissioner McQuillan noted that teachers of ELL students are presented with a great challenge, and the need for appropriate training. Discussion ensued regarding the success of ESL and bilingual programs, the length of time in the program, and monitoring activities. Committee members also discussed the need for qualified ELL teachers and related certification issues, as well as the advantage of districts having access to "best practices." Mrs. Luke made a suggestion to begin the statement with a reference to the Board's goal to provide a superior education for Connecticut's 21st century learners, acknowledge the achievement gap and the Board's desire to close it, and to explain how ESL programs can facilitate the closure of the gap. She suggested that rather than separate bilingual from ESL programs, the two be presented as ways to address the achievement gap.

IV. Adjourn

By unanimous consent, the meeting was adjourned at 2:47 p.m.